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## READINESS FOR PROTECT THE POPULATION DURING DISASTERS. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIL PROTECTION - HYSTORIAL OVERVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

The disasters, accompanying the mankind in its centuries-old history, cause huge damages and measureless suffering. The human preparedness to react in disastrous situations is essential to minimize the risk to life and health. Good preparation in case of a disaster, reducing its negative affects and guaranteeing an effective reaction for protecting and helping the affected people are important components of sustainable development and management of society.

**Key words:** disaster, catastrophe, protecting the population, civil protection.

### INTRODUCTION

In mankind’s centuries-old history natural and anthropogenic disasters are common phenomena. They cause the appearance of huge number died people and sufferers, massive material and non-material damages, ecological changes, etc. Due to the occurrence of different types, sizes and weight disasters a severe general and medical situation is created in the damaged area. The suddenness of the occurrence, as well as the sharp discrepancy between the required and available forces and means to eradicate the resulting consequences require prior preparation and planning activities for the protection of the population and providing medical care in the heart of the defeat.

### PURPOSE AND TASKS

The aim of the study is to highlight the significant role of readiness to protect the population, to prevent and minimize the consequences of the disaster.

We set ourselves the following tasks:

1. Examine the key elements of the organization of population’s protection.
2. To track the development of civil protection in Bulgaria since its inception as a state structure for coordination and implementation of the main activities on protecting the population in case of a disaster.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive analysis of scientific publications concerning the nature, goals, objectives, principles and remedies available to the population in emergency situations. Study of historical documents about the establishment and development of civil protection in Bulgaria.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Protection of the population is part of the national security of the Republic of Bulgaria and it is a system of nation-wide and local humanitarian activities with social, organizational, economic and scientific-technical nature undertaken in peacetime and wartime to protect the population and the national economy in the event of a disaster situation. (1, 4)

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Main objectives of protection are to prevent or reduce losses and adverse effects of the impact of the disaster striking factors, conducting rescue and emergency operations and provide conditions for the survival of the population. (2)

The tasks of protection of the population are divided into three main groups depending on the time - preventive activities and preparation for action during disasters, tasks in the declaration of emergency situations and tasks in organization and management of emergency rescue operations. The whole range of activities is subordinate to a basic task: saving the lives of people that have come to the area of the disaster. (3, 5, 7)

Development of a modern system for the protection of the population in emergency situations is based on established principles. The first of these states that the tasks, organization and protection structures are formed on the basis of established scientific-meaningful concept for civil protection and projected situation in case of a disaster. Development of a modern system for the protection of the population in emergency situations is based on established principles. According to the second- the defense of the population is organized territorially-productive principle and based on areas. The third basic principle is reasonable sufficiency, autonomy and mobility of forces and means of action, resourcing and others. And last but not least, compliance with the norms and principles of international humanitarian law. (4, 7)

The main ways of protecting the population are based on these principles: public education how to behave during disasters; informing the population about the existing situation, providing individual and collective protection, organization and implementation of the evacuation of the population from the disaster area. (2, 3, 4)

The Civil Protection is a state office for protection of the civilian population, material and cultural values of Bulgaria during disasters, accidents, terroristic attacks and military attacks against the country that existed under different names during the period July 18<sup>th</sup>, 1936- January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

On 18 July 1936 the Bulgarian Tsar Boris III issued Decree №310, which approves the decree for anti-aircraft and chemical protection of the population in the Kingdom of Bulgaria. In 1942 was formed Management "Anti-aircraft and

chemical defense". Until 1946 the main tasks and activities are aimed at protecting the population of conventional and chemical weapons. (1, 6)

During the period 1946 – 1989 the tasks and organization of Civil defense are aimed primarily at preparing for the protection of the population against weapons for mass destruction in case of an armed conflict. By the Decree № 252 of the 1962 the headquarters of the local anti-aircraft defense was renamed Civil Defense. (1, 5)

After the change of the political system in Bulgaria on 10.11.1989 started an uninterrupted reforming and restructuring of Civil defense. A thorough reassessment of the goals, objectives, methods and means of protecting the population was being performed. Efforts are directed mainly to peacetime disasters and preventative action. In 1998 was established the "Regulations on the organization activities of prevention and liquidation of consequences of disasters, accidents and catastrophes." (8)

In 2001, "Civil Protection" office was transformed into the State Agency "Civil Protection", subordinated to the Council of Ministers. (9) "Civil Protection" has initiated the establishment of the Council for Civil-Military Emergency Planning for Southeast Europe. On 29 November 2002 in Brussels was signed "Memorandum of understanding between the European Community and the Republic of Bulgaria", which regulates the participation of Bulgaria in the "Community Mechanism to facilitate reinforced cooperation the field of civil protection." In 2006 was accepted "Regulation of the Ministry of state policy for disasters and accidents". To the Ministry was formed the National directorate General office "Civil Protection" with 28 regional directorates. (10) On 6 December 2006 the National Assembly passed the Law for protection during disasters. (11) In 2009 was closed the Emergency situation Ministry, and in 2011, the General directorate "Civil Protection" was closed. According to the latest amendments to the Law on the Ministry of Internal Affairs General directorate " Fire safety and Rescue " was renamed to the General directorate " Fire Safety and Protection of Population " by taking over the functions of the closed General directorate " Civil Protection". (12)

**CONCLUSION**

The willingness of the population to respond to emergency situations is essential to minimize the risk to life and health. Good preparation in cases of disasters, mitigating their adverse effects and ensuring an effective response to protect and assist affected people are important elements of sustainable development and management of the society.

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