

Challenges of Effective Civil Security System in Croatia in the Context of the EU Membership

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ABSTRACT

In the area of civil security, there is no unique European civil security system and it is primary responsibility of each EU member state itself to ensure proper protection and rescue of their own citizens. As result there are significant variations among the national civil security systems within the EU. Nevertheless, on the basis of solidarity principle the EU has developed various crisis management mechanisms aimed to assist and complement member states' actions in prevention, response and recovery from disaster and crisis. Croatia became the EU member on July 1, 2013, undertaking responsibilities of the EU member state. As regards, this paper gives a brief overview of rules, structures, policies and practices relevant for Croatian civil security system and deals with key strengths and weakness of the system in protecting citizens from natural and man-made disasters in order to be able to adequately contribute to civil security challenges within the wider EU framework. The results of this paper confirm the main hypothesis that Croatia has made a significant progress resulting from civil security reforms that have been introduced over the past years, but there are still many areas where additional efforts are needed for the better functioning of the country within the EU.

Key words: Civil security, crisis management, strengths, weaknesses, effectiveness, transparency, legitimacy, Croatia, European Union

Introduction

Background for the study

National civil security systems differ significantly from country to country in Europe. The countries have established different organisational structures according to specific legal/constitutional frameworks with the aim to protect their citizens from the civil security threats which are different across Europe and are transforming themselves with the climate change, environmental and industrial pollution, energy shortages, cyber-attacks, new forms of terrorism etc. The European Union (EU) itself has developed wide range of crisis management capacities and mechanisms for assisting the member states in civil security crisis management according the solidarity principle. However, the EU member states are responsible for protecting and rescue their own citizens.

The Republic of Croatia (hereinafter Croatia or RC) is highly exposed and vulnerable to natural hazards, including floods, earthquakes, forest fires, droughts and heath waves¹. The most frequent types of crisis in Croatia are floods, followed by wildfires and extreme tempera-

tures. According to the disaster statistics² the reported data related to human and economic losses in disasters occurred between 1980 and 2010 show that there were 18 significant events in Croatia, with total of 848 people killed (27 in average per year) and total of 5,386 persons affected (174 in average per year), with the total economic damage of 607.750 million US\$ (19.6 million US\$ per year). Croatia is facing serious seismic risks of earthquakes, while a particular danger to human lives still stems from leftover mines and explosive devices, after the Homeland war (1991–95).

The risk profile shows that the strongest potential losses for Croatian inhabitants are expected from floods (country ranks 101 out of 162), droughts (88/184), landslides (90/162) and earthquakes (69/153). However, in terms of population exposed to a certain hazard type, droughts are on the first place (298,949 citizens exposed) followed by earthquake (57,890). Droughts and extreme temperatures caused the highest economic losses².

Two specific types of crisis events seem to be exceptionally important in the development of crisis management system in Croatia – floods and fires. Croatia belongs to the group of European countries with high forest fire risk, having many rural and forest fires, particularly along the coast and on the islands.

The recently drafted Croatia's risk assessment shows that floods pose a threat for a 680 km² of the total Croatian territory, out of which close to 60% is located in Drava and Danube basin. Wild fires represent serious threat for the Dalmatian coast and the islands particularly in the period from May to October. The potential earthquake events pose a serious threat to the whole country, while the danger of the earthquake with the strength of VIII^o and IX^o exists in more than 1/3 of the country area, inhabited by almost 2/3 of country's population. Croatia does not belong to high risk area regarding man-made technological and industrial disasters but any major accident of this kind combined with natural disaster multiplies the negative consequences for civilians, goods and environment. In the period 2000–2007 there were 1040 cases of water pollutions recorded (regular and irregular – inland and sea waters). Illegal waste landfills are significant sources of pollution and Croatia still does not have complete evidence of dangerous waste spreading. Although Croatia does not have its own nuclear plants, there are two of them in its neighbouring countries (Krško in Slovenia and Paks in Hungary located at 10 to 74 km from national border respectively), representing a potential threat for civil security (pp. 10, 20, 43, 53, 79, 56)³. Another potential threat is related to the functioning of critical infrastructure (energy infrastructure, communications, transport, flood prevention system, etc.). Even though Croatia does not have a precise definition of the critical infrastructure and its protection at the present, the legislative framework for regulating this area is in procedure³.

Research questions

The aim of this paper is to identify and explore specific rules, structures, policies and practices relevant for functioning the civil security system in Croatia at national level and its' integration into the wider EU framework.

The main hypothesis of the research presented in this paper is the following: Croatia has to further develop its civil security system aiming to protect citizens from a variety of threats to their security and safety, in order to be able to contribute to civil security challenges within the EU. The further hypothesis are the following: (i) adequate coordination is a precondition for raising the operational efficiency of the national civil security system; (ii) appropriate legal and institutional framework and well trained forces contribute to efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy of disaster management; (iii) the EU membership contributes to better functioning of civil security system.

This paper elaborates some of the findings and empirical data of the national country study carried out in

Croatia⁴ in 2012 based on the approach which was implemented in the analyses of civil security systems in 22 selected European countries. It gives a brief overview of legal and institutional aspects of civil security system in Croatia and points at key strengths and weakness, leading to the conclusions for improving the system effectiveness and efficiency. It focuses on prevention and protection aspects regarding natural and man-made disasters such as floods, wild fires, droughts, dangerous waste management and threats that are specific for Croatia, such as remaining mines.

Material and Methods

The wider research leading to these results is part of the project which has received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme FP7/2007–2013 »ANVIL – Analyses of Civil Security Systems in Europe«. The duration of ANVIL project is from March 2012 to February 2014. Its objective is to explore and compare relevant cultural phenomena and legal determinations of civil security across Europe, taking into account the existing significant differences between countries and regions. Based on national studies (Croatia is one of them), the project intends to give policy stakeholders an answer to the question which kind of systems could enhance the security in certain regions of Europe, and contribute with added value to the debate concerning »not one security fits all«.

The country mapping procedure for Croatia (as well as for other countries covered by ANVIL project) followed the joined methodology⁵ based on collection and analyses of data from primary (interview based) and secondary sources, aiming to present a comprehensive overview of civil security architecture, experiences and practices. Together with the analyses of the existing documents, legal acts, studies and academic articles dealing with civil security system in Croatia, interviews were carried out among relevant institutions and experts at national level. The interviews were based on a semi-structured questionnaire which was prepared according the specific civil security threats on which Croatia is exposed to. Additionally, the SWOT analysis of the civil security system in Croatia was undertaken to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as a basis for defining the improvements to the system in the future.

The civil security crisis types were selected according their relevance for Croatia. The research was primarily focused on natural disasters as well as on threats that are specific for Croatia, such as mines remaining from the recent war.

Results

The evolution of the civil security system and current legal framework

Croatia has established legal and institutional framework and introduced internal reforms in its' civil secu-

rity system, which are still going on and are facing challenges for better functioning of the country within the EU framework. Croatian civil security system inherited long tradition of the former Yugoslav federation. The crisis management system in Croatia was particularly well functioning during the Homeland War, when it had important role regarding civilian evacuations, providing care and shelter, humanitarian assistance, and similar activities. Later the system has passed through internal reforms, but it seems that not all of previous experiences were included in the current system.

Since Croatia's independence, the area of civil protection has experienced fundamental changes. After being a part of the Ministry of Defence, the civil protection was transferred to the Ministry of Interior in 1994. The process of overall organizational setting and further development of the protection and rescue as a single structure has been launched. Thus, the main focus of the civil protection switched from the war threats to the prevention, protection and rescue regarding natural and man-made threats and disasters and today the dominant crisis management approach is a civilian-based. The coordination at national level takes an all hazards approach in the case of disaster and major accidents.

Since January 1, 2005 the civil protection (along with the fire fighting system and the new 112 system) became a part of the newly established National Protection and Rescue Directorate (NPRD). The NPRD is a coordinating administrative body tasked for regulating the norms and standards in the protection and rescue area, as well as harmonization of all activities and resources in the event of disaster or major accident. The current model of the protection and rescue system in the country is established and defined by Protection and Rescue Act⁶, adopted in 2004, and later amended in 2007, 2009 and 2010. This Act represents a core legal act regulating civil crisis management system. The reason for establishing this new administrative framework was to unify several existing units under the umbrella of single coordinating organisation. Also, there was a need to provide optimal conditions to the civil protection (being an operational component of the system) in the area of creating conceptual development and implementation of strategies and operational preparations aiming to protect Croatian citizens, cultural and other material goods and environment⁷.

The other relevant acts regulate rights and obligations in different civil security areas e.g. fire fighting, natural disasters protection, dangerous substances, and communicable diseases etc. Specific legal framework and institutional setting have been developed regarding the remaining mine threat after the recent war.

Legal system was partly updated as a result of the EU accession process. The Government has adopted both, generic and specific strategies addressing civil crisis management in the areas of security and defence, terrorism, chemical safety, water management and other. Plans and programmes related to crisis management (i.e. risk as-

essment, protection and rescue plan) have been adopted at national and municipal level⁸.

Institutional setting

In line with the Protection and Rescue Act, the system consists of operational protection and rescue forces, local and regional self-government units, and armed forces and police in case of major accident or disaster (p. 3)⁹. The protection and rescue is being performed by operational protection and rescue forces at local and regional level, as well as at the national level. The local and regional self-government units regulate and plan, organize, finance and maintain the protection and rescue in accordance with their rights and obligations defined by the Croatian constitution and the Act on local (regional) self-government units. On the other hand, the legal responsibility of the Government is to ensure proper functioning and management of the protection and rescue system (Art. 2)⁶. Additionally, the local authorities with the assistance of the local and regional protection and rescue headquarters manage and coordinate protection and rescue at their governmental tiers, while in the case of disaster proclamation, the NPRD as the main coordinative body, manages and commands the operational forces and coordinates all participants involved⁹.

Pursuant to the Protection and Rescue Act, civil security agencies, such as Croatian Mountain Rescue Service (CMRS), Croatian Red Cross (CRC), Croatian Fire fighting Association (CFA), and other associations, legal persons, and institutions established by the government are obliged to participate in the implementation of protection and rescue activities, when requested by the NPRD. (Art. 26)⁶ Besides, all relevant governmental services, including Croatian Waters, National Meteorological and Hydrological Service (NMHS), Croatian Seismological Survey, State Service for Public Health etc. are obliged to provide NPRD with data and information when they identify a risk of disaster (Art. 24)⁶. The leading organization regulating mine action in the country is Croatian Mine Action Centre –CROMAC¹⁰, while the Government Office for Demining¹¹ is a political coordinating body that monitors CROMAC activities, contributes to mine awareness rising and to further development of mine action system in the country, etc.

The Protection and Rescue Act re-emphasized the subsidiary issue and the need to strengthen the system in local and regional self-government units. Thus, the establishment of the protection and rescue headquarters at all level (including the civil protection headquarters) and their linkage by the unique 112 System, as well as the development of the Standard Operative Procedures (SOPs), intended to contribute to better coordination of the system and operative efficiency of the protection and rescue forces (p. 6)⁹.

However, the introduction of the new system caused also some legal inconsistencies, mostly because the civil protection and fire fighting system were previously parts of the Ministry of Interior for a long time. Namely, there is a lack of legal definition of the civil protection in terms

of its organisation. At the present, under the Article 29 of the Protection and Rescue Act operational protection and rescue forces may be organized in local self-government units, while their organization, scheduling and training is regulated by the secondary legislation. As mentioned before, the authority and responsibility for crisis preparedness and response rests on the local level (subsidiary principle), but establishment, appointment and training of the civil protection units at local and regional level has been neglected (underpaid) for a number of years which made this level the weakest executive and implementing component of the system (p. 79)³. Furthermore, there are some inconsistencies regarding fire fighting system, meaning that this system is not fully adjusted to the new organization. Following initial difficulties in introduction of the single European number 112 in 2005, the NPRD has actively approached system modernization, personnel education and development of SOPs, and consequently now the whole 112 system works well.

To solve existing problems, the new draft of the Protection and Rescue Act is being prepared, containing new provisions regarding rights and obligations of local self-governments and highlighting the role of the volunteers in protection and rescue activities. Also, the new model of financing of protection and rescue forces at local levels based on clear risk assessment is envisaged⁹.

Effectiveness of Croatia's civil security

The effectiveness of the system depends on the type of the crisis event and on the particular actors that are involved. In the case of serious failures of the system, there are two types of inquiry procedures in Croatia – official internal and public inquiries. In the majority of cases where problems have occurred, no political inquiries were undertaken and only internal professional analyses were carried out. The outcomes of internal inquiries are usually not available for the wider public while the single surveillance body for objective monitoring the work of all actors in Croatia does not exist. Political resignation based political liability are quite seldom in Croatia.

The Protection and Rescue Act (Art. 58–60)⁶ envisages only financial penalty provisions for legal persons, responsible persons in the local and regional self-governments or individuals for a misdemeanour of obligations. There is no insight in the penalties that were imposed in practice. However, the inspection and control of the implementation of protection and rescue activities is carried out by the NPRD inspectors, and reports on such inspection activities are regularly submitted to the Parliamentary Committee for Internal Policy and National Security. In 2011 there were 1,280 inspection surveillances from fire fighting inspections and 777 protection and rescue surveillances. In general, the NPRD report for 2012 estimates that regular inspection surveillance has raised the operational preparedness of the system¹².

As an illustration of big cases that were widely debated in public, several examples could be mentioned. The Kornat island case (August, 2007) was the largest fire fighters accident in the history of fire fighting in

Croatia which happened when a routine fire fighting operation ended with great loss of human lives. Twelve out of thirteen fire fighters (both professional and voluntary), who found themselves surrounded by fire, lost their lives and one was badly injured by high temperature. In an almost one and half century long history of fire fighting in Croatia, no accident with similar consequences was ever recorded. The official explanation was that the Kornat accident was caused by a natural phenomenon known as »burning of non-homogenous gas mixture« i.e. a high temperature burning, with fast expansion of hot gasses (p. 48)¹³.

However, the Kornat island case remains an example of uncoordinated crisis operation which was inefficient both on the prevention and response side. It was one of crisis that resulted with wider political debates, questions and inquiries but has not resulted with significant legislative amendments that could contribute to the overall quality of the system. Weaknesses in coordination are expected to be reduced by the new act which is in preparation and should clearly define direct responsibilities for collaboration of action in signature crisis – »one-side commander« at operational level. Meanwhile, the National Fire Protection Strategy 2012–2020 was prepared in 2012 and introduced stronger role of fire fighting inspection.

Another example that could be mentioned in this context is the general flooding case in mid-2010 which was the highest in the last fifty years. It caused significant damage due to delayed prevention and inefficient response (shortage of sand and bags, lack of coordination and communication, inadequately equipped operational units). Particularly affected were the areas of the river Sava, Mura, Drava and Danube, Istrian and Dalmatian catchment basins. The National Centre against Floods has taken responsibility for the damage and the director of the Croatian Waters has offered his resignation which was not accepted by the decision makers.

In the second half of 2012 another strong flooding caused significant damage and it contributed to launching activities for reducing risk of flooding. A Multi-year program of building regulative and protective aquatic facilities and buildings for melioration is being prepared (to be adopted by the Government) for the period 2013–2017. Moreover, through the process of harmonization of water environmental legislation with the *acquis communautaire*, the newly prepared flood protection plans in Croatia will after 2015 become a systematic part of the River Basin Management Plan.

Efficiency

Although a remarkable progress regarding organization of the protection and rescue has been made within the system reform in 2005, it has not significantly improved the transparency of funding. The Government still does not have a clear overview of the total costs for crisis management preparedness and response, especially costs of different relevant ministries, regional and local levels.

According to available estimates (p. 28)¹⁴, the overall budget for the protection and rescue (key users and other sectors, 2010–2012) ranges between 439 and 499 million Kuna's annually (60–68 million Euros) which is about 0.36–0.4% of the total state budget. The state budget covers the majority of costs of key bodies: NPRD, CRC, CMRS and partly CFA, and the allocations for the mentioned institutions over the last three years were about 0.2% of the annual state budget. In 2011 the key institutions of the system were allocated 186.5 million Kuna's (25.5 million Euros) from the budget while in 2012, 177.4 million Kuna's (24.3 million Euros) were planned for the budgetary users in the function of protection and rescue activities. It is some 4.9% less than the previous year, with a declining tendency of funds in future years. Out of the available budgetary sources in 2012, some 90% was allocated to NPRD, 6% to the CFA, 3.9% to the CMRS and 0.1% to CRC.

In addition to these direct resources at the national level, the funds are planned and allocated to the protection and rescue through the budgets of other ministries, such as the MoD (fire fighting as part of the other tasks of the Armed Forces), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure (e.g. road safety), the Ministry of Agriculture (protection from floods), the Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection (prevention of accidents in industrial plants), the Ministry of Health, and agencies under their jurisdiction. These funds are in continuous decline, too.

Financial sources for the protection and rescue are through various items within the county/local budgets. Additional funding of the basic protection and rescue system is conducted through donations (especially in the area of demining) and project applications to be financed through the EU funds, which are (except for two active projects) in initial stages. Over the past ten years, the privatization has contributed to the effectiveness of the system.

Transparency in financing the protection and rescue sector would significantly increase efficiency of the system. Hence, one of the key goals for the next few years is the financial consolidation of the system with the aim of reducing costs and more rational cost management. The strategy of Government programs for the period 2011–2013 assesses the protection and rescue system in Croatia as satisfactory, but with the need to further strengthen of the coordination. Further alignment with the EU *acquis communautaire* in the sector is stated as a special task, as well as strengthening of GIS system coordination and integration and technological development of the 112 system. However, development of the data base with the information provided from all relevant bodies in Croatia would be useful.

Legitimacy

The major critical views regarding the system relate to insufficient coordination and lack of clear division of responsibilities which significantly undermine the overall capacity to prevent or react to a crisis in an appropri-

ate manner. One of the main reasons for it is inappropriate legal framework and still undefined civil protection as a category within legal framework. The most noticeable case that supports this statement is the already mentioned Kornat island case.

None of the crisis has ever led to the collapse of the government and/or resignation of responsible ministers due to political pressure. However, the debates on crisis management structures and/or their performances regularly take place at the annual conferences of the Croatian Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The debates on functioning of the system are mostly limited to the narrow group of experts and practitioners within the system, while the general public is rarely being consulted or invited to take part in it. Croatian National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, which is organised on annual basis since 2009 in Zagreb, contributed to the overall debate by highlighting the need for changes within the system which can be accomplished by strengthening coordination, strategic planning and risk management at national level, building the integrated system for horizontal and vertical linking the actors for natural disaster risk reduction, as well as stronger involvement of local and regional self-government.

The reforms were mainly initiated by experts and practitioners within the system in order to consolidate it and make it more functional. On the other hand, the process of Croatia's accession and adjustment to EU standards to the EU played important role in the reforms.

According to the results of the most recent available study of GfK (Growth for Knowledge, Croatia) on safety perception of Croatian Citizens conducted in 2009, the majority of Croatian citizens feel safe in the place of their habitat (48% very safe, 39% pretty safe), while only 13% of citizens feel unsafe¹⁵.

Since the Special Euro barometer 371 on Internal Security covers only EU member states, data on extent to which Croatians believe that the state is doing enough to manage different types of threats are not available. The only source that may be helpful is the Readers Digest Survey on »Trust in our community«, where fire-fighters are the first on the list of most trusted institutions in Croatia with a very high score of confidence among population during the last two years (93%).

Strengths and weakness of civil security system in Croatia

The best performing parts of the Croatia's civil security system are well trained and well equipped forces, particularly in the fire-fighting (both regular and voluntary forces) and flood protection. Croatia has highly professional and operational protection and rescue capacities at central government level (healthcare, inspections, capacities of relevant public administration bodies and crisis management related services). Their skills and knowledge are one of the crucial assets for the system. Close cooperation has been established between state administration bodies, NGOs, public and private compa-

nies taking part in crisis management. Significant capacities have been developed in dealing with the mine problem and mine action that Croatia was faced with due to recent war (1991–1995) and especially, in the post-war period. Croatia has developed humanitarian demining capacities (physical demining, equipment, know-how, and rehabilitation of mine victims) which represent its comparative advantages in Europe and worldwide. Croatian legislation has been harmonised with the EU acquis during the negotiation process in the area of environmental protection. There is a need for legal enforcement and further development towards interoperability for acting in joint operations guided by the EU. However, the key weaknesses of Croatia's civil security system remain the lack of coordination and inadequate level of institutional integration of all parts into the system (i.e. policies for managing the crisis situations) due to inconsistencies or even vacuum in the existing legal framework. The key structures, bodies and actors are well functioning, but the coordination (particularly the commanding dimension, procedures, responsibilities and competences) is not well defined by the legislation and thus causes problems in implementation. These problems are intended to be solved with the new legal act, which was under preparation in time of writing this paper (March, 2013) and aims to clearly define responsibilities («one-side commander» at operational level). Due to limited financial sources, the local and regional level units represent weak parts of executive and operational part of the system. However, the new model of financing is envisaged and the financing of local levels should be based on clear risk assessment for a certain area. There is a lack of systematic method for collecting disaster data and thus, the establishment of the central base data would be needed (p. 14)¹.

Civil security in the European Union

The EU crisis management approach is based on two main principles: responsibility of the EU member state for protection and rescue activities for its citizens and the principle of solidarity among the EU member states in crisis situation. The legislative framework regulating the European civil protection is based on two major legal acts, namely the Council Decision establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism, adopted in 2001 and upgraded in 2007, and the Council Decision establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument, adopted in 2007¹⁶. The Commission faced the need for comprehensive approach in order to achieve European effective reaction to the disasters, including risk assessment, forecast, prevention, preparedness and rehabilitation which require the mobilisation of all instruments and services available to the Community and Member States.

The Community Civil Protection Mechanism (CCPM) represents a major mechanism for cooperation in the field of civil protection. It includes all EU member states, while the European Economic Area Member States and the EU candidate countries may also obtain membership. Currently, the CCPM includes 32 participating states. It is established to facilitate cooperation in the civil

protection assistance interventions in the event of disaster or major accident, requiring urgent response actions or in the event of an imminent threat of disaster. In order to ensure an effective assistance, the CCPM has developed a number of tools intended to facilitate adequate preparedness and effective response to disasters at the EU level. This includes: the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC), Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS), training programme and civil protection modules.

-The Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) is based at the European Commission in Brussels. It is accessible 24 hours a day and capable to act immediately, when a call for assistance is received. Its main tasks include monitoring of the situation in a case of disaster and major accident within the EU, neighbouring countries and the rest of the world as well as the responsibility of the EU response in emergencies. It can be activated by any participating state seeking for international assistance, when a disaster overwhelms its national civil protection capacities, or upon a formal request for assistance from any third country affected by a disaster.

- The Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) have been created to make disasters response faster and more effective. It is a reliable web-based alert and notification application, aimed to facilitate communication between the MIC and national authorities.
- The training programme includes training courses, organisation of joint exercises and the experts exchange system among the participating states, in order to improve skills of the experts involved in civil protection assistance operations.
- Civil protection modules are voluntary based teams consisted of national protection and rescue forces from one or more participating states, which contribute to the civil protection rapid response abroad¹⁷.

The Civil Protection Financial Instrument (CPFI) is established with the aim to support and complement the efforts of the participating member states in the area of protection and rescue, but also to facilitate reinforced cooperation between the EU Member States in the field of civil protection. In addition, the CPFI provides the financing of preparedness and response actions covered by the Mechanism; studies and projects related to prevention and preparedness and co-finance the transport expenditures of Member States operating under the Mechanism. Funds for the CPFI are provided from annual membership fees, paid by countries that are not EU members but that are Mechanism participating states, whereas the funds from EU Member States intended for functioning of the Mechanism are provided by the EU budget¹⁸.

Additionally, a new Council Directive on the control of major-accident hazards (the so called SEVESO II) was adopted in 1996. It is a key EU directive governing prevention of chemical accidents which has to be transposed into national legislation of member states. The Directive aims to prevent major accident hazards involving dangerous substances and to limit the consequences if such

Strengths

- Institutions governing protection and rescue actions are established at all levels
- Crisis management plans and programmes are adopted at all levels
- Croatian National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction is in place.
- 112 systems together with an active early warning system are developed.
- Highly professional and operational protection and rescue capacities at central government level.
- Well trained and equipped fire fighting headquarters and units; experience in addressing forest fires.
- Internationally recognised expertise and strong humanitarian demining capacities
- Good network of non-profit organizations and well-trained voluntary forces provide service in disaster management
- Bilateral agreements with neighbouring countries have been signed; active participation in multilateral regional initiatives and organizations in South-Eastern Europe.

Weaknesses

- Croatian protection and rescue system needs more adequate coordination and clear division of responsibilities for raising its operational efficiency.
- Current civil protection and rescue legislation faces legal inconsistencies.
- Inadequate level of institutional integration of all parts into the system.
- Technical capacity and human resources potentials need improvement at local self-government units
- Lack of unified analyses and transparency of total costs especially at regional and local level; cost-benefit analyses are not undertaken.
- Underinvestment in protection and rescue activities at all levels.
- The coastguard forces are weak component of system due to lack of financial sources.
- Critical infrastructure and its protection in Croatia are not precisely defined.
- Lack of citizens' and media awareness regarding protection and rescue issues.
- Lack of in-depth scientific research on civil security issues in the country; teaching on disasters is only partially included in the school curricula.

Opportunities

- EU membership represents opportunity for strengthening and improving civil security system and achieving additional support through EU funds.
- Adoption of new Protection and Rescue Act which will better regulate rights and obligations of local self-governments, with new model of financing will provide significant improvement.
- Adoption of the new National Security Strategy with plans and measures regarding disaster risk reduction, improvement of response actions could contribute to better functioning of the system.
- Introduction of planning process based on risk assessment and cost-benefit analyses at all levels could be opportunity for effective crisis management.
- Inclusion of civil security issues in the school curricula could contribute to better information of young generations regarding threats and disasters.

Threats

- Continuation of economic recession in Croatia may reduce overall resources for protection and rescue activities.
- Lack of political will to increase investment in protection and rescue at local level might slowdown the progress in building more effective system.
- Climate changes might bring new challenges and different ranking of priorities in protection and rescue sector.

Fig. 1. SWOT Analysis of civil security system in Croatia.

accidents occur, not only having in mind safety and health aspects but also for the environmental aspect. It applies to facilities where dangerous substances are produced or/and stored¹⁹.

Important step forward is the fact that the area of the Civil Protection has been established as a formal EU policy area by the Treaty of Lisbon²⁰. Namely, the Article 196 of *TEU* defines the area of Civil Protection as an area of shared competence between the EU and the Member States (MS). Thus, the EU Commission has got the right to carry out measures in order to support, coordinate and complement measures undertaken at the national level, but without any harmonisation of the MS acts and regulations. Moreover, Article 222 »Solidarity Clause« stipu-

lates a joint action of the EU and its MS (coordinated within the EU Council) in a case when one of the MS became the object of a terrorist attack or victim of natural or man-made disaster. In a spirit of solidarity, the MS are obliged to offer their assistance, while the Union has to mobilise all instruments at its disposal (including the military instruments of the MS). However, the implementation of solidarity clause is being determinate by the EU Council, at the joint proposal of the EU Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. For this purposes, the EU Council may be assisted by the Political and Security Committee as well as by the new Standing Committee on Internal Security, introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon Article 71 »Standing Committee on Internal Security«²¹.

It is important to mention that in 2010 the Commission issued a strategy on the natural and man-made disasters management, providing a series of proposals to strengthen the European Union's response capacity in the event of disasters. The establishment of the new European Emergency Response Centre within the Commission's DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection is being proposed. The strategy envisaged the improvement of the EU response actions in terms of efficiency by planning and mapping of resources in order to ensure their immediate deployment, the cost-effectiveness of logistics operations through coordination of units at European level, the coordination and cost-effectiveness of transport, etc.²².

Finally, in 2010 the European Council has adopted the EU Internal Security Strategy in Action: Five steps towards a more secure Europe²³, setting out the challenges, principles and guidelines for dealing with identified threats to EU security i.e. organised crime, terrorism, cybercrime, cross-border crime and natural and man-made disasters. In addition, five strategic objectives (each with specific actions) are listed for overcoming the most urgent challenges in order to make the EU more secure. Namely, the objectives to be achieved are to disrupt international criminal networks; prevent terrorism and address radicalisation and recruitment; raise levels of security for citizens and businesses in cyberspace; strengthen security through border management and increase Europe's resilience to crises and disasters. As regards to the natural and man-made crises and disasters, improvements to long-standing crisis management practices in terms of efficiency and coherence are emphasized. This will require full use of the solidarity clause, development of an all-hazards approach to threat and risk assessment, reinforcing the links between sector-specific early warning and crisis cooperation systems and development of European Emergency Response Capacity²⁴.

Croatia's participation in EU mechanisms and instruments

Croatia became the EU member on July 1st, 2013 and has to undertake the responsibilities of the EU member state. As already mentioned, the EU supports and complements the member states' action at national, regional and local levels in risk prevention, preparation of their civil protection personnel and response to national and man-made disasters within the EU^{20,23}. Therefore, the EU strategic documents regarding civil security and risk management represent a »soft law«, while Croatia has to harmonise its legislation in the area of environmental protection.

In the accession negotiations the most significant part of civil security legislation was covered by the Chapter 27 – Environment (hazardous waste management, industrial pollution and risk management, nature protection and civil protection). Civil security areas where Croatia has implemented the most of the reforms with the support of EU include water and dangerous waste manage-

ment, industrial pollution control and risk management, nuclear safety and radiation protection, etc. Although Croatia made significant progress in the civil security reforms, there are still many areas where continuation of efforts on law enforcement is needed.

As a part of legal harmonisation in the area of environmental protection, Croatia has transposed provisions of the SEVESO II Directive (98/82/EC) into national legislation, during the negotiation process. The Environmental Protection Act²⁵ was adopted together with related bylaws (regulation and rulebook covering issues of managing dangerous substances and preventing major accidents). Through this, Croatia has also partially transposed the Directive 2003/105/EC that amends and supplements the SEVESO II Directive, all being part of the legislative harmonization with the EU. Furthermore, the Protection and Rescue Act was also harmonized with SEVESO II Directive.

By entering the EU membership, Croatia has the obligation to define European critical infrastructure within its area as well as protection of such infrastructure for other member states which is in its own national interest. Creation of such legal framework is underway (p. 74)³.

Croatia participates in the Civil Protection Mechanism and Civil Protection Financial Instrument²⁶. The Memorandum of Understanding (MuO) on Croatia's participation in the Civil Protection Mechanism entered into force in September 2009, making Croatia the Mechanism's 31st participating state. It enables Croatia to take part in training programmes, joint exercises, seminars and pilot projects. Since May 2008, Croatia has participated in all activities, including inter alia the co-organisation of the Modules Basic Training programme²⁶. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism enables Croatia to have access to the European Commission's Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) in which Croatia participates since 2002, as well as to Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) which facilitates communication between the MIC with National Authorities.

The MIC has not been activated yet in Croatia, because so far the country did not face a crisis that would surpass its national capacities. However, after joining the MIC in 2002, Croatia reacted to MIC requests and to Civil Protection Mechanism several times. As examples, the cases of sending sand bags to Hungary during floods in 2010; assistance to Albania during floods in 2010 and assistance with Canadair's and fire fighting helicopters to Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro in 2012, could be mentioned¹⁷.

The country participated in several simulation exercises organised at Community level which a learning opportunity to accelerate response in major emergencies and a contribution to establishing a common understanding of co-operation in civil protection assistance interventions. The trainings with earthquake scenario could be mentioned – EU TEREX in Italy in 2010; EU Danubious in Romania, 2009; SweNorEx 2009 in Swe-

den; and flooding training – EU HUROMEX 2008 in Hungary^{28,29}.

Croatia also participates in a number of civil protection projects, aimed to cooperation improvement between the countries of South-Eastern Europe, funded by the EU. One of them is the programme for civil protection cooperation financed through the EU Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) aiming to bring the EU candidate countries and potential candidates closer to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism and to contribute to the development of their civil protection capacities. Croatia organised the CRO-FLOODS 2012 Field Exercise, which was event of significant size with participation of the civil protection intervention teams from seven Western Balkan countries and several EU countries³⁰. Another example is development of the Regional Sustainable Development and Civil Protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Montenegro Project, with the aim to establish the first Joint Fire Fighting Centre (JFFC) as part of the SEEFREC, and thus creating the mechanisms for coordination of fire fighting related activities and joint operational structure to address this critically important area in line with the Hyogo Framework, as well as to facilitate sustainable economic development in terms of environmental protection and increase participation of communities and businesses in risk reduction to forest fires (p.21)¹.

Discussion and Conclusion

Mapping of national civil security systems in Europe, exchange of knowledge and experience, as well as coordination and networking among individual countries are necessary preconditions for mutual success in predicting, preventing and reducing the damage of all forms of disaster. Although the legal framework of civil security systems differs from country to country, there are efforts for a more substantial adjustment, thus facilitating progress in quality of the systems. The role of the EU is primarily coordination of civil protection and integration of activities to achieve common standards with greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Croatia inherited long tradition of the former Yugoslav federation which has built and implemented efficient civil security system. Historical legacies and administrative traditions provided good basis for developing its civil security capabilities. The crisis management system in Croatia functioned well during the war of independence when it had an important role in organizing civilian evacuations, refugee acceptance, taking care of displaced persons, humanitarian assistance and similar. However, the principles of civil security have been changed during its further development. The building of the crisis management system has occurred simultaneously with the EU and NATO integration processes which positively impacted Croatian strategic culture.

Until today, however, the functions and activities within the civil security system in Croatia have been overlapping and there is the lack of coordination in the

vertical and horizontal level through different sectors. In addition to the fragmentation of institutions, one of the characteristics of civil security system is the fragmentation of legislation in this area. At least six key laws regulate civil security and there is overlapping of authority at the level of implementation.

Croatian protection and rescue system needs to be further reorganised. There is a need for more adequate coordination and clear division of responsibilities for raising operative efficiency. The structures and actors are well functioning, but coordination among them (particularly the commanding dimension, procedures, responsibilities and competences) is not adequately defined, causing the problems in implementation. The system of crisis management is not well enough recognised. These problems are intended to be solved with the new legal act, which is under preparation and aims to clearly define responsibilities. The technical capacity and human resources potentials need to be reorganised particularly in local self-government units, which represent weak executive and implementing component of the system, partly due to Croatia's regional development imbalances. The system is facing financial problems and needs further rationalisation. There is lack of unified analyses and transparency of total costs of the system and its services especially at regional and local level while cost-benefit analyses are not undertaken. New model of financing is envisaged to enhance transparency whereby, amongst others, the financing of local levels will be based on clear risk assessment for a certain area.

At the operational level the civil security system in Croatia is, as in other EU countries, among other things, responsible for the preparation of plans and risk management, procurement and maintenance of equipment and the implementation of education. These activities are performed at a satisfactory level. On a regular basis approximately 4-5 exercises are conducted annually at the national level and one with international significance. Croatia has cooperation agreements with all the countries in the neighbourhood. It would be useful to intensify activities within these frameworks considering the possibilities of using different sources of the financing (e.g. IPACBC projects). In addition to neighbouring countries, Croatia signed agreements on cooperation in the field of civil security with seven EU member states, as well as with all the key international organizations. Since the country did not face any major disaster, assistance from partner/neighbouring country was not received.

Cooperation with citizens is also significant factor of civil security systems in EU countries. The EU pays special attention to the education of all participants of civil security systems and the extensive network of voluntary actors who conduct the widespread training programs for general population. Croatian citizens do not have formal/ legal obligation or responsibility to civil security other than temporary support up on request by public authorities. Informing the citizens is ensured through a system of sirens, radio TV warning sat local, regional and

national level and through the central NPRD website at which information about the emergency appears regularly. Mobile applications for reaching citizens with vital crisis/security information are not used, although it could increase the awareness of citizens and the visibility of civil security systems in the public and contribute to an increase in preventing damage in emergency cases.

In Croatia, cooperation with civil security system organizations of civil non-profit actors plays an official legally mandated role in regular provision of almost all actors of civil security. One of the forms of preventive cooperation is education programs for the general public, but lacking are video and TV companies to raise awareness of crisis issues among the public. There are also not enough substantial financial means for research and technological development on civil security management.

Croatia is a country in which there are no significant man-made disasters, but the entire area is exposed to flooding and fires. Floods are characteristic threat in lowland continental parts of the country, and fires often occur during summer seasons at the coast along the Adriatic Sea and at islands. Therefore, most of the activities within the system are focused on prevention and emergency preparedness through appropriate planning and risk assessment, communication, logistics, and monitoring. Distinctive threats in Croatia are mined areas after the war in early 1990, demining of which last many years and will require substantial financial resources.

Still, not sufficient care is given to the activities of monitoring and evaluation in the civil security sector in Croatia so the monitoring and evaluation of indicators such as effectiveness, efficiency, legitimacy and sustainability are lacking.

Effectiveness of the civil security system depends on the type of crisis event and on particular actors involved. Generally, Croatia's system can be assessed as functional, in particular with regard to the high operability of fire fighting, water management, mountain rescue and demining teams. However, it is difficult to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the system with certainty having in mind the fact that there is no clear insight into (mostly) internal inquiries regarding the cases where problems have occurred. Furthermore, the results of implemented strategic measures are not regularly monitored or evaluated, especially at local and regional level.

Regarding legitimacy, Croatia could be compared with the developed European countries. It could be mentioned that the reform of the system was conducted in the period 2000–2012. Several national political debates on crisis management structures and their performance were conducted primarily regarding promulgation of the Protection and Rescue Act and the preservation of the key strategic changes during 2005. There were few formal and politically inquires on the civil security issues that

resulted with significant losses (e.g. the Kornat island case, Baxter case), but there were no changes in the government related to catastrophes and similar reaction to the crisis situation in Croatia.

Efficiency in Croatia is quite difficult to assess because the financing system is not transparent enough. Activities are financed with different amounts coming from different sources at the national level. The lack of transparency is more evident at local and regional level. There are no adequate financial plans and reports on an annual basis or as part of a long-term strategic document. It would be useful to make a long-term funding strategy of civil security system in Croatia with referenced key investments in the system and clearly defined necessary investments with the sources of financing and privatization plans of individual activities and their effects on market principles.

Further research focused on civil security sector in Croatia, as a new EU member, should be welcome as a basis for the on-going legislative changes and system reform primarily aimed at strengthening vertical and horizontal coordination. These activities, based on research, would contribute to the increase the quality system – its efficiency, effectiveness, legitimacy, sustainability and ultimately the welfare and safety of the population all over Europe and beyond. By the inclusion of data from Croatia to Euro barometer and implementing other public opinion surveys on civil security system, the citizens' opinions on whether the country is doing enough to manage natural and man-made disasters or fight against terrorism will become comparable to other countries. The results of such surveys might serve as a background for the guidelines, further decisions of the Government and break through sin upgrading the quality of civil security system. Thus, future research of mutual interest to all EU countries would do well to focus on the relations between the civil security systems and the citizens, with regard to information on preparedness and response, education and awareness, teaching on disasters and training activities targeting wider public. Furthermore, in an effort to raise the quality of civil security system one of the next steps certainly leads to intensified cooperation with non-governmental organizations, but also to increasingly important cooperation with the private sector.

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IZAZOVI DJELOTVORNOG SUSTAVA CIVILNE SIGURNOSTI U HRVATSKOJ U KONTEKSTU ČLANSTVA U EUROPSKOJ UNIJI

SAŽETAK

U području civilne sigurnosti ne postoji jedinstveni europski sustav civilne sigurnosti, već je primarna odgovornost svake države članice Europske unije da sama osigura odgovarajuću zaštitu i spašavanje svojih građana. Rezultat navedenog su značajne razlike među sustavima civilne sigurnosti država članica Europske unije. Međutim, na temelju načela solidarnosti, EU je razvio različite mehanizme upravljanja krizama kojima je cilj pomoći zemljama članicama EU-a u akcijama prevencije, odgovora i oporavka od kriza i katastrofa. Republika Hrvatska je 1. srpnja 2013. godine postala članica Europske unije preuzimajući tako i odgovornosti države članice. Sukladno tome, ovaj rad pruža kratak pregled pravila, strukture, politika i prakse relevantnih za sustav civilne sigurnosti Republike Hrvatske te se bavi ključnim

prednostima i slabostima sustava na području zaštite građana od prirodnih i tehničko – tehnoloških katastrofa kako bi mogao adekvatno doprinijeti rješavanju izazova civilnoj sigurnosti u sklopu šireg EU okvira. Rezultati ovog rada potvrđuju glavnu tezu da je Hrvatska ostvarila značajan napredak koji proizlazi iz reformi provedenih na području civilne sigurnosti tijekom proteklih godina, međutim još uvijek postoje mnoga područja na kojima je potrebno učiniti dodatne napore za bolje funkcioniranje države unutar Europske unije.