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Crisis management as an organized action of responsible departments

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ABSTRACT

The issues related to crisis management can be considered taking a multidimensional perspective. It is a set of various actions, which play the fundamental role in eliminating threats and counteracting them when they result in crisis situations. Crisis management can also be treated as a system designed to ensure the consistent and transparent functioning of numerous elements and institutions, often forming complex systems and subsystems that interact between each other to achieve the basic objective of protecting the population. Crisis management is understood as a response to a crisis situation characterized by strictly defined parameters, which provide the basis for devising relevant activities. This approach is adopted in the response phase of crisis management.

KEYWORDS

crisis management, civil planning, ad hoc planning, crisis



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Introduction

The internal dimension of security affects many areas of the State's operation, which, among other things, are related to civil protection, the environment and rescue. Emerging threats require a strong response from all state agencies, departments and other organizations, aimed at ensuring the safety of the population and the environment and enabling the state administration to function efficiently in the event of a crisis of varying size and characteristics. In accordance with the provisions of the National Security Strategy, one of the challenges for the State is to find new solutions for a more efficient implementation of tasks related to crisis management and civil protection, including civil defense [Strategia bezpieczeństwa... 2007, point 111].

This is reflected in the construction of the crisis management system, which requires the cooperation of public administration at all levels and entities from outside the area. The functioning of the system must have a strong legal basis. Such basis is provided, among others, by the Act on Crisis Management, which is an essential step towards

the national system solutions in the area of crisis management [*Strategia bezpieczeństwa... 2007*, point 111].

Crisis management projects are a response to a number of risks natural to the military, and, according to many experts, they also represent [Cf. Gryz and Kitler 2007, p. 33]:

- an integral part of the national security system,
- actions aimed to reduce the likelihood of crisis situations and, in case of their occurrence, to take control and restore and maintain the normal state,
- intentional actions that are often capable of mitigating or eliminating a risk.

Any threats that arise in the social space, whether caused by natural phenomena or by technical factors, start to affect, to an increasing extent, the bodies, services and inspection and other organizations, even the third sector. The magnitude of these situations and the number of entities operating in the field of crisis management necessitate their organized action, which, on the one hand, will prevent unfavorable phenomena and, on the other hand, will respond to them, ensuring the safety of the civilian population as much as possible.

The paper presents the essence of ontological terms related to crisis management and the crisis management system, including its subsystems and constituent elements. However, to ensure the smooth functioning of the whole it is also necessary to take account of selected procedures and crisis management processes, with respect to their theoretical and practical aspects, which is also contained in this article.

1. Crisis management and crisis management system

Crisis management is a particular type of management that is characterized by certain indicators. Considering the problems of crisis management it seems appropriate to reflect on the meaning of the term “management” and highlight the qualities that make it reasonable to use the term “crisis management”. In the literature there are many definitions of management. It is not the intention of the author to quote them all, or to create any new ones. The presentation of the concepts of organization and management is, however, necessary to extract those characteristics that describe crisis management. So what is management? Management requires a multifaceted approach. Management can be defined as a system of measures regulating the manner and functioning of a particular organization in accordance with established goals [Czopek et al. 1999]. According to other authors, management is the act of allocation of resources [Pszczolowski 1978, p. 288] and the accurate knowledge of what is expected of people and the assurance that it is done in the best and cheapest way [Griffin 2001, p. 38]. Management also means a set of operations (including planning and decision-making, organizing, leadership, i.e. management of people and controlling) directed to the organization’s resources (human, financial, material, and information) and performed with the intention of achieving the objectives of the organization in a way that is efficient and effective [Griffin 2001, p. 38]. Management should be considered in its functional aspect, that is the way the organization strives to achieve the stated objectives by directing work teams and all human resources. Each organization operates in the

specific setting or surroundings. The organization is affected by its close (sectoral) surroundings and, concurrently, it exerts some influence on its immediate environment. The interaction between the two represents one of the elements that shape them both¹. On its more distant environment the organization has no effect. The third plane of the organization is its internal structure, taking into account that the organization creates a lot of factors, such as the already mentioned environment and competition, culture, geography, law, technology, and economic and political conditions. Each organization through the use of appropriate cycles, procedures, projects and its own resources is trying to create and transform its own elements and activities so as to achieve the assumed common goal. This is referred to as the management process, which involves planning and organizing activities, to motivate members of the organization to systematically implement the plan and achieve its objectives, and control understood as a comparison of the actual state at a certain stage of the operation to the target state and the implementation of appropriate adjustments. These projects are the domain of crisis management, as shown further below. So what is crisis management and what are its characteristics? The answer to this question justifies taking a closer look at the phenomenon of a crisis, which causes the emergence of new circumstances and disruption in the smooth functioning of the system and makes it necessary to take countermeasures. Such countermeasures may include a procedure or a project used by the organization management (in this case identified with the system) to tackle the crisis and mitigate its effects, which is referred to as emergency response [Sienkiewicz and Gorny 2001, p. 28] or it may be a management process in the organization (the system), which aims to prevent crisis situations and, in the case of their occurrence, it identifies the origins of the development of dangerous phenomena that threaten the functioning of the entire organization. Such action is called crisis management [Wroblewski 1996, p. 39]. It follows that a crisis cannot be identified with the crisis. A crisis, as defined in the Glossary of Terms of the National Security, is a situation which is the consequence of a threat, leading ultimately to the rupture or significant weakening of social ties, with a simultaneous serious disruption to the functioning of public institutions [Cf. Balcerowicz 2002, p. 61]. Crises always occur without any prior symptoms indicating the imbalance of the system. Under the influence of risks, a crisis situation may unfold and degenerate into a crisis. Thus, a crisis is a condition in which the increasing internal or external tension (between systems) destabilizes the functioning of the system and makes it necessary to adopt certain remedial actions, which may lead to the resolution of such crisis, and in the case of unsuccessful operations, may degenerate into a crisis.

Based on the analysis of the concept of a crisis and its comparison with the concept of management it is relatively easy to determine the characteristics of crisis management. Such comparison shows that crisis management in a crisis situation is characterized by:

- limited time for action (especially as a response to the crisis situation),

¹ A company that produces a product and resells it can shape the price, which is part of the strategy to compete with competitors and affects consumers.

- uncertainty in decision-making – it is difficult to predict the consequences of actions,
- action taken in an emergency,
- lack or excess of conflicting information (i.e. information chaos),
- shortened decision-making process.

Crisis management should not, however, be only associated with activities undertaken in the phase of the crisis. Therefore, it appears advisable to state that crisis management should be described as a process comprising four, already mentioned, major functions, performed cyclically in the form of civil planning, which does not differ in its nature from the classical approach to management. The process is organized as an action taken at a specified time (planning documents should be updated every two years), entailing the continuous analysis of the organization's environment (state, province, county, municipality), continuous investment in the development of notification systems and protection minimizing the effects of hazards, and motivation of people to efficient operation, accompanied by continuous monitoring. All these activities are carried out without any time pressure or lack of information. On the contrary, a two-year period provides enough time to make an accurate analysis and implement appropriate preventive measures. Furthermore, this process is implemented on a continuous basis, which makes crisis management, regarded as overall administrative activities and the prevention, planning, response and reconstruction process, extremely stable and predictable.

The prerequisite for the above is the appropriate use of risk assessment techniques and implementation of rational prevention and response projects.

In accordance with the requirements of the Act on Crisis Management the tasks incorporated in the civil planning include the following [*Act on Crisis...* 2007]:

- drawing up crisis management plans,
- preparing structures to be launched in crisis situations,
- preparing and maintaining the resources necessary to perform the tasks included in the plan for crisis management,
- maintaining databases necessary in the process of crisis management,
- preparing solutions in case of the destruction of critical infrastructure or disruption to its functioning,
- ensuring consistency between crisis management plans and other pertinent plans drawn up by the competent public authorities.

Since the above tasks have to be accomplished in a timely manner, the responsible authorities, capable of making decisions within their respective areas of responsibility, regarding the ongoing projects, resources and means (e.g. services, guards, organizational units, combined administration elements or auxiliaries), may implement the decisions of the relevant bodies. Crisis management is a dynamic action only in its response phase, where the situation may become difficult to predict. The essential feature of crisis management, distinguishing it from other types of management carried out in business, economy and companies, is the purpose of the action. The main objec-

tive of efficient management in these organizations is the development featured by making profit and gaining competitive advantage. The basic objective of crisis management is to ensure the security of the population and, consequently, to create for any person in a specific area the conditions to develop and to overcome threats. Management, as a system, consists in using all resources of the organization to focus on the four main subsystems: human resources, technologies, organizational structures and goals. According to some experts in management, it is important to take account of the decisions taken at the ministerial level [Penc 1998, p. 25], which coordinate and synchronize all actions, giving them a defined and organized character.

The identification system includes all the components and subsystems that work together or function according to the separate operating directions and aim to achieve the basic goal, which is to minimize the risks, respond to them and eliminate their consequences as soon as possible. According to E. Nowak, in the crisis management system the following form its distinguishable components: the governing bodies, the linking of the information necessary to implement the management process, and methods and actions governing how the organization functions in accordance with the set objectives. The system changes dynamically over time and the governing bodies are the driving force for such changes, being related to all elements of the system [Nowak 2007, p. 46]. In accordance with the above definition a subsystem of management bodies and other elements including the method(s) for action can be distinguished in the crisis management system. The crisis management system in Poland is the function of a superior governing body, whose role is mainly to make decisions, allocate tasks to individual contractors and coordinate actions at the time of an emergency. The management body determines the scope of projects and assigns responsibility for actions in the different phases of crisis management, which boils down to the prevention of crisis formation, preparations to take effective action, effective response and return to the normal state. The subsystem fulfills its task by management, which is the decision-making process consisting of acquiring, storing, processing and distributing the information. Therefore, the governing body is a system of three orderly items that perform the following roles [Majchrzak 2011, p. 59]:

- decision-making bodies – understood as properly organized institutions acting on behalf of and for the account of the state, capable of taking formal actions (finalizing and endorsing urgent decisions may take the form of: laws, regulations, rulings, court orders, resolutions, ordinances, administrative decisions or orders) and using specific measures, including the coercive ones, to the extent permitted by law [Kitler 2011, p. 192],
- advisory bodies – teams whose function is to express opinions and give advice, define specific actions in a crisis situation, recommend proposed solutions and ensure communication between the decision-makers and planning and coordination units,
- planning and coordinating units – their function is to ensure that activities are undertaken, including the civil planning, and to constantly analyze and evaluate the situation and coordinate the daily functioning of the system.

Therefore, it can be assumed that the governing bodies represent a management subsystem in the crisis management system, whose legal basis is provided by the Act on Crisis Management. They operate at the appropriate level, assigned according to the administrative division (commune, district, province, central level), organizing appropriate actions within their territory or, in the case of ministries, in the various government departments. This subsystem coordinates the actuators, also assigned to the appropriate level of the government or local government, which may also operate autonomously, in the case where the means at their disposal are sufficient in a particular crisis situation, which does not require the use of additional forces and resources or any extraordinary coordination. All actuators also have their own authorities to report to, which, among other things, are responsible for keeping them ready for action at any time. These elements are: the fire brigade forming a national system for fire-fighting and rescue, the state system of emergency medical services, services maintaining the public order (police, municipal police), inspections functioning within the framework of central administration and field agencies, central offices, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, economic entities, organizational units, counties and municipalities (e.g. municipal police, social welfare centers, schools, utilities, etc.) as well as non-governmental organizations.

2. The process of crisis management

The process of crisis management is understood as a set of activities (including planning and decision-making, organizing, leadership, i.e. managing people and controlling), directed to the available resources (human, financial, material and information), and performed with the intention of achieving the objectives in an efficient and effective manner. Considering the problems of the process of remedying the crisis, it is worth pointing to the importance of the concepts of planning, organizing, motivating and controlling. Planning is a process (activity, action) consisting in laying, developing, producing and preparing plans and projects, predicting future actions, and deciding on specific actions oriented to achieve objectives in the future. While analyzing the so presented concept of planning it should be noted that it is [Sobolewski 2011, p. 32]:

- both the thought process – related to the planning of future activities,
- and the physical process consisting in drawing up a plan.

Planning is decidedly the basic function of the process. Planning also subordinates and rationalizes the decision-making process and coordinates various aspects of the organization. It is an instrument to anticipate phenomena and to build the capacity to respond to any challenges, opportunities and threats. It can communicate visions of the organization development and, properly targeted, it enables the management and respective individuals to achieve their goals through its implementation [Cf. Golebiowski 2001, p. 52].

Another action is to organize. According to Kotarbiński, the term “organization” means the action of organizing, the system of mutual dependences achieved as a result of such action or an object organized in a certain way. (...) The organization concerns

a given set of people, with their clusters formed by the organizing team [Kotarbinski 1969, p. 107]. It can therefore be assumed that the organization is a system of many mutually penetrating, simultaneous relationships that bring people under the leadership of their managers who aim to achieve common objectives [Stoner et al. 2001, p. 306]. In order to sort these relations, already in the planning phase of the organization, adequately to the required capacity to carry out certain tasks, an organizational structure is created that provides a reference framework in the allocation and coordination of activities of the organization members. Therefore, to make the organization function as intended in its immediate and distant environments it is necessary to establish connections between individual elements and overall relations between different (parts of) subsystems forming the organizational structure [Kiezun 1997, p. 275]. Within this structure it is possible to distribute tasks to be completed, which is the essence of the organization. Organization is listed as the second, after planning, management function. In the literature it is described as “a logical grouping of activities and resources” [Griffin 1998, p. 43] or “Deciding on the best grouping of activities and resources of the organization” [Kiezun 1997, p. 329]. It follows that the elements of the organization, including all managers responsible for their organizational units, to be able to organize their activities, need to know what, where, when and in what order they should implement to achieve the intended goal of the organization. On this basis, the management process can be realized, starting from the analysis of the task and including the establishment of time limits, boundary decision points (milestones), and intermediate objectives (partial).

The third basic function of management is to motivate, which is identified with stimulating action. This function can be understood as “the set of forces that make people behave in a certain way” [Kiezun 1997, p. 458] or specifying “The team processes used in order to make the members of the organization work together in the interest of the organization” [Griffin 1998, p. 43]. It should be noted that the management science approach to motivation has evolved from the traditional look taking into account the relationships between human resources. It also has to be emphasized that motivation is primarily a task for the management – “To transform decisions into action and sustain this action, managers must encourage and support people who implement the plans and work within the structure” [Stoner et al. 2001, p. 536]. The final function of management is to control or “Observe the progress the organization makes in achieving its objectives” [Griffin 1998] or “Adjust the activities of the organization in such a way as to facilitate the achievement of its objectives” [Stoner et al. 2001, p. 585]. It is also said that “Control enables managers to track the effectiveness of planning [...] and to take action if correction is needed [Stoner et al. 2001, p. 536]. The connection between planning and control is very clear, because planning and control are interdependent processes” [Wrzosek et al. 2009, pp. 10-11]. The action plan is a reference point or a kind of beacon placed on the time axis and whenever unforeseeable changes in the environment or in the organization itself occur, the necessary adjustments have to be made to ensure the achievement of the intended objective. “No manager can control the actions that have not been scheduled, because the core concept of

control involves correcting deviations from the plan” [Chrostowski and Szczepankowski 1996, p. 216].

3. Phases of crisis management

Crisis management can also be described as certain parts of various sequences of actions, called phases, in which individual tasks are carried out, allowing to achieve the common goal of security. These phases include prevention, preparation, response to crisis and reconstruction. In this perspective, crisis management projects provide an opportunity for effective action in practice. Through the realization of individual tasks in a specific order all authorities and entities involved in the process of crisis management are enabled to implement respective steps in a systematic, accurate and planned manner, aiming to ensure the safety of the population.

The phase of prevention is characterized by a number of tasks, which basically come down to analysis and cataloging of threats, analysis and development of legislation, generation of financial resources and control of the enterprise with respect to the process of crisis management. Specific tasks may include, among others:

- analysis and categorization of all potential hazards in the area of interest for a particular body,
- cataloging and assessment of technical infrastructure, the natural environment and social groups and communities particularly vulnerable to the effects of natural disasters or events similar to natural disasters,
- analysis and evaluation of the functioning of legal acts as well as the introduction of new solutions ensuring the proper performance and efficiency under conditions of crisis,
- monitoring and active participation in the planning process, development of a plan and, in general, reducing the risk of threats in the technical areas, areas and zones that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of natural disasters or events similar to natural disasters,
- planning and funding sources and the mode of funds acquisition – for the financing of projects implemented in all phases of crisis management,
- development of the concept of raising extra-budgetary funds for the execution of tasks in the field of public safety, carried out by public authorities, institutions and emergency services,
- carrying out inspections and exercising supervision over the implementation of tasks of a preventive nature.

The essence of the next phase of crisis management, i.e. preparation, includes drawing up a relevant action plan, organizing and carrying out the constant monitoring of risks by creating appropriate institutions, bodies and procedures. An important part of the preparation phase is the training of the above-mentioned bodies, services and forces. Specific tasks include, for example:

- development and updating of the Emergency Management Plan and all its derivative documents,

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- ongoing monitoring of the state of the organization and equipment of the crisis management center and notification system, in terms of achieving and maintaining the required standards,
 - ongoing monitoring of the state organization and the opportunities to develop Crisis Management Teams and an emergency mobile control center,
 - development, verification and updating of organizational, legal and technical solutions ensuring communication between all component parts of the crisis management system,
 - monitoring of risks and their consequences, and maintaining the readiness of the warning and alarm system,
 - development, adoption and implementation of the procedures for requesting assistance and determination of the relevant responding administration levels,
 - development, updating and creation, according to the current needs, of contact data databases, provision of hardware, medical materials, etc., and determination of the size of various categories of human resources, funds and materials necessary to conduct rescue operations and to satisfy the security needs of the population,
 - planning, coordination and participation in the process of training of emergency response structures and rescue forces,
 - preparation of the conditions and organizational and legal solutions for the coordination of humanitarian assistance provided to the affected population,
 - definition of the principles and creation of the information policy regarding the projects carried out in crisis situations,
 - preparation of a package of legal acts necessary to ensure the conditions of security and the proper control of activities carried out in order to prevent the effects of a natural disaster or an event similar to a natural disaster or to mitigate and remedy such effects (orders, regulations, rules),
 - analysis of the course of rescue and reconstruction operations conducted in the past and lessons learned to ensure the efficient and effective carrying out of activities in the future,
 - organization and participation in the decision-making games and exercises to prepare the crisis management structures for the coordinated and effective execution of their activities,
 - identification of the needs and securing materials and technical and financial resources necessary to carry out the tasks.

The response phase attracts most media and public attention. During this phase all previously scheduled tasks and procedures are carried out as well as additional projects undertaken due to specific unplanned situations. At this point ad hoc planning procedures are implemented, addressing a concrete situation at a specific place and time. During this phase the following tasks are performed:

- the process of coordinating rescue operations and efforts to restore order takes place, and protection activities are carried out by the organizational units involved in crisis response,

- the Crisis Management Team works round the clock in its full composition,
- all systems and rescue structures and procedures are started up to protect the ability of the responsible authorities to address the circumstances caused by a natural disaster or an event similar to a natural disaster,
- the constant exchange of information is secured, regarding the risks, undertaken activities and interactions with the services (teams) of other public administration bodies, ministries, and non-governmental and social organizations,
- hazards and their effects are subject to monitoring and the further development of the situation is being predicted,
- proposals for optimal decisions and solutions are developed for the use of the relevant forces to ensure the proper and effective utilization of the means of rescue and the correct course of action,
- corrective actions are implemented with regard to the evacuation process and the scope of social and humanitarian assistance, and conditions are created for establishing short-term centers ensuring the survival of victims, with special attention paid to medical and psychological care,
- information points for the population are established,
- the procedures related to the allocation of forces and resources to rescue operations are coordinated at the central level, including the Minister of National Defense and equivalent foreign bodies,
- the legislative package is enacted to secure the conditions for the competent authorities to manage properly the activities carried out to prevent the effects of natural disasters and to mitigate and remedy such effects,
- reports and information on the status of individual tasks are prepared,
- a report on undertaken activities is drawn up.

Reconstruction is the last phase of crisis management. It is characterized by being spread over a long period during which projects are implemented and it entails the largest financial expenditure. Often, this phase is naturally combined with the prevention phase, when the possibility of restoring the technical infrastructure is associated with large financial expenditure, which prevents its rapid rebuilding, and in the case when the funds are derived from long-term assistance programs, including foreign programs. As shown by examples in recent years, in the event of damage to infrastructure and the environment, the reconstruction efforts should seek to improve the functionality of equipment, systems and utility infrastructure, and enhance the aesthetics of the environment, which, in turn, may contribute to the development of the region. If such approach is adopted, a crisis situation caused by a particular threat becomes an opportunity for a given region or city, as it results in added value, raising the level of human security. The tasks and activities in this phase of crisis management come down to estimating losses, distributing aid and special purpose grants, restoring the ability to carry out actions by all actors responsible for security, reconstructing infrastructure and the environment, and drawing conclusions for the future in case another crisis situation occurs. The detailed distribution of tasks and activities is as follows:

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- assessing damage and submitting opinions and requests to the competent authorities and institutions to provide financial and material support to remedy losses and damage caused by a crisis situation,
 - preventing the occurrence of secondary hazards,
 - ensuring adequate living conditions for the affected population,
 - distributing the funds from the humanitarian aid to the affected population,
 - monitoring the efficiency of the health care system in the treatment and rehabilitation of the injured,
 - monitoring the correct and effective functioning of the insurance institutions and the process of payment of compensation to institutions and individuals,
 - undertaking projects aimed at restoring the forces, means and resources of emergency services to the level guaranteeing the achievement of their full readiness and ability to act,
 - coordinating and monitoring the projects related to restoring the efficiency of technical infrastructure, buildings, transportation, communications, supply systems, industrial production and services, education, and culture and art,
 - coordinating and monitoring the projects related to restoring the ecological balance and the original condition of the environment,
 - preparing assessments, opinions and analyses, and developing reporting documents necessary to implement conclusions and recommendations aimed at reducing the future vulnerability to adverse effects of a crisis,
 - drawing up draft legislation and proposals for organizational changes designed to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of administration, emergency services and institutions under extraordinary threats,
 - modifying and updating emergency management plans, risk assessments and derivative documents,
 - preparing proposals and applying for assistance to the Government.

Based on the above, the following question can be asked – what are the differences between the process of crisis management and crisis management phases? Trying to answer this question presents a problem. It is clear that the process of crisis management makes it possible to implement tasks related to both theory and practice, and included in the concept of civil emergency planning. In the process of crisis management a holistic approach is adopted and every two years there is a possibility of testing certain solutions. As a result of exercising control over the planned and completed activities and the developed and implemented systems all necessary changes can be made. This process is carried out without any pressure of time and without the need for a quick assessment of the factors affecting the particular situation. It can be stated that this results from the routine everyday activities involving or affecting all relevant cells and bodies. The phases of crisis management represent the practical approach to the completion of specific tasks by the authorities and bodies. These are the grouped tasks to be performed by all authorities and institutions. The sequential, or in some cases simultaneous, fulfilment of these tasks makes it possible to achieve the practical,

efficient and subject-specific functioning of all bodies and manpower in the area of crisis management. Some of these activities are carried out on an ongoing basis and are often associated with services provided by registered businesses, and the actions undertaken by the fire brigade or other bodies are not restricted to the process of crisis management only, but they form the capabilities, within the respective areas of administrative responsibility, ensuring the safety of the population under normal conditions.

On this basis, it can be concluded that the process of crisis management is a set of projects with the scope narrower than that of the measures referred to in the phases of crisis management. The process focuses mainly on the preparatory phase, which includes the planning, organization and control of major projects, which are carried out at the time when there is no emergency situation. In other words, in the process of crisis management the tasks are fulfilled by all authorities involved in the crisis management system [Majchrzak 2011], which draw up plans of action, develop lists, documents and procedures, implement individual solutions to improve the whole system and monitor the compliance of all records of normative and quality tasks, in accordance with their respective competences. In the tasks completed during the crisis management phases all the above are put to use and the main point of reference is the situation before, during and after an emergency or crisis.

4. Extemporary planning

Crisis management can be described as extemporary planning or team operations in the event of the occurrence of a specific crisis in the already known location. Then, the process may take the form of positioning, planning, setting tasks and, as in the case of crisis management process, exerting control. In this case, however, control has a slightly different role and refers only to the immediate tasks of the services of guards and the response phase. During the response phase planning is done extemporarily, where, in addition to the factors directly affecting the development of the crisis, the earlier procedures developed during the formation of a crisis management plan in the process of crisis management, as part of the civil planning, are taken into account. The extemporary planning is, therefore, a process by which a public administration authority, taking into account all the circumstances and using its advisory body, plans, organizes, coordinates and directs the activities of its subordinate entities, thus performing its responsibilities and fulfilling its obligation to ensure the safety of the population living in the area.

The planning process is implemented in an ad hoc mode, continuously and following a particular sequence (phase), until the crisis has been averted. It is a response to the ever changing conditions that shape the situation. The extemporary planning consists of four main phases: positioning, planning, setting tasks and exerting control. During the positioning phase all the steps are carried out to obtain as much information as possible on the status of forces and held funds and the source and type of emergency. The information is collected, stored, sorted, evaluated and compared to the information obtained earlier. The main objective of this phase of the planning process is to

create a temporary picture of the real situation, which provides the basis for the further process of extemporary planning. An important feature of this phase is its simultaneity, which means that every piece of information is passed on to all cells of the advisory team at the same time. Any information can come from a variety of sources. It is understood that the information is reliable if it is derived from at least two independent sources. The available information can be divided into the materials in the possession of the team and the acquired data. The first group of information includes all kinds of hazard analyses, safety nets, hazard maps, lists, descriptions, etc. collected at the stage of developing a crisis management plan and in the preparation phase. It also contains the information items obtained from reports and communications coming from individuals, institutions and other parties. Generally, it can be said that the information coming from neighbors, witnesses or the media can influence the supervisor or the subordinates within the existing crisis management system. The acquired information relies on own monitoring (technical or human), e.g. a reconnaissance carried out at the site of the event and the exchange of information with different actors in the area of crisis development.

The next phase consists in planning, which in this case is based on a careful analysis and assessment of the situation and any factors affecting its development and identification of strengths and weaknesses of such factors. In this phase proposed solutions, called variants, are submitted to the body which, in accordance with its competence, takes a decision on the course of action. At this stage the decision-making body announces its intention to act and on this basis a plan of action is formed. The planning phase consists of four steps: evaluating the situation, taking a decision and clarifying the intent, drawing up an action plan (adequate to the situation and making use of the content of the plan for crisis management) and preparing regulations and administrative decisions. The first stage, the assessment of the situation, is very important as it provides the basis for identifying the scope of the crisis, understanding the tasks to be accomplished and creating the conditions for the decision-making authority to take the decision. The actions taking place in this step overlap each other and the boundaries between them are liquid, however, it can be divided into the following: task analysis, evaluation of the factors affecting the performance of task variants, and consideration of variants (if possible or necessary).

One important step in the process is the analysis of the job. On this basis it is possible to determine what to do and in what order to accomplish the tasks arising from the crisis situation. In order to solve this problem, a decision-making body should answer a number of specific questions:

- What is the role of the decision-maker's crisis management actors and administrative function in the settlement of the crisis?
- What activities must be carried out with the available forces and measures to control the crisis and minimize its impact?
- What are the restrictions on the freedom of action (force measures, time and area), if any?
- Has the situation changed since the occurrence of the threat?

This activity should be summarized by briefing the crisis staff (advisory body), called information clearance. During the briefing all requests and responses to the issues should be presented. The body responsible for task analysis should also specify its own task, being a keynote. To accomplish this main task it is necessary to complete all partial (detailed) tasks, resulting directly from the situation or indirectly from the initial analysis. For example, to use a rescue unit for a fire-fighting action in region X, it is necessary to send the signal and specify the task. The unit must be prepared (according to the fixed procedures) and moved, and it has to organize its activities on site and start the operation. This example just attempts to illustrate the scale of problems and present the partial tasks arising out of the situation. The reasoning behind the task analysis can affect every aspect of emergency response, resources and entities performing tasks. During the task analysis the decision-making body determines its keynote, which is the result of the said analysis. It is a short unambiguous definition of what subordinate forces must do to complete the task in the given situation. It is a kind of idea of how to conduct activities, which generally determines the direction of planning actions of the advisory team, without specifying the mode of action. At this point, the process of temporary planning should also provide the criteria to compare action variants and their consequences. The criteria are assigned numerical values or percentages. This may be the most important aspect in defining the situation. The criteria are determined on the basis of the task analysis or records of the crisis management plan and they will be used for a step-by-step comparison of variants of action, e.g. time, use of force, flexibility, simplicity of management actions, maintaining the order, etc.

Next, the advisory body prepares the assessment of the factors affecting the performance of the task, on the basis of which variants to resolve the situation are developed and the tasks are completed in accordance with the decision taken by the relevant body. To facilitate the evaluation all factors can be divided into the following categories: environmental features, such as terrain (land cover, conditions for the movement of forces and means, the possibility of observing developments, the main field facilities and infrastructure elements affecting the situation, the key elements for the task), weather conditions in the foreseeable period, time of the day, time of the year, identified hazards and characteristics of own forces and means. On this basis, taking into account the keynote, established criteria and records of the crisis management plan, the policy options are prepared. Their number is determined in the course of work managed by the advisory team. It is assumed that more than three variants should be developed. A very important prerequisite is that the variants must differ between each other, so that they offer different ways to perform a task and present their advantages and disadvantages, thus enabling the responsible authority to make a decision. The action variants should include such information as the purpose of action, the way to achieve its objective, along with the preparation for the next stages, the major efforts to be made, the distribution of forces and means, the initial determination of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solutions and how, as a result of management actions undertaken to prepare all the action variants, actuators should have the knowledge of what they have to do, where, when and for what purpose.

To determine the advantages and disadvantages of respective variants a simulation of tasks to be completed in a particular stage, using available forces and means, can be carried out. The aim of this exercise is to coordinate activities and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed solution. This activity, however, is time-consuming and, therefore, it is not always possible to carry it out, especially in the case where the crisis develops dynamically. A member of the crisis management team responsible for ad hoc planning and the authorities responsible for all the elements and institutions involved in the projects referred to in the action variants should take part in this phase of the project. Using an evacuation plan as an example, it can be illustrated how the action variants are considered, with the process being divided into various stages:

- **stage I** – organization, which lasted, for example, one hour, consists in reviewing the existing plans, issuing warnings to the public about a possible evacuation, organizing the groupings of the evacuated population, and preparing an evacuation camp,
- **stage II** – evacuation, lasting, for example, five hours, includes the determination of signals when to be ready for action and such activities as notifying of the evacuation, providing vehicles at a specific place and time, supervising and managing the evacuation, fixing the displacement markings, starting the evacuation, locating people at the temporary places to stay, and checking the number of people remaining at their homes,
- **stage III** – execution, lasting until the causes for evacuation have been eliminated and the most important effects of the crisis have been remedied, during which actions are taken to ensure living conditions in the temporary accommodation and to protect the belongings of the evacuated people at their homes,
- **stage IV** – return, lasting about one day, consists in ensuring the organized return of the evacuated people to the places of their residence. In this step the activities carried out in stage II are repeated in the reverse order, with the only difference that the time factor is not so significant.

In practice, when the execution of this operation is considered, the signals denoting the start of different stages and activities should be identified, for example, by the head of the crisis management unit, who, by asking those responsible for the execution of their projects, should verify what and in what order they and their functional elements have to do. This is an excellent way to coordinate and synchronize all projects, as well as to identify all possible problems and inconsistencies. The next step is to compare the action options. The purpose of the comparison is, based on the previously adopted criteria, to select the best option and to evaluate the proposed solutions to recommend a specific solution to the decision-making authority. During this activity any conclusions should be taken into account regarding the advantages and disadvantages determined as a result of the previous activity – considering the action variants. This operation can be carried out in three ways:

1. Advantages and disadvantages method, where, based on the experience of the crisis management team members, the most practical and least flawed

variant is identified. In this process, each member of the crisis management team or expert justifies their choice and the sum of these indications shows the recommended variant.

2. Voting method, used in the case of lack of time, where each member of the crisis management team is entitled to one vote without the need to justify it.
3. Criteria method, which is the most time consuming method. It is based on an assessment of each action option presented during the information criteria check. It makes use of the printed table with criteria to which different weights are assigned. The variant with the highest score becomes the recommended variant. In the second stage of the planning phase, i.e. making a decision, the authority responsible for safety takes a decision by choosing one of the action options and announces the choice made. The decision can be taken at the briefing. The advisory body presents all prepared materials, including the evaluation of factors, calculations, and comparison of the action variants until the recommendation has been made. The decision-making body may ask questions to dispel any doubts and clarify the solutions. At the briefing the responsible authority announces its intention, which should contain the central idea, purpose and final state (e.g. the goal of evacuation – to ensure the safety of all residents of the affected area; final state – after the evacuation, all residents return to their homes), explains how to perform tasks broken down into stages, determines the main focus of efforts, allocates people and resources and sets priorities for the use of support forces, and organizes the management activities.

After the decision has been taken, a plan of action is drawn up, which translates the intentions of the authority responsible for safety into a written and graphical format. It provides the basis for engaging the task forces and implementing measures, archiving decisions for the future evaluation of the projects and drawing conclusions in the next phase of crisis management – restoration. The above is supplemented by drawing up regulations and administrative decisions that trigger the action of individual entities and ensure their coordination and management. While all documents are being developed the next phase of the temporary planning process, i.e. setting of the tasks, takes place. Often, this phase is combined with the decision clearance, involving the entities responsible for carrying out the tasks. In the second part of the operations the decision-making body can verbally assign the tasks to the actuators in order to start operations as soon as possible. However, given the breadth of activities and the amount of forces and means involved in the emergency response action tasking, it may take place using such means of communication as the existing WLAN or any other system operated by the body engaged in crisis management. However, any official orders and recommendations must be recorded in the “daily activities” of both the sender and the recipient, which ensures the task credibility and confirms the circulation of information.

The exercise of control is the last phase of the temporary planning. During this phase the effects of the measures taken are checked, which is done by comparing the situa-

tion after the completion of a particular stage and verifying whether the results obtained are consistent with the assumed effects. In the event of discrepancies that have arisen, for example, as a result of the dynamics of change in a crisis situation, adjustments must be made to the adopted plan, which is then put into effect. At this point, the positioning phase takes place again, and the short-term planning continues until the situation has been stabilized and balance has been restored. In the whole process of planning on an ad hoc basis special emphasis is placed on the fact that the completion of tasks depends on whether time permits. The accuracy of planning and implementing activities in the temporary planning is directly proportional to the length of time in which the body responsible for security in a given area may decide. This phenomenon can be explained perfectly using the example of a flood wave, which will reach a specific district (municipality) within a dozen or few dozen hours. In such case prevention can be planned and organized thoroughly and safely and it does not have to necessarily involve the evacuation of the population, as other actions can be taken, for example, blowing up levees at a specific location. However, these tasks can be completed in the right way when it is known what, who, where, when and for what purpose. In extreme cases, the decision-making bodies have to decide immediately, without the comfort of temporary or extemporary planning activities. However, it is then very important to make the most accurate assessment of the situation, examine the existing opportunities and issue clear and precise instructions.

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Author contributions

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

Ethical statement

The research complies with all national and international ethical requirements.

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