

## NALOGI IN IZKUŠNJE MADŽARSKE VOJSKE PRI KRIZNEM ODZIVANJU

## TASKS AND EXPERIENCES OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT

**Povzetek** Najpomembnejši nalogi madžarske vojske sta oborožena obramba države in izpolnjevanje drugih vojaških obveznosti, ki izhajajo iz mednarodnih pogodb, še zlasti kolektivne obrambe, ter mirovnih in humanitarnih dejavnosti (madžarski Zakon št. CXIII iz leta 2011). Poleg temeljnih obvez, opredeljenih v Zakonu o domovinski obrambi, je ključna in, kot kažejo izkušnje, tudi zelo pogosta funkcija »prispevanje k izvedbi nalog, povezanih z ravnanjem ob nesrečah«. Namen tega prispevka je predstaviti delovanje madžarske vojske na dveh večjih področjih kriznega upravljanja, pri čemer analiziramo izkušnje iz mednarodnih mirovnih operacij ter varstvo pred nesrečami. Naš drugi namen pa je prikazati primer morebitnega miroljubnega večstranskega sodelovanja manjših evropskih držav na vojaškem področju.

**Ključne besede** *Madžarska vojska, krizno upravljanje, podpora miru, varstvo pred nesrečami, podnebne spremembe.*

**Abstract** The most important task of the Hungarian Defence Forces is the armed defence of the country and the fulfilment of other military obligations arising from international treaties, particularly collective defence, peacekeeping and humanitarian functions (Act CXIII of 2011 in Hungary). In addition to the basic responsibilities described in the Home Defence Act, an essential, and, as experience shows, very frequent, function is “contribution to the performance of tasks related to disaster management”. The purpose of this paper is to present the work of the Hungarian Defence Forces in two large segments of crisis management: we analyse experiences from international peace support operations and protection against disasters. Our other aim is to show an example of smaller European countries engaging in possible peaceful multilateral military cooperation.

**Key words** *Hungarian Defence Forces, crisis management, peace support, protection against disasters, climate change.*

**Introduction** The participation in peacekeeping missions is a success story for the Hungarian soldiers. The first mission was taken place more than one hundred years ago and Hungarian involvement in various operations has been being acknowledged by the international community since this event. These missions were not without losses; nevertheless the sacrifice was not futile.

## **1 INTERNATIONAL PEACE SUPPORT OPERATIONS WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES**

### **1.1 Early missions**

The first four peace support missions took place before the outbreak of the Ist World War. The six European powers (Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia, Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) “created order” together. As it turned out during these missions, soldiers understand one another better than other people, which impression has become even stronger since then. The soldiers of countries already in an armed conflict against one another did their best for peace in a comradely spirit. Hungarian soldiers served the cause of peace on Crete between 1897 and 1898, in China between 1900 and 1914, in Macedonia between 1903 and 1909, and in Albania between 1912 and 1914.

### **1.2 In war-stricken Indo-China**

After 1914, Hungarian soldiers started to take part in international peace support missions in 1973. On 24 January 1973, Hungary was requested to participate in the activity of the International Commission for Supervision and Control in South Vietnam. The first group of Hungarian officers arrived to Saigon on 28 January to monitor, together with their Polish, Canadian and Indonesian counterparts, compliance with the armistice agreement accepted on 27 January. The third (and last) group of the Hungarian contingent set off for home on 8 May 1975, meaning that the total number of Hungarian soldiers and diplomats working in the mission was 750 (Ravasz, 2005).

### **1.3 Hungarian soldiers in peace support operations in the past thirty years**

The Hungarian soldiers joined the missions under the flag of the UN in 1988, when Hungary was invited to participate in the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG). Our blue berets have proved their competence, endurance and persistence in more than twenty missions, on three continents. Many times, they performed their missions under extreme conditions and in a hostile environment.

In many respects, 1995 was the year of change in the history of the Hungarian Defence Forces. This was the first time Hungary joined a NATO-led military peacekeeping

operation, making available its airspace and infrastructure for military action, and sending the Hungarian Engineer Contingent to the relevant location. The latter built 27 bridges under IFOR/SFOR, including the “Old Bridge” in Mostar, repaired roads on 27 km and railway tracks on 65 km, and inspected/demined an area of 102,000 m<sup>2</sup> in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Hungarian presence in the Balkans had been continuous for almost twenty years, with the EUFOR contingent serving in Sarajevo, the KFOR contingent and the Preventive Health Laboratory Service in Pristina that had been working for nine years. Earlier, the Hungarian Defence Forces supported the operations of NATO in Macedonia, an expert group participated in a mission launched for the collection and destruction of weapons, and Hungarian health soldiers provided assistance in treating Albanian refugees. In addition to all of the above, due to its geographical location and transportation and telecommunication infrastructure, Hungary provided three passage bases for the international peace mission in the Balkans until 2002.

Hungary joined the work of the peacekeeping mission of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO), stationed on the Sinai Peninsula, in 1993. This was the first commitment of Hungarian soldiers to undertake military police functions.

Hungarian participation in the military operations in Iraq started with the work of the transportation battalion in 2003. (Note, however, that Hungary sent a field hospital to the area affected by the first Gulf War, operating in Saudi Arabia, already in 1991 to provide humanitarian aid). After withdrawing the transportation battalion, Hungarian soldiers were still present in the area, with our staff officers working for the NATO Training Mission in Iraq and for the Connection Group until 2012.

The last and probably best-known military mission gave a new challenge to Hungarian soldiers in Afghanistan. In the ISAF mission, Hungary was represented by staff officers, medical soldiers and a military police section from 2003, the Light Infantry Company from 2004, and then, from 2006, the so-called Provincial Reconstruction Group. The members of the latter were partly Croatian, Bulgarian and Slovakian peacekeepers, under Hungarian leadership. The Kabul International Airport was guarded by Hungarian soldiers in some time periods, and we were taking part in the training of Afghan helicopter pilots and in the mentoring of Afghan land forces and a special operations section also performed its service in this region. The PRT mission ended in December 2014, only Hungarian military mentors remained in Afghanistan.

The skills of Hungarian soldiers were also tested in the operations of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, contributing to the resolution of conflicts in Georgia, Nagorno-Karabakh, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ukraine and Tajikistan. The importance of the participation of the small Hungarian staff here lies in the fact that the country is represented by experts who are specialists in a certain field (observers, consultants, financial experts).

In accordance with the international military role of the European Union, our participation in EU operations also shows a growing trend. Apart from the EUFOR company already mentioned above, we also took/take part in operations in Congo, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia and Macedonia, but our soldiers are also present in Mali.

We have UN observers in Western Sahara, and a joint Slovakian-Hungarian company is serving in Cyprus.

All in all, more than 800 Hungarian soldiers perform their service simultaneously, in 12 countries and 12 different missions, under the flag of the United Nations, the NATO, the European Union, or based on international treaties (MFO).

#### 1.4 In international contingents

In autumn 1997, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia founded the Central European Nations Co-operation in Peace Support (CENCOOP). The order on the establishment of a Hungarian-Romanian Joint Peacekeeping Battalion was signed by the chiefs of the defence staff of the two countries on 14 May 1999. The agreement on setting up the Hungarian-Italian-Slovenian Multinational Land Force was signed on 18 April 1998 in Udine. Hungary was the initiator of the establishment of the “Tisza” Hungarian-Romanian-Slovakian-Ukrainian Multinational Engineer Battalion, responsible for coordinated protection against floods along the river Tisza.

## 2 THE ROLE OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES IN PROTECTION AGAINST DISASTERS

The *Home Defence Act* clearly defines the tasks of the Hungarian Defence Forces, including protection against disasters. During the performance of disaster management functions, military organisations take part in the work in a system of military subordination, led by their own commanders. The participation of not more than 200 persons for a maximum of 21 days may be ordered by the Chief of the Defence Staff, while involvement with more persons or for a longer period is decided by the minister in charge of home defence. If the number of the military staff to be employed is more than 3,000, the minister in charge of home defence must, simultaneously with passing the decision, notify the parliamentary committee dealing with home defence issues. Thus, the performance of tasks is clearly governed by statutory rules and procedures.

*Act CXXVIII of 2011 on disaster management and the amendment of certain related acts* also discusses this issue (Act CXXVIII of 2011 in Hungary).

*“Defence and the elimination of consequences shall be ensured by coordinating the activities of dedicated bodies and various defence systems, through the involvement of and contribution from citizens and civil defence organisations, business associations, the Hungarian Defence Forces, the police forces, the National Tax*

*and Customs Administration, the National Meteorological Service, the National Ambulance Service, administration organisations for water management, the state administration body for health, civil society organisations participating on a voluntary basis, as well as associations and dedicated public bodies, and, in case of non-natural disasters, the party causing and triggering the disaster, state bodies and local governments (hereinafter jointly referred to as parties contributing to disaster management).”*

In addition to discussing changes in the security environment, the *National Security Strategy* also describes the tasks of the Hungarian Defence Forces:

*“Natural and industrial disasters. Uncontrollable processes in certain industrial, biological, chemical and especially nuclear facilities may jeopardise or cause damage to the health of masses of people, as well as to the environment, the security of life or property. Further risks are posed by the transportation of hazardous goods by land and rail, on waterways, in the air or through pipelines.*

*The Hungarian Defence Forces also need to possess capabilities to actively contribute to disaster relief in case of natural or industrial catastrophes.”* (Hungarian Government Resolution No. 1035/2012).

The *National Military Strategy* defines the above tasks in a sector-wide context (Hungarian Government Resolution No. 1009/2009). The document states that the issue of home defence cannot be interpreted and treated in itself, separately from other areas of security. The non-military aspects of security are growing in importance, but this does not result in a reduction in the role of the military sector. The management of security challenges is beyond the scope of individual ministries and requires coordinated government cooperation.

The functions of the Hungarian Defence Forces are defined with this in mind. The Hungarian Defence Forces have been typically used in crisis management actions, in many cases in large distances from Hungary, under extreme natural and climatic conditions, in areas of poor accessibility. Crisis management calls for the extensive use of network-centred warfare, precision weapons and modern technologies, civil-military cooperation, psychological warfare and special forces. Crisis management is usually carried out in weak states incapable of performing their basic functions, where security needs to be established and maintained against irregular, semi-military organisations, rioters, armed groups, and international mercenary and terrorist groups.

There is a growing need for humanitarian intervention and assistance, and military forces need to be employed as the primary tools of intervention with an increasing frequency in humanitarian emergencies. Crises cannot be handled simply through military action; they require complex civilian and military efforts and cooperation, especially bearing in mind the mutual interdependence of military and civilian

experts working in the same operation area. Military and civilian efforts cannot be clearly separated from each other. The operation area is populated, in addition to state players, a number of other important, non-state participants.

Within the constraints of law, the Ministry of Defence and the Hungarian Defence Forces established their internal regulations and put in place procedures for the permissible use of forces and tools.

The past decade has continuously posed a major challenge to Hungarian organisations responsible for protection against disasters. The Hungarian Defence Forces are no exception, being a determinative contributor to the system of protection with their highly trained experts, special equipment, and more than a hundred years of experience in defence. The execution of this task is complicated by the shrinking budgets allocated to and the continuous reorganisation of the army. To make things worse, disaster situations are getting ever more complex, primarily as a consequence of the climate change, thus increasing the intensity of protection required to handle them.

### 3 CHALLENGES

Over the past few years, Hungary has faced disasters that have appeared, on the one hand, in unexpected ways, on the other hand, with unusual intensity. The list of disasters is topped by floods. Over the past decade, flood levels have risen significantly as a result of the increasing extremities in weather patterns, the decreasing water carrying capacity of river beds, and human intervention within the catchment areas. Floods occurring on smaller rivers or streams are also increasingly frequent due to the abundant rainfalls taking place within a short time and in limited areas (flash floods).

#### 3.1 Red sludge catastrophe

In addition to floods, we also have to face with unexpected situations. The red sludge catastrophe in 2010 was the greatest challenge ever, causing unbelievable damage and types of risk unknown before. (Figure 1.) As a result of the largest industrial disaster during the history of Hungary, ten people died, 265 were injured, and more than 300 homes had to be demolished. The recovery, reconstruction and environmental remediation cost the state a total of HUF 38 billion (<http://www.kormany.hu>). (Figure 1, p. 96)

On 4 October 2010, there was a fracture in the wall of slurry reservoir No. 10 of the alumina plant in Ajka, as a result of which 600-700 thousand m<sup>3</sup> red sludge flooded the surrounding 10 km<sup>2</sup> area, reaching a height of 2 m at certain places. (Figure 2, p. 97) The pollution affected several settlements. Rescue, assistance and damage removal activities were performed by state and local government bodies, various business enterprises, and charity organisations. A large number of the population also offered voluntary assistance and donations. This catastrophe showed that, if necessary, the population of the country is able to join forces in order to help those in need.

The Hungarian Defence Forces were among the first to participate in rescue and damage assessment/removal activities and to provide assistance to the population. Our soldiers worked shoulder to shoulder with the forces of the fire department, the police and other partner organisations. They contributed to the rescue of the injured, the removal of contamination from residential buildings, roads and vehicles, the removal of ruins and the evacuation of the inhabitants.

On the day of the catastrophe, 2 military helicopters transported 23 injured persons to the Military Hospital (*Honvédkórház*) in Budapest, where they were examined and appropriately treated. (Figure 2, p. 97)

The technical team of the Hungarian Defence Forces contributed to the construction of a dam protecting Devecser and Kolontár, and built a bridge over the Torna stream in Kolontár within a very short time. The Hungarian Defence Forces secured the closure of the airspace over Devecser and Kolontár using helicopters, and took action on several occasions against people violating the airspace. The Ministry of Defence also contributed to the satisfaction of needs arising during the protection process by offering material assets and real estate.

The CBRN mobile laboratory of the Hungarian Defence Forces performed radiological measurements and took chemical samples, and delivered its detailed findings to the civilian authorities.

Due to the extreme nature of the catastrophe, the relief subunits of the chemical protection battalion were also deployed. Our soldiers carried out the removal of contamination from people participating in the operations, motor vehicles, other technical devices and paved roads. (Figure 3.) The volume of the work is clearly illustrated by the fact that a total of 635 persons, 31,749 motor vehicles and 98 km roads were cleaned (Szombati, 2011). (Figure 3, p. 97)

The delegated teams performing the removal of ruins and manual work, as well as the transportation teams played a key role in rescuing property, finding missing persons and cleaning the area (250 persons and 50 technical devices). 2 tanker trucks ensured the continuous supply of fuel to all machinery used on the site. We provided a refrigerator container for the storage of perishable goods delivered to the site through aid shipments.

In addition to damage removal activities, the Ministry of Defence renovated and offered to the local government of Devecser 6 apartments owned by the ministry, and permitted the use of 70 more empty residential units in other settlements.

From the staff of the Hungarian Defence Forces, altogether 2,217 persons were involved in the work, in a well-organised manner, responding to every situation within the shortest time possible and fulfilling their legal obligations to the largest extent possible (Szombati, 2011).]

### 3.2 Extreme blizzard throughout the country in March 2013

Let us also mention an event from 2013, a dangerous situation caused by extreme weather conditions. In the middle of March, a blizzard never earlier seen in the country swept over Hungary, which was attributed by many to the change of the climate. The large amount of snow falling within a very short period of time was coupled with extreme cold and stormy winds, blocking transport at several locations and destroying public utilities, causing the most damage in the high-voltage electric network. Thousands of people became prisoners of the snow in their vehicles on the motorways or left without electricity in their homes. The extreme weather, which lasted for several days, posed a real challenge to the police forces, as well as the organisations performing the rescue work and the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure elements. The Hungarian Defence Forces provided assistance at several locations.

The Hungarian Defence Forces participated in the performance of disaster management tasks at more than 100 locations from the evening of 14 March 2013 to 22 March 2013. The teams to be employed were appointed and prepared at the beginning of the winter period. The first request, concerning the provision of accommodation, was received by the central emergency service of the Hungarian Defence Forces on 14 March, a little before 6 p.m. Recognising the potential further risks of the situation, they activated the Disaster Management System of the Defence Forces. Our soldiers carried out road-cleaning, rescue, transportation, towing and supply functions in 6 counties. Some examples: on the M1 motorway tanks rescued snow ploughs, trucks and stuck fire engines, tracked vehicles were used to rescue an ambulance car carrying a patient, to tow trucks, snow ploughs, fire engines, lorries and passenger cars, and to transport and rescue citizens. (Figure 4.) Our vehicles with high off-road capability rescued buses, passenger cars and lorries, cleaned roads, and transported injured persons, blood and dialysis patients. We provided a hundred blankets for gathering rooms in Tata, where hot tea was also given to people gathering together after their rescue. In addition to that, we delivered 220 of the 400 sets of night equipment, prepared for handover, to Tatabánya. At the same time, we provided generators to facilitate communication with areas of poor accessibility affected by the extreme weather conditions. In the meantime, in the eastern part of the country freezing rain and stormy winds started to cause serious problems in 3 counties. We had to supply generators to these areas already from 15 March. Initially 1, later 2, and finally 10 tracked vehicles, as well as an Mi-17 helicopter participated in the reinstatement of the fallen poles of electricity providers. To help the population, we distributed hot food to 5,000 people in 12 settlements. (Figure 4, p. 98)

All in all, we took part in the performance and provision of protection functions with 770 persons and 268 technical devices used for 88 tasks (<http://www.honvedelem.hu>).

Although the country has always made great endeavours to prevent disasters and eliminate consequences as efficiently as possible, the method of defence needed to be redefined. Accordingly, the government has accepted large-scale changes



both at the organisational level and in terms of legal regulations. This included the reorganisation of the disaster management system, which required the amendment of nearly two hundred regulations. The new disaster management act, which entered into force on 1 January 2012, introduced an integrated disaster management system, and transformed related functions and the system of control. It resulted in an extended period of defence, focusing on improving the safety of life and property of citizens, as well as on increasing the efficiency of defence. The primary objective of such changes is to achieve the best results possible through the better use of existing resources. In a nutshell: to establish the conditions for efficient defence. In this system, the procedures for and the focuses of the use of the Hungarian Defence Forces have also changed.

#### 4 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

The scope of the new disaster management act covers all activities with a risk of disaster performed within the territory of Hungary to prevent disasters, including the prevention of serious accidents involving hazardous materials. In line with the Constitution of Hungary, this act guarantees the safety of life and property of the population living in the territory of Hungary by redefining the concept of special legal order and by establishing extraordinary measures to be applied in the event of a disaster. As a result of such regulations, a uniform industrial security service was brought to life, the system of disaster management administration was reorganised, and the fire department was integrated into the organisation of disaster management, thereby becoming a state-owned entity (earlier it had been operated by the municipalities). The concept of “disaster risk” was introduced as part of the national system, allowing immediate actions to be taken based on a predefined plan to protect human life, the material goods necessary for subsistence, and critical infrastructure, as well as to provide basic supplies to the population.

The Hungarian Defence Forces were, of course, also affected by these changes. Although the use of the defence forces for their intended purpose is primarily foreseen in warfare conflicts, taking an active role in disaster management is also a key obligation. This is especially important at a time when the shortage of resources underlines the need for efficiency and the reasonable use of resources at a national level. This is also reflected in the Constitution, which requires the defence forces to participate in protection against disasters.

The adoption of the Constitution resulted in the redefinition of special legal order and the appearance of the concept of disaster risk.<sup>1</sup> This change now allows immediate actions to be taken based on a predefined plan to protect human life, material goods, and critical infrastructure, as well as to provide basic supplies to the population. The goal of such change is clearly the improvement of efficiency during the periods of preventing disasters, eliminating consequences and remediation.

<sup>1</sup> Further cases *cf* special legal order according to the: states *cf* national crisis described by the Constitution: state *cf* emergency, state *cf* preventive defence, unexpected invasion, state *cf* extreme danger.

Consistent control over protection against disasters should be exercised by the state, which gave rise to the establishment of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Disaster Management (KKB). This Committee is chaired by the Minister of the Interior, and its members are leading state officials delegated by the ministers, such as the administrative state secretary of the Ministry of Defence. The Chief of the Defence Staff regularly participates in the KKB's work in a consultative capacity, ensuring the prominent role of the defence forces and the enforcement of a professional approach in protection against disasters. The operational body of the KKB is the National Emergency Management Centre (NVK), coordinating the activity of participants during the period of defence. The Ministry of Defence is represented in this body by 2 sectoral experts, who are responsible for facilitating the flow of information.

It is important to emphasise that the legislative changes do not affect the leadership/control structure of the defence forces or the legal provisions governing military subordination. This means that the units of the defence forces participating in protection against disasters may only perform their activities under military control. The purpose of this rule is to ensure that an organisation established to carry out functions of armed defence should not be governed by any other body, and that the civilian control and military leadership of the armed forces should be continuously guaranteed, as legally required.

The legislative changes were closely followed by the amendment of sectoral regulations. The main results thereof are the following:

- The efficient operation of the system called for a more active participation of the Chief of the Defence Staff in performing disaster management functions;
- Work teams within the defence forces appointed to perform protection tasks were reviewed and, where applicable, reorganised both materially and technically.

As a result of the reorganisation, in addition to reinforcing control and improving efficiency, the defence forces retained their ability to make available a large number of personnel and equipment within a short time, with a full logistic background. They still possess the special equipment and knowledge unique to them compared to any other disaster management organisation.

## **5 DISASTER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM OF THE DEFENCE FORCES**

The establishment of the Disaster Management System of the Defence Forces was started in 2000. At that time, defence forces focused on three areas: they faced the biggest challenge in the prevention of nuclear accidents, flood protection and extreme weather conditions in winter. One of the goals of reorganisation was to create a uniform procedure, suitable for handling any emergency situation. Over the past ten years, tasks have actually remained the same, but a well-organised and transparent home defence system has been established and consolidated, based on a sound legislative framework.

- By now, the Disaster Management System of the Defence Forces (HKR) has become a system structured along the following aspects:

- Operation in line with the applicable regulations;
- The system is more and more based on modular organisations;
- Ensuring the efficient and sustainable participation of the Hungarian Defence Forces in protection against disasters;
- Tasks related to the intended purpose and protection tasks complement each other, increase the level of skills, and, as a result, efficiency;
- The experience gained during the activity is continuously integrated in the system, improving its functionality;
- The participation of the defence forces organically fits into the national disaster management system;
- To offset the decreasing capacity of the defence forces, the system is shifted towards quality participation. The capabilities, equipment and forces contributed to the system are not, or only to a limited extent, available elsewhere;
- The conditions for rapid alert, leadership and control have been established.

The HKR has continuously adapted itself to the changing circumstances. As part of those changes, general military recruitment was abolished in 2004, and Hungary adopted a system of professional and contracted military personnel. This measure had a negative initial consequence as complete generations escaped the service. These generations still fail to have the minimum skills that would make them suitable for efficient protection against disasters. Therefore, the reorganisation of the reservist system was started in 2010, with the consequences described later.

When establishing and later modifying the HKR, special emphasis was laid on tasks that could be efficiently performed by the defence forces. These are always determined by the focus of preparation and the available resources and equipment. Such tasks may generally include the following:

- Transportation (personnel and material) by road, water and air;
- Rescue from water and from under ruins;
- Building and maintaining river crossings;
- Terrestrial and airborne radiation detection and analysis;
- Radioactive decontamination of equipment, persons and roads;
- Explosions (ground, ice, ruins, engineering structures);
- Rubble removal, ground movement; building embankments; snow removal;
- Closing areas;
- Water supply (discovery, cleaning, distribution);
- Research and rescue;
- Electricity supply and illumination;
- Logistical tasks (supply, building and maintaining camps);
- Healthcare functions (first aid, medical assistance, prevention of epidemics);
- Special tasks (exploration, diving; establishment of connections).

In the appointed corps and military organisations, teams prepared in accordance with the above tasks participate in the defence activity. The total number of people involved is today more than 2000. Figure 5. shows the change in the number of participants over 8 years.

**Figure 5:**  
Trends in the number of participants in the HKR between 2004-2011 (Tokovicz, 2012, p. 153)



It costs money to maintain and operate the system. This does not mean the development of new organisations or new capabilities, but resources are required to maintain existing leadership and intervention skills. All this represents a cost of HUF 80 million per year, which is necessary to maintain leadership and readiness, to operate the forecast systems, and to establish and maintain the technical conditions (Figure 6.).

**Figure 6:**  
Trends in the costs of maintaining the HKR between 2009-2022 (Tamási, 2013, p. 137)



Costs directly arising from protection are not budgeted by the ministry; they are recorded separately during the actions, and aggregated at the end of the protection activity. Actual excess costs are refunded from the reserves of the central budget.

There are clear regulations in place regarding the procedures for the control of the HKR. Normally, control is performed via the existing systems of the Hungarian Defence Forces, according to procedures used in everyday operation. Tasks of

disaster management are controlled in three main areas: administration, defence administration and military.

In the area of sectoral *administration*, it is the Minister of Defence that is in charge of disaster management functions (planning, organisation, monitoring, establishment of conditions). The execution of tasks, the preparation of the Steering Committee for Disaster Management, the representation of the ministry at the meetings of the KKB, the establishment of the regulatory environment, and international cooperation in this field are supervised by the administrative state secretary of the ministry.

The special body responsible for *defence administration* is the Protection Agency of the ministry. It plans and organises administration tasks, cooperates with the competent disaster management bodies, and participates in the preparation of defence committee chairmen.

The person in charge of the *military field* is the Chief of the Defence Staff, who participates in the KKB's work in a consultative capacity, governing the planning of the functions of subordinated organisations, and controlling preparation and training. He appoints the operational groups with a prominent role in management, as well as the military organisations responsible for execution. System hierarchy is visualised in Figure 7.

Figure 7:  
Control  
hierarchy within  
the Disaster  
Management  
System of the  
Defence Forces



Time is a major factor in protection against disasters. The rapid activation of the HKR is facilitated by the alert system of emergency services. The standard for the readiness of leadership elements is 3 hours, while the forces in charge of preventing nuclear accidents reach operational readiness within 7 hours. The HKR forces appointed for action are not in the state of constant readiness (Tokovicz, 2012, p. 229).

The fact that the Ministry of Defence and the Hungarian Defence Forces take their role in protection against disasters seriously is clearly illustrated by the reorganisation of the system of voluntary reservists and the exploitation of the relevant opportunities.

## 6 OPPORTUNITIES IN THE SYSTEM OF VOLUNTARY RESERVISTS

Mandatory military recruitment was abolished in Hungary in 2004. The abolition of obligatory military service at times of peace resulted in a change in the basic philosophy of organising the military, meaning that the main objective was now to maintain and develop a professional army consisting of a small number of highly qualified volunteers. At the same time, experience has showed that no country can afford to base its security solely on volunteers. The reservist system of the Hungarian Defence Forces is comprised of voluntary reservists, as well as trained reservists and persons liable to military service based on a legal obligation, who may only be used in case of special legal order. The aim of the Government is to have 8,000 persons available in this capacity. The number of voluntary reservists is continuously growing, by the end of the year 2014 it was already over 5,500. The system of voluntary reservists is broken down into two segments: voluntary operational reservists and voluntary defence reservists. The peacetime reserves of the professional military staff of the defence forces are only constituted by the voluntary reservists.

A voluntary defence reservist agrees to take part in performing the tasks of the defence forces (such as the guarding of military objects, support from the host nation, performing disaster management functions).<sup>2</sup> Voluntary defence reservists may be employed for executing tasks related to the prevention of natural and industrial disasters, or the elimination of their consequences. In this case, they are subordinated to the quick-response defence brigade. In case of voluntary defence reservists without preliminary military qualification or experience, drafting to actual service must always be preceded by general military training and preparation for special tasks.

Reservist forces can primarily participate in the elimination of the consequences of natural disasters, either as additional staff to the corps of the defence forces, or separately, using technical equipment sourced from the national economy. Possible tasks can be assigned to three groups according to their nature:

- Auxiliary tasks, defined, depending on the situation, only after an alert (rescue functions, physical work, guarding, closing areas, patrolling).

<sup>2</sup> A voluntary defence reservist is available against a consideration, performing actual military service after being drafted. In this capacity, this category may also be employed for protection against disasters.

- Tasks requiring preliminary training, where special qualifications or skills are not necessary but the persons executing the task should get to know the activity, the location and the equipment beforehand (traffic control, support from the host nation, operation of supply points).
- More complex and large-scale functions requiring preliminary training, where, ideally, corresponding qualification, experience or a short training course is necessary (discovery, area inspection, fuel supply, healthcare functions).

The establishment of the system of reservists has not been completed yet. The biggest challenge is recruitment and making recruits accept that the skills of reservists are necessary to fight off certain dangers threatening the country. Another issue is to find a way to ensure that labour requirements pertaining to reservists are clear and inspire them to take on the service. As an important part of this process, employers should be made interested, meaning that they should not be at a disadvantage if their employee takes on voluntary service.

## **7 THE RESOURCES OF THE HUNGARIAN DEFENCE FORCES FOR PROTECTION AGAINST DISASTERS**

2012 was the most difficult fiscal year for the Hungarian Defence Forces. Expressed in figures, the amount available was 0.81% of the GDP. Just for a comparison, the corresponding rate was 1.61% of the GDP in 2001. In real terms, this means that the budget for 2012 is worth a little more than 50% of the amount available in 2001, calculated at the then price level. Note, however, that the number of military personnel permitted by the budget was 47,168 in 2001, while the 2012 budget was planned for a staff of only 25,427. This means that the per capita budget in 2001 was HUF 5 million at current prices, whereas in 2012 the planned expenses amounted to more than HUF 9 million per person. However, using comparative prices, the per capita budget in 2012 is somewhat lower than in 2001 at HUF 4.9 million, calculated at 2001 prices (Nagy, 2012). In 2012, the Government stated in resolution, that annual military budget should not be decreased further in nominal value until 2016, and after that, from 2016 to 2022 it should be raised with a minimum of 0.1 percent of the GDP to reach 1.4 percent of the GDP by 2022 (<http://www.honvedelem.hu>). But as a consequence of the Ukrainian crisis, this procedure had to be speeded up, so the Hungarian Government gave 260.5 billion HUF for the defense budget for 2015, that means a 20 billions HUF raise (8.2 percent) compared to 2014 (<http://www.honvedelem.hu>).

The shortage of resources does not leave the disaster management budget of the defence forces unaffected. Diagram 2 clearly indicates that the amount that can be spent on protection is not large, even in relative terms (HUF 140 million in 2015), and the defence budget is far from being abundant for the following years too. Meaningful changes are to be expected as of 2018, depending on the planned increase in the total budget of the defence sector.

In Hungary, the main threat is posed by floods, due to the geographical location of the country. Accordingly, the Hungarian Defence Forces face the biggest challenge in the area of flood protection. This is a century-long tradition, as the military was used as a last resort for the population of disaster-stricken areas as early as in the 19th century. A saying of Francis Joseph is still frequently quoted: “Die Leistungen der Pioniere ausserordentlich. Überhaupt Pioniere wie immer” (“They are pioneers, anyway!”)<sup>3</sup> (Jacobi, 1928).

It was not much different in later years. Looking at only the past ten years, more than 25,000 soldiers were involved in flood protection, and the number of technical appliances is also more than 2,000.

A specific application of the defence forces is the provision of drinking water to the population. The Hungarian Defence Forces helped to supply 290 thousand inhabitants in 123 settlements with healthy drinking water from 1 January 2013 until spring 2014 (<http://www.honvedelem.hu>). To that end, the military objects allocated to this function were populated by approx. 250 soldiers and 240 technical appliances already in December 2012 to prepare the necessary technical devices. In line with the Government’s decision, the defence forces contributed their “military capabilities” to the provision of healthy drinking water to the population.<sup>4</sup> The capabilities of the Hungarian Defence Forces are remarkable even at the level of the alliance. We have a company for water purification, equipped with state-of-the-art devices. The daily output of the devices in case of full utilisation is 800 m<sup>3</sup> of surface water, 448 m<sup>3</sup> of seawater, 348 m<sup>3</sup> of chemically contaminated water. All this capacity is supported by packaging devices, enabling us to satisfy needs with bagged water (Kállai, 2012).

## 8 INTERNATIONAL MILITARY COOPERATION

As disasters are not limited by country borders, defence against them is also of a cross-border nature. Partly due to its geographical specificities, Hungary is motivated to look for ways of international cooperation in disaster management.

Hungary is an active participant in the disaster management initiatives and organisations of the UN and the EU. The benefits of cooperation are exploited in both our bilateral and multilateral relations. The best practical example of defence realised by way of international cooperation is the “Tisza” Multinational Engineer Battalion.

This battalion is an efficient tool for cross-border military cooperation. The cooperation, launched in 2002, joins the forces of four countries in the protection

<sup>3</sup> The city of Szeged was threatened by the flood in 1879, and therefore the soldiers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion (cf Bratislava) were employed. They deserved praise by the emperor with their devoted work.

<sup>4</sup> The examples presented do not provide a full picture of the capabilities of the Hungarian Defence Forces. Our military personnel are prepared for tasks related to epidemiology, the management of migration problems, and the elimination of disaster situations arising from extreme weather conditions.



against flood waves along the river Tisza. In case of a flood within the catchment area of the Tisza, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovakian and Ukrainian special technical soldiers jointly take part in providing assistance to the local residents and in the elimination of damage. The cooperation allows the corps, or any part thereof, to participate in defence in the territory of any of those countries. They carry out their activities in accordance with their national organisational structures and in line with their national laws and equipment, with very similarly structured engineering companies. The battalion holds a military exercise each year, but has not yet been used for fighting floods.

**Summary** Hungary, as a member country of the European Union and of course the United Nations has a wide range of international responsibilities, and military activities are important part of them. Compared to the full force of the Hungarian Defence Forces, quite large of our contingents are taking part in international peace support operations even now in many countries and on several continents all over the World. For the future, our country is determined to keep these activities in high level to take part in crisis management and international stability and confidence strengthening.

On the other hand, use of military forces in protection against disasters has a long-lasting tradition. This is no wonder as they represent human and technical resources that may and must be efficiently used in situations where the population of the country is endangered. We need to remember, however, that the basis for efficient protection is the coordinated use of available resources. Protection against disasters is not an area where organisational interests or material considerations can prevail. Every organisation with the necessary power and assets and the ability to contribute to the effectiveness of defence is obliged to do its best for the protection of the population. The Hungarian Defence Forces, like all through the past more than one hundred years, play a prominent role in this system, providing indispensable skills, assets and knowledge to protection functions.

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