

Original article

Comparison of Crisis Management Systems in Poland and Slovakia

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INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT

Natural disasters have a specific position in terms of threats to the life and health of citizens, the environment, and the property of municipalities in individual regions. Their negative consequences can affect a lot of people and disrupt the routine processes on a large area. Natural disasters mostly have negative effects on people, material values and nature. In the case of large-scale natural disasters, the functioning and stability of state systems may be compromised and impaired, including those in Poland and Slovakia.

KEYWORDS

crisis management system, crisis events, crisis situation, state, authorities



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Introduction

A prerequisite for effective and efficient crisis management, whether in Poland or Slovakia, is understanding administrative bodies at all levels of crisis management system, their purpose, culture, including the ongoing processes which take place in them. The authors will discuss the issue of crisis management systems in the Poland and Slovakia.

1. Current state analysis of the crisis management system in Poland

According to Dworzecki [1], crisis management system is very complicated and time consuming. The best proof is the history of formulating this kind of structure in Poland. Lack of system solutions, enabling the coordination of activities of all administrative bodies and other units forming various rescue structures, was noticed during the flood in July 1997. At that time, in southern and western part of Poland, as a result of intense rainfalls, overflowing rivers flooded 2,592 towns, 1,362 completely, and 665 thousand hectares of ground. 480 bridges and almost 1400 km of roads were destroyed. The flood devoured 54 victims, and 162.5 thousand people were evacuated.

As Lizak [2] writes, crisis management in Poland as a civil component of the national security system is a response to different internal and external threats (like natural disasters, terrorism). Individual competencies and tasks are regulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, by some acts and internal procedures of administrative bodies.

Figure 1 presents the organisational chart of Civil Protection Mechanism of crisis management system in Poland.

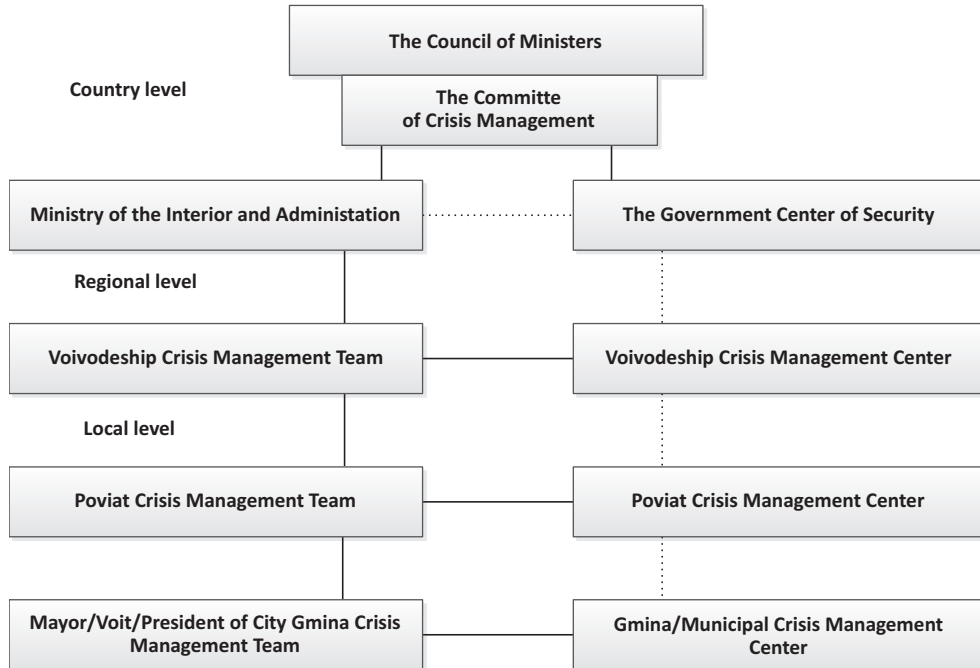


Fig. 1. Organisational chart of Civil Protection Mechanism of crisis management system in Poland
 Source: [3].

The Council of Ministers is a crucial element and is responsible for maintaining public order and internal security at the national governmental level. The Committee for Emergency Management is established within the Council of Ministers, chaired by the Minister of the Interior and Administration. Most of the emergency services are subordinate to the Ministry of the Interior and Administration. The Ministry of the Interior and Administration is responsible for the maintenance of public order, the protection of the population in emergency situations and the prevention of disasters and emergencies. The structures of fire service and civil protection form together one unit [4].

Good practices mentioned by [3] include:

- raising awareness of management and reaction scheme during crisis situations,
- early warning of people about the threat,
- flood monitoring.

Chapter XI of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland [5] deals with the issue of extraordinary measures. The authors only mention the most important extraordinary measures with regard to the scope of the paper. Martial law, state of emergency or state of natural disaster may be introduced in the situations of particular danger and if ordinary constitutional measures are inadequate [5, Art. 228]. In the case of external threats to Poland, the President of Poland may declare martial law in a part of or upon the whole territory of Poland [5, Art. 229]. In the event of threats to the security of the citizens or public order, the President of Poland may introduce the state of emergency in a part of or upon the whole territory of Poland for no more than 90 days. In the event of a continuous threat, it is possible for a state to extend it by no more than 60 more days [5, Art. 230]. The Council of Ministers may introduce the state of natural disaster in a part of or upon the whole territory of Poland for no more than 30 days; during this time it is necessary to minimise the consequences of a natural disaster or a technological accident [5, Art. 232].

The issue of crisis management system in Poland is described in more detail in the Act of 26th April 2007 on Crisis Management. The bodies responsible for crisis management, their roles and the general principles of crisis management, as well as the rules for financing the crisis management tasks, are contained in this Act [6, Art. 1]. Crisis management is defined as the activity of public authorities, which is an element of the management of the national security management system. Crisis management system in Poland consist of four phases: crisis prevention, preparation for them through planned activities, reaction in case of emergencies and removing their effects and reconstructing resources and critical infrastructure [6, Art. 2]. A situation that has a negative impact on the safety of people, property in large sizes or on the environment and which causes significant constraints on the activities of the relevant public authorities due to the inadequacy of available capacities and resources is defined as a crisis situation [6, Art. 3]. This Act also describes the structure and crisis management system at local government and self-government level [6, Art. 14].

In terms of territorial structure, Poland is divided into 16 voivodeships, each with its own voivode. The main task of the voivodeships is to coordinate the prevention of all kinds of dangers and to help lower level governments if their resources are inadequate. Higher self-government units make up 373 administrative districts. When crisis situations go beyond the local level, responsibility for solving crisis situations lies within the competence of administrative districts. Municipalities represent the lowest government level in crisis management system in Poland. The mayor is the head of each village, defining the tasks of Civil Protection for all institutions that are operational within the municipality with the help of the permanent Emergency Response Board [4].

According to Zdzymira [7], the structure of provisionally created self-governmental emergency management bodies (teams and centers) obliges relevant authorities to call, in a proper mode, the emergency management team. It is a principle existing in larger administrative units i.e., for example, in large towns or cities, and obligatorily in voivodeships. Emergency management centers function as full time, on-duty cells working by the appropriate Emergency Management Departments.

The main aim of Civil Emergency Planning (CEP) in Poland is to ensure the security and welfare of the civil population. CEP performs crisis prevention activities during the time of crisis prevention phase and activities enabling the effective response to crisis during reaction phase. Both phases relate to disaster, crisis or war. Other activities performed and provided

by CEP include, for example: support for peacekeeping operations, coordination of international humanitarian, technical and professional aid, preparation of legislation, raising public awareness of the threats that threaten them, etc. [4].

In addition to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland [5] and the Act of 26th April 2007 on Crisis Management, there are many others acts, regulations, orders and procedures that address the issue of crisis management system in the Polish legal environment. Some conditions for implementing extraordinary measures in case of disasters, which may be either natural or man-made, are specified in detail by the Act on the State of Natural Disaster [8]. The Procedure for Compiling a Fragmentary Report to the Report on Threats to the National Security [9] provides for the obligation to process security plans or reports to be coordinated by the Director of the Government Centre for Security. The Regulation of the Council of Ministers on the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Programme [10] shall specify the way of implementation of duties and cooperation in the scope of the National Critical Infrastructure Protection Programme by public administration authorities and services responsible for national security. The ways of creation, updating and the structure of critical infrastructure protection plans are contained in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers on Critical Infrastructure Protection Plans [11]. The ways, procedures and deadlines for the compilation of the Report on Threats to the National Security are specified in the Regulation of the Council of Ministers concerning the Report on Threats to the National Security [12]. The Regulation of the Prime Minister on the organisation and operating mode of the Government Centre for Security [13] regulates roles, responsibilities, competences and overall structure the Government Centre for Security. Order No. 78 of the Prime Minister on the organisation and operating mode of the Government Crisis Management Team [14] has also its foundation in the crisis management system in Poland.

2. Current state analysis of the crisis management system in Slovakia

Slovak legal framework in the field of crisis management is constituted by the Slovak Constitution, constitutional acts, acts and lower legal regulations. It creates a legal environment governed by public authorities, legal entities and individual people. There are a number of definitions of crisis situation in Slovakia. Legislation offers two basic definitions:

- according to the Constitutional Act No. 227/2002 on State Security in Times of War, Hostilities, Exceptional Circumstances or Emergency [15], a military crisis situation refers to the period during which the security of the state is imminently threatened or impaired, and the constitutional authorities may, after meeting the conditions laid down in this Constitutional Act, declare a state of crisis in the particular territory in Slovakia,
- according to the Act No. 387/2002 on the Management of State in Crisis Situations Other Than Time of War and State of War [16], a non-military crisis situation is defined as period during which the security of the state is imminently threatened or impaired, and the constitutional authorities may, after meeting the conditions laid down in this Act, declare an exceptional state, state of emergency, extraordinary event or extraordinary situation in the particular territory in Slovakia.

As Šimák [17] writes, crisis state is defined as a legal state declared by a competent public authority in a particular territory in order to solve crisis situation. Crisis state relates to the

need to apply the principles of crisis management and the temporary restriction of fundamental human rights and freedoms. Extraordinary event is a significant, difficult to predict and difficult to be limited incident. This event may cause system stability or ongoing processes to be compromised, with consequences to lives and health of people, material and cultural values, or the environment. Extraordinary events are divided into natural disasters, accidents, disasters and terrorist attacks. In accordance with Act No. 355/2007 on Protection, Promotion and Development of Public Health [18], amended and supplemented by certain laws concerning threats to public health. Extraordinary situation is declared and recalled through mass information means (Act No. 42/1994) [19]. If exceptional state and emergency state was declared, then extraordinary situation is not to be declared. In this case, it is proceeding in accordance with Constitutional Act No. 227/2002 on State Security in Times of War, Hostilities, Exceptional Circumstances or Emergency.

According to Šimák [20, p. 157-79], we have to distinguish between the basic theoretical model of crisis management and the complex procedure for solving crisis phenomena in the Slovakia. The basic theoretical model of crisis management consists of four crisis management processes – prevention, crisis planning, response and recovery (Fig. 2).

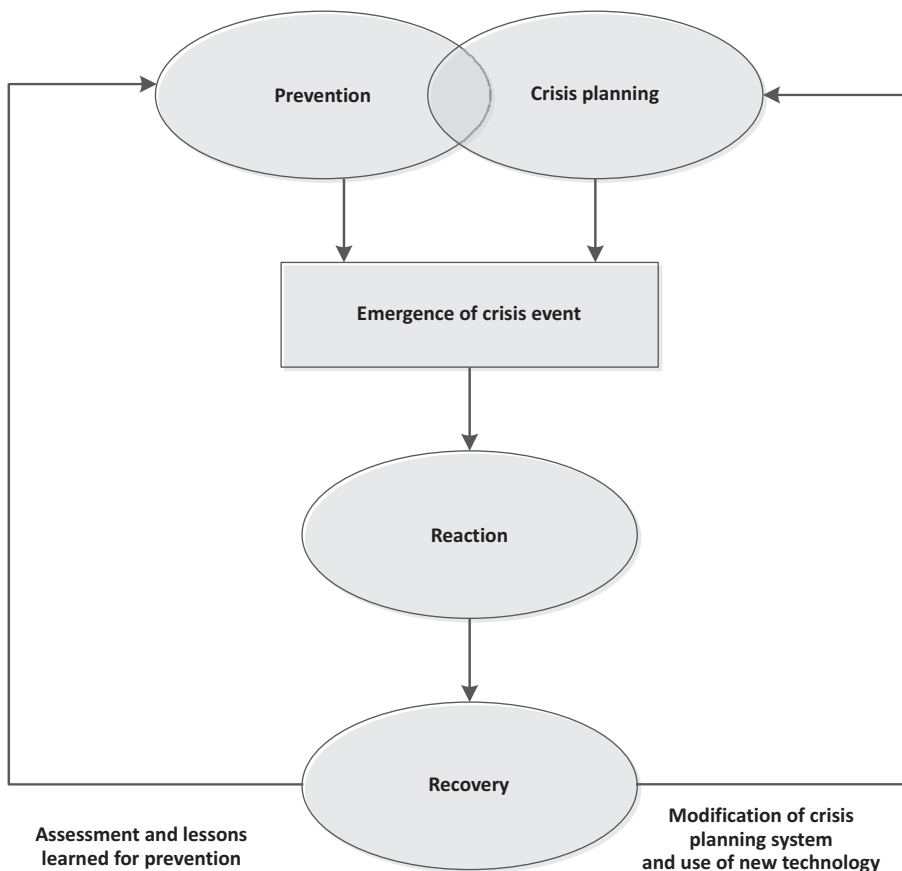


Fig. 2. Basic theoretical model of crisis management
Source: [20].

The complex procedure for solving crisis phenomena is much more complex. It is necessary to take into account the type of crisis phenomena, including its power and the environment in which they occur. This procedure relies on the basic theoretical model of crisis management. It can adapt to external and internal conditions and address all likely crisis situations. The basic theoretical model of crisis management which does not accept broader connections and the complex procedure for solving crisis phenomena, may lose certain flexibility and adaptation in some cases [20, p. 157-79].

As Drenman [21] claims, in the prevention phase, the most important step is to identify and assess all current risks and threats, followed by the processing of crisis and crisis scenario forecasts. Part of the crisis planning is the processing of emergency plans and crisis plans. The Crisis Plan is a document containing the procedures, processes and activities needed to adequately respond to the crisis situation. Crisis plans serve as a guide to the organisational staff, use resources efficiently and improve communication, with the emphasis on crisis communication. According to Novak [22], the following emergency plans and crisis plans are being processed in the crisis planning system:

- emergency plan of the entity that is a potential threat to the environment,
- emergency plan of the object (municipality, region), which is an endangered object in its territory or in the surroundings,
- the economic mobilisation crisis plan,
- rescue unit crisis plan,
- business entity crisis plan.

Ordinance No. 388/2006 on the Details of Ensuring the Technical and Operational Conditions of the Civil Protection Information System [23] regulates the scope of warning and information centers. Warning of the population and providing information to persons in the Slovak Republic is technically provided by a network of sirens, radio and television broadcasts, home radio, local information media of municipalities and towns, systems of automated information and public electronic communication networks.

The process of solving the crisis phenomena is performed by the Integrated Rescue System and the representatives of legal entities and businesses owning premises in which the crisis phenomenon originated. Solution of Crisis Phenomena is contained in Act No. 42/1994 on Civil Protection [19]. The basic tasks of civil protection are, for example, the organisation and conduct of rescue services, the provision of emergency supplies and emergency accommodation, the provision and execution of shelter and evacuation, and the implementation of anti-radiation, anti-chemical and anti-biological measures. Recovery is the last phase in the basic theoretical model of crisis management and the complex procedure for solving crisis phenomena. Recovery tasks are within the remit of the statutory representative of the institution, which was affected by the negative consequences of the crisis phenomenon. Feedback is very important in the crisis management system. Feedback is a means of improving crisis management at different levels through assessment and lessons concerning prevention and modification of crisis plans [20, p. 157-79].

According to Šimák [20, p. 157-79], from the institutional point of view, public administration is divided into state bodies, self-government bodies and public corporations. Organisational chart of crisis management system in Slovakia is shown in Figure 3.

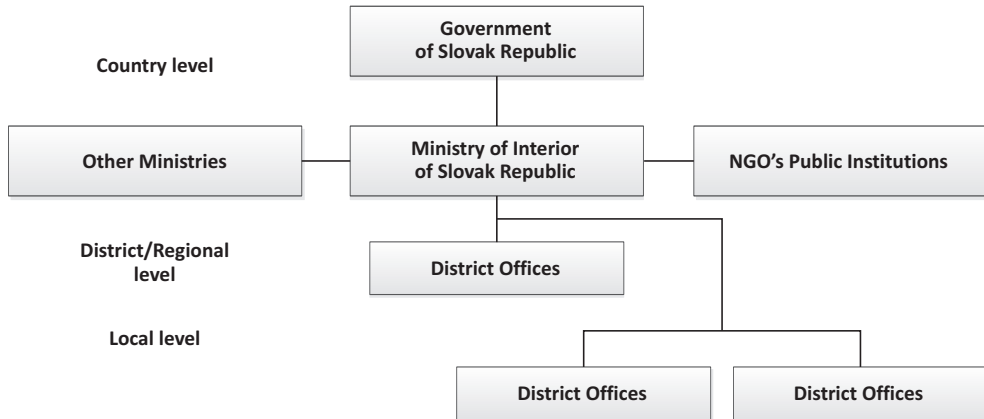


Fig. 3. Organisational chart of crisis management system in Slovakia
Source: [3].

Crisis management authorities in Slovakia are: the Government of the Slovak Republic, Security Council of the Slovak Republic, individuals ministries, central government bodies, National Bank of Slovakia, Region Security Council, District Security Council and municipalities [16]. Security Council of the Slovak Republic, as an advisory authority, participates in the creation and implementation of the Slovak security system and evaluates the security situation in the Slovak Republic and in the world. The President of the Security Council is the Prime Minister of Slovak Republic. Security Council of the Slovak Republic establishes four Committees for the preparation and implementation of individual tasks: Foreign Policy Committee, Defense Planning Committee, Civil Emergency Planning Committee and Committee for Intelligence Coordination [15].

Neubauerová [24] characterises the local government level as state budgetary organisation connected to the budget of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic through financial relations. Local government authorities represent a hierarchically lower government level. They consist of authorities directly subordinate to a central government authorities. New concept of local government level is detailed in the ESO Program (effective, reliable and open government).

According to the Act No. 180/2013 on the Organisation of Local State Administration [25], the main aim is the effectiveness, flexibility, efficiency, transparency and modernisation of government services. There are 8 Regions and 82 District Offices in Slovakia. The details of the internal organisation of District Offices are provided for in the Directive No. 14 of the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic [26]. According to the territorial and administrative arrangement, Slovakia established Regional and District Security Councils. They evaluate security situation in the territory of a given region, respectively the territory of a district [15]. The crisis management system at local government and self-government level is established by crisis staff. Tasks of crisis staff are defined in the Act No. 387/2002 on the Management of State in Crisis Situations Other Than Time of War and State of War [16]. The main tasks include crisis situation risk analysis, proposing measures to address it and coordination activities of all the components in crisis management system. According to Šimák [17], crisis staff constitutes the executive element of crisis management. The establishment of flood commissions and their technical staff is contained in Act No. 7/2010 on Flood Protection [27].

Integrated Rescue System was established in 2002 in Slovakia, as a result of the experience of the European Union countries in order to improve the quality of rescue activities. According to the Act No. 129/2002 on the Integrated Rescue System [28], the Integrated Rescue System provides for the rapid use and coordination of rescue forces and resources in the event of a crisis situation or when solving a crisis situation. The Integrated Rescue System Coordination Center provides assistance to the Crisis Staff in fulfilling its tasks.

The main document for the effectiveness of crisis management at local government level and self-government level is the Analysis of the Area of the Possible Crisis Events. The aim of this analysis is to comprehensively assess the risks in the particular territory, following the National-level Risk Assessment Methodology [29]. According to Novak (2005), the Analysis of the Area of the Possible Crisis Events is a complex document describing a particular territory, based on predetermined and defined criteria. This analysis is made in the form of a set of documents and consists of a written and graphic part.

3. Data and methodology

The aim of this article is to assess and compare crisis management system in Poland and Slovakia. In order to achieve this aim, it was necessary to become more familiar with the state of crisis management in both countries, including the roles, competencies and status of individual institutions. Several methods and procedures were used to process the contribution. The analysis in the process of summarising and comparison in the process of evaluating the collected facts and documentation were used most frequently. In the case of the diversity of knowledge gained and the facts, it is necessary to use the synthesis.

4. Analysis of problems and challenges in crisis management systems in Poland and Slovakia through comparison

Table 1 was created in order to evaluate the current state analysis of the crisis management systems in Poland and Slovakia. Individual variants presented in the columns constitute the selected characteristics of these systems.

Crisis management systems in both countries have many common elements and they overlap in some cases. On the other hand, there are many differences. The highest position in crisis management system in Poland has The Council of Ministers, which also includes the Ministry of the Interior and Administration. In Slovakia, decision-making authority at central government level is the Ministry of the Interior of Slovak Republic. To some extent, this is also related by parliamentary system in both countries. Slovakia has 1 more government level. Self-government level is a part of local government level in Poland. The issue of crisis management is included in a number of legislations. Poland and Slovakia have not created a comprehensive legal framework. Terminological inconsistency and ambiguity of legislation cause many problems in practice. There is a system error within the hierarchy of crisis management system. Overall quality of the legal environment in Slovakia is not effective for frequent legislative amendments or adjustments. Poland and Slovakia are the neighbouring countries.

When reading some acts of law and various kinds of literature, the authors found a number of. These terms only exist in legislation and literature within their country. This difference is mainly related to the territorial organisation of countries. The main institutions for effective

Table 1. Evaluation table of crisis management systems in Poland and Slovakia

Criterion/Country	Poland	Slovakia
The highest position in crisis management system	The Council of Ministers	Government of Slovak Republic
Central authority	Ministry of the Interior and Administration	Ministry of the Interior of Slovak Republic
Number of government levels	2	4
Comprehensive legal framework	No	No
Main aim of Civil Emergency Planning	Ensuring the security and welfare of the civil population, protection of critical infrastructure	Protecting the lives, health and property of the population and creating conditions for survival in exceptional circumstances
National security document	Poland's National Security Strategy	Security Strategy of the Slovak Republic
Competent institutions for solution of crisis situation	Governmental and non-governmental organisations	Integrated Rescue System
Crisis states	state of emergency, natural disaster state, state of war	extraordinary situation, exceptional state, state of emergency, state of war, war
Membership in international crisis management organisations	EAPC, NATO, UN, EU OSCE, Council of Europe	NATO, EU, UN, OSCE, Council of Europe

Source: Processing by author.

solution of crisis situation are governmental and non-governmental organisations in Poland. For example, State Fire Rescue System, firefighters, air rescuers, Red Cross organisation and others are part of these organisations. In Slovakia, the rescue services are in the competence of Integrated Rescue System. Integrated Rescue System is divided into the basic, as well as other components. Poland and Slovakia have a declaration of crisis states defined in the legislation. Slovakia has the most crisis states from among all Central and Eastern European countries.

Natural disasters and extraordinary events often cross the national borders. Poland and Slovakia are not exceptions. River Poprad and Dunajec flow through the territory of both countries. Many lakes and water reservoirs are located near state borders, for example Jezioro Czorsztyńskie (lake) in Poland and Oravská priehrada (water reservoir). Stormy winds in High Tatras and forest fires also influence the possibility of cooperation between Poland and Slovakia when the need for prevention and solving a crisis situation arises. Within the cross-border cooperation in crisis management, Poland and Slovakia are involved in various programmes and projects. The agreement between the Government of Poland and the Government of the Slovak Republic on cooperation and mutual assistance in emergency, natural disasters and other serious accidents was signed. It is a part of crisis management system between the countries.

Conclusions

Poland and Slovakia have a relatively comprehensive crisis management system. Crisis management authorities at all government levels are responsible for preparedness and response to crisis events. More effective response is directly proportional to the qualitative and quantitative staff resources needed to deal with crisis events. An effective response and active cross-border cooperation is one way to prevent loss of human life and property damage. In particular, it is necessary to emphasise the creation of the effective environment for the cooperation of all those involved in the process of solving crisis events.

Cross-border cooperation needs to be further strengthened. Local government and self-government level authorities in the border territory must be aware of the risks of emergencies in the neighbouring territorial units, whose negative effects may threaten their own population and territory. In the future, crisis situations should be regarded as a way to unite crisis management systems and their different legislations in individual states into one legal framework, for example European legal framework for crisis management or civil protection.

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Conflict of interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

Author contributions

The author contributed to the interpretation of results and writing of the paper. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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Biographical note

Daniel Brezina – works as an internal doctoral (PhD) student at the Department of Crisis Management at the University of Žilina. His doctoral thesis is focused on the issue of crisis

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Porównanie systemów zarządzania kryzysowego w Polsce i na Słowacji

STRESZCZENIE

Klęski żywiołowe zajmują specyficzną pozycję pośród zagrożeń dla życia i zdrowia obywateli, środowiska oraz mienia komunalnego w poszczególnych regionach. Ich negatywne skutki mogą wpływać na znaczną liczbę ludzi i zakłócać funkcjonowanie dużych obszarów. Klęski żywiołowe najczęściej wywierają szkodliwy wpływ na obywateli, mienie oraz na przyrodę. Bardzo poważne klęski żywiołowe mogą zagrozić funkcjonowaniu i stabilności systemów państwowych lub je utrudniać. Problem ten dotyczy między innymi Polski i Słowacji.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

system zarządzania kryzysowego, kryzysy, sytuacje kryzysowe, państwo, władze

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