

The concept of population protection in the Czech Republic as a tool to increase the level of security of society

Otakar Jiri Mika^{1,2}

The Czech Republic pays great attention to the protection of the population. This important security area in the Czech Republic is included in some important laws and a special security decree is issued directly to implement individual measures to protect the population, such as warnings, evacuations, shelters, etc. However, the Czech Republic does not issue a law on population protection.

Since 2002, the so-called Concept of Population Protection, which is approved and announced by the Government of the Czech Republic, has been published regularly. Population protection concepts were issued in 2002, 2008, 2013 and most recently in June last year. The professional contribution includes a brief analysis, evaluation and professional discussion on the current state of population protection in the Czech Republic. It shows weaknesses and shortcomings in the whole system from the legal point of view to the current readiness of the population to deal with emergencies and crisis situations. At present, the preparedness of the population of the Czech Republic for natural disasters and industrial or traffic accidents seems to be relatively low.

The author of the paper makes academic reflections on the current state and submits his own proposals for possible solutions. It is basically an improvement of the current state of protection of the population in the Czech Republic with a view to the near future.

Important and significant is the author's personal but long-term vision of the preparation and introduction of the national law "*Protection of Population*" in the Czech Republic. The basic vision of such a national law is summarized here and presented as a framework, including the basic justification of this social need.

Keywords: concept of population protection, security threats, emergencies, crisis situations, security, protection of population, national law, national security priorities.

I. Introduction

According to the constitutional order of the Czech Republic, the state is obliged to ensure the safety of its citizens in order to lead a quality life. For this purpose, it creates a security system that develops tools to strengthen the protection of the population. The protection of the population is undoubtedly an area that deserves high attention. The valid terminological dictionary of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic from 2016 defines the protection of the population as follows:

“Fulfillment of civil protection tasks during and outside of armed conflict, especially warning, notification, evacuation, shelter and emergency survival of the population and other measures to secure their life, health and property. The interpretation of the protection of the population is not uniform, in some countries where they do not have a crisis management system, the

¹ Police Academy of the Czech Republic in Prague, Faculty of Security Management, Lhotecká 559/7, P.O. Box 54, 143 01 Praha 4, Czech Republic, email: mika@polac.cz

² University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, J. Boreckého 1167/27, 370 11 České Budějovice, Czech Republic, email: otakar_mika@email.cz

protection of the population is used in a broader interpretation as a system of non-military protection - it addresses, for example, the protection of internal security and the economy."³

In June 2021, a draft strategic document was approved in the area of population protection in the Czech Republic, which in its content determines the direction and development of population protection in the state until 2030.

"The concept of population protection until 2025 with a view to 2030" was prepared by the Ministry of the Interior - General Directorate of the Fire and Rescue Service of the Czech Republic in accordance with the provisions of § 7, paragraph 2, letter e) Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on the integrated rescue system and on the amendment of certain laws, as amended.⁴

This act defines the integrated rescue system (IZS) in detail, establishes the individual components of the IZS and their scope, the scope and authority of state authorities and authorities of territorial self-governing units, the rights and obligations of legal entities and natural persons in preparing for emergencies and in rescue and liquidation work and in to protect the population before and during the declaration of a state of danger, a state of emergency, a state of threat to the state and a state of war.

Protection of the population is the fulfillment of the tasks of civil protection (Article 61 of Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of August 12, 1949 on the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts), in particular **warning, evacuation, shelter and emergency survival of the population** and other measures to ensure the protection of its life, health and property.

II. A brief historical overview

The issue of population protection is a very important security area, as already indicated above. In addition to the above-mentioned law of the Czech Republic, there are also other legal regulations in the area of population protection that define basic information for preparing for emergencies, during rescue and liquidation work and before and after declaration of crisis situations. Furthermore, they define the authority of state authorities and the authority of the authorities of territorial self-governing units, including the obligations of legal entities in preparing for the occurrence of extraordinary events. They take the form of laws, government regulations and ministerial decrees.

In 2002, binding implementing decree No. 380/2002 Coll.⁵ The mentioned document is relatively brief, it contains 15 pages of text including two appendices on specific cases of evacuation.

Decree No. 380/2002 Coll., which has been effective since August 22, 2002, thus establishes detailed demarcations for a number of important areas from the protection of the population, as follows:

- the procedure for setting up civil protection facilities and for the professional training of their personnel,
- method of informing legal entities and natural persons about the nature of the possible threat, prepared measures and the method of their implementation,
- technical, operational and organizational security of the unified warning and notification system and the method of providing emergency information,

³ Collective Terminological dictionary of terms in the field of crisis management, population protection, environmental security and state defence planning, Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, Department of Security Policy and Crime Prevention, Prague 2016, p. 51.

⁴ Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on integrated rescue system as amended.

⁵ Decree of the Ministry of the Interior No. 380/2002 Coll., on the preparation and implementation of population protection tasks

- the method of carrying out the evacuation and its all-round security (the annexes then set out the principles of evacuation in the event of a flood and in the event of a radiation accident)
- the principles of the procedure for providing shelters and the method and extent of individual protection of the population,
- population protection requirements in spatial planning and construction-technical requirements for civil protection buildings or buildings affected by civil protection requirements.

The said implementing decree is of course still important and useful, on the other hand, it is already somewhat outdated at the present time. Unfortunately, its amendment or the issuance of a new decree is not yet in sight.

Due to the fact that the Czech Republic does not yet have an independent law on "*population protection*", it is significant that since 2002 it has started issuing the Population Protection Concept irregularly, but at certain similar time intervals, as an important conceptual document. In terms of historical context, it is possible to recall that the first Population Protection Concept was issued in 2002, then in 2008, then in 2013. The new Population Protection Concept was drafted in 2020 and approved at a meeting of the Government of the Czech Republic in mid-2021 ⁶, as discussed in more detail below.

Picture 1: Cover sample of the penultimate Population Protection Concept from 2013



The concepts mentioned above were always a reflection of the time in which they were created, they were consistently and honestly based on the state of scientific knowledge and established professional tasks and measures for the next period. It is not without interest that the concept

⁶ Collective: Concept of population protection until 2025 with a view to 2030, Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, General Directorate of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, Prague 2020.

of each individual document is somewhat different, both from the point of view of professional content and the page size of individual concepts.

III. A new concept of population protection in the Czech Republic

During 2020, all professional work on the new concept of population protection in the Czech Republic was completed, as can be seen from this document.

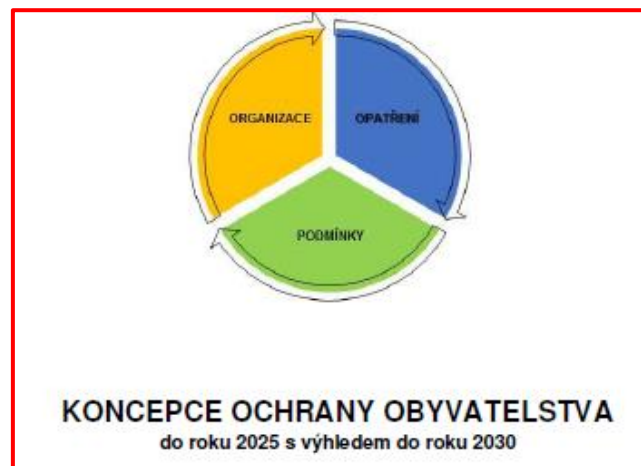
Subsequently, on Monday, June 21, 2021, the government of the Czech Republic approved a fundamental document in the field of population protection - Concept of population protection until 2025 with a view to 2030. The document is an intersection of fundamental topics within the population protection system. It is therefore not only a significant text from the point of view of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, but also from the point of view of ministries and central administrative offices, municipalities and other key actors involved in preparing for and solving large-scale emergencies and crisis situations.

The document sets out 3 basic strategic goals, i.e. the basic lines of further progress. These are divided into 12 task areas.

The concept represents a new perspective on the protection of the population. The protection of the population is no longer perceived only within the limits of the definitions set out in Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on the integrated rescue system and on the amendment of some laws, but reflects ongoing or anticipated development trends and accepts the possibility of unexpected events with significant impacts on society.

The protection of the population is viewed from a broader perspective and is understood as a system of prevention, preparedness and response to extraordinary events and crisis situations, the aim of which is the protection of lives, health, property and the environment. Actors are state administration bodies, local governments, legal and entrepreneurial natural persons, but also citizens themselves.

Figure 1: Sample of part of the cover of the new Population Protection Concept from 2021



Fulfillment of the Population Protection Concept by 2025 with a view to 2030 will significantly help increase society's resistance to a wide range of threats. This entire process leads to the required increase in the overall preparedness of not only the population, state administrative bodies, components of the integrated rescue system, or actually the entire society for possible extraordinary events and crisis situations.

The quality of the response of the entire system to various types of threats is conditioned by the constant development of the capabilities of its individual components, which must clearly depend on the current state of scientific knowledge, while respecting the economic possibilities

of the state. However, the entire system cannot do without the responsible approach of citizens. This is a very important and serious idea in the concept, which is intertwined with the entire strategic document.

IV. A brief proposal for the creation of a law on the protection of the population

It is necessary to develop the population protection system with regard to development trends and beyond also taking into account the acceptance of the possibility of the occurrence of unexpected events with significant impact on society. To ensure the functionality of the population protection system and above all to maintain its high standard in the context of the development trends mentioned below and taking into account the acceptance of the possibility of unexpected events with a significant impact on society, the role of research support is important. This is secured mainly through security research programs. A non-negligible role is also played by selected universities and colleges, which, due to their profile, cover research projects in the area of population protection.

Characteristic features of a changing society are individualization individuals, population aging and widening inequalities caused mainly by socio-economic factors. It's running out to a decrease in social empathy and, conversely, an increase in manifestations aggression. In the developed world, the proportion of people living alone is increasing. According to the forecast of the Czech Statistical Office, the share of people aged over 65 could approach one third in 2050, which would mean doubling the current proportion of the population.

The protection of the population (or civil defence and protection) has a long and rich tradition in the former Czechoslovakia and subsequently in the Czech Republic (established on January 1, 1993). Therefore, it can be said that at present its conception and, above all, its real implementation lags behind social practice in some areas.

The protection of the population is undoubtedly a very important area life of a modern democratic and industrial society. The highest legislative norm of the Czech Republic, the Constitution of the Czech Republic ensures the protection and saving of their lives and protection to the citizens of the state health of people, protection of their property and protection of the environment.

The main tasks of protecting the population include security citizen warning, hiding (shelters), evacuation, individual and collective protection and emergency survival.

The main measures to protect the population include:

- establishment and operation of the warning and information system population and notification of interested entities,
- timely and reliable transmission of information about real threats or already extraordinary events that have occurred,
- preparation and use of means of individual protection or improvised means to protect respiratory organs and body surface,
- preparation of shelters and organization of permanent shelters and improvised shelters,
- provision of medical assistance and hygiene measures for the prevention and eradication of epidemics, infections and other health issues threat,
- prevention and liquidation of leaks of dangerous substances, explosions and fires,
- search and rescue of endangered and disabled persons,
- provision of spare and emergency supply of drinking water, food, energy, hygiene and disinfectants,
- humanitarian and other forms of aid,
- ensuring public order and security, closure disabled and endangered space, regulation of the movement of people and transport,
- saving property, cultural, economic and domestic values animal life,

- removing the consequences of extraordinary events,
- other measures according to the specific situation.

The prerequisite for the effective implementation of the mentioned measures is sufficient readiness of the population to act in a timely, active and correct manner in cases of imminent or already occurring threats.

The contradictory and contradictory character of civilizational activities, combined with the continued proliferation of security risks, results in permanent increasing the threat to the population due to the increasing number of species and types extraordinary events. However, this objective process is connected with the delay in the development of an adequate security system, which makes the issue of protecting the population permanently open matters.

Given the importance of the area "*protection of the population*" it would be define the necessary issue and include it in a separate one of the law. Possible framework content and scope of the proposed law on the protection of the population is given below:

- Introductory provisions,
- Definitions and basic terms,
- General conditions,
- Extraordinary events,
- Crisis situations,
- Basic organizational and technical measures to protect the population,
- Protection of the population from the effects and consequences of extraordinary events events and crisis situations,
- Prevention of extraordinary events and crisis situations,
- Preparedness of the population for emergency and crisis events situation,
- Performance of state administration in the area of population protection,
- The effectiveness of the law,
- Annexes to the law.⁷

V. Conclusion

Population Protection Concepts (2002, 2008, 2013, 2020) have been published in the Czech Republic since 2002.

It was always an important conceptual document on the protection of the population, which responds to the social changes that have taken place on the level of scientific knowledge in security fields.

In addition, since 2015, the Czech Republic has issued an evaluation report on the state of population protection in the Czech Republic every 3 years, the first report was issued in 2015, and the next in 2018, which are also freely available on the website.

A solid and comprehensive knowledge of this issue is important for a correct understanding and subsequent creative thinking for a permanent increase in the level of protection of the population in the Czech Republic.

It is true both in the Czech Republic and in other comparable countries that

The ability of every citizen to help himself and others significantly contributes to reducing the negative effects of various extraordinary events and crisis situations. An important and permanent task is to improve the conditions for building sufficient information and good preparedness of the population to ensure the safety of themselves and their loved ones.⁸

⁷ Mika O. J., Padrnos J. Population Protection Act, Proceedings of the International Conference Population Protection 2013 - Decontamination, 29-30 January 2013, Ostrava, pp. 87-93, ISBN 978-80-7385-122-4.

⁸ Mika O. J. *New concept of population protection in the Czech Republic*, Civil protection, Review for civil protection, Slovakia, February 2022, pp. 37-38, ISSN 1335-4094.

In conclusion, it is possible to refer serious interested parties to the public website, where the mentioned document is not only easily accessible, but also freely downloadable.

Recommended website (unfortunately only in Czech):

<https://www.hzscr.cz/clanek/vlada-cr-schvalila-novou-koncepci-ochrany-obyvateilstva.aspx>

Protection of the population as a separate system of specialists the measure is an integrated part of crisis management and emergencies events of a non-military nature are priority matters of the crisis management. In a systemic approach to the solution of individual species and types of extraordinary events represents independently managed and coordinated action.

The current and future importance of population protection is so serious and important that it is possible to recommend preparation the adoption of separate legislation (see the above proposed law on protection population). The law would be based on and follow up on the "*set of crisis of laws*", which were adopted in the middle of 2000, with effect from January 1, 2001. Protecting the population takes this responsible approach no doubt they deserve it.

VI. References

Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on integrated rescue system as amended.

Collective: Terminological dictionary of terms in the field of crisis management, population protection, environmental security and state defence planning, Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, Department of Security Policy and Crime Prevention, Prague 2016, p. 51.

Collective: Concept of population protection until 2025 with a view to 2030, Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, General Directorate of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, Prague 2020.

Decree of the Ministry of the Interior No. 380/2002 Coll., on the preparation and implementation of population protection tasks.

Mika O. J., Padrnos J. Population Protection Act, Proceedings of the International Conference Population Protection 2013 - Decontamination, 29-30 January 2013, Ostrava, pp. 87-93, ISBN 978-80-7385-122-4.

Mika O. J. New concept of population protection in the Czech Republic, Civil protection, Review for civil protection, Slovakia, February 2022, pp. 37-38, ISSN 1335-4094