

THE WHITE PAPER OF CIVIL PROTECTION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA: CONTRIBUTION TO THE SECURITY STRATEGY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

The White Paper of Civil Protection of the Republic of Bulgaria Project was completed in December 2004. The project was implemented by the Center for National Security and Defense Studies (CNSDS) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences by a team headed by Associate Professor Dr. Velizar Shalamanov. The main goal of the study was to assess the status and prospects ahead of the system for the protection of population and critical infrastructure with the participation of foreign experts, as well as to formulate a concept for the development of the system and thus assist the Permanent Committee for Protection of the Population Against Natural Disasters, Accidents and Emergencies (PCPPNDAE) with the Council of Ministers.

The fundamental principles of the Concept for Civil Security of the Republic of Bulgaria have been formulated as a part of the project within the context of the establishment of an integrated security sector. An institutionalized civil security system is considered “the third pillar” of the security sector in Bulgaria. This system includes both the “traditional” civil protection and the crises response system, which are to be regulated by the Crises Management Act. The expert team has reached the conclusion that active civil participation (mainly through volunteer formations) is the connection between the “traditional” civil protection and civil security.

The civil security concept foundations are formulated also based on an analysis of the existing models of civil security within the frameworks of the EU and US. The term *civil security* is suggested as the Bulgarian equivalent to the term *homeland security*, adopted in the US, and *civil (societal) security*, adopted in many EU countries. Due attention is paid to the tendency of transformation of civil security system in many European countries targeted at the establishment of an independent unit outside the Ministry of Defense or of the Interior, which is to execute the powers in this area and coordinate the work of all other government authorities in case of emergency situations, natural disasters and accidents.

The White Paper of Civil Protection contains a detailed reference of the possible risks for both population and infrastructure. A comprehensive analysis of the current status of organizational structures within the civil protection system points to a number of weaknesses (particularly in interdepartmental coordination and the lack of strategic forecasts and planning).

The expert team behind the White Paper of Civil Protection suggests three fundamental alternatives for the development of the system for the protection of population and infrastructure. The first alternative lies in a narrow interpretation and application of the Crises Management Act. This alternative envisages the establishment of a crises response system compliant with the Act – a National Center for Crises Management with the Security Council of the Council of Ministers, as well as Security Councils with the central and local government authorities. The main weaknesses of this alternative are the narrow range of covered risks, as well as the danger that traditional “power” ministries could obsess the initiative within the crises management system and dominate over the structures for the protection of civilians and infrastructure.

The second fundamental alternative, suggested in the White Paper, offers a broader interpretation and application of the Crises Management Act. This alternative envisages maximum interdepartmental coordination, which includes also the coordination plans for the expansion of the capacities for protection of population and critical infrastructure of several agencies. The second fundamental alternative is considered to be “a quasi ministry, whereas a ministry is not actually established.” Its major advantage is the higher extent of integration of the crises response system and the existing structure for population and infrastructure protection.

The third fundamental alternative, formulated in the White Paper, envisages the establishment of a new Ministry of Civil Security. This ministry should include organizational units based on three existing state agencies – Civil Protection State Agency, State Agency for Refugees and State Reserve and Wartime Stocks State Agency. This alternative envisages the establishment of a new Civil Security Services Agency within the new Ministry, which is to coordinate and control the work of paramilitary volunteer formations (Civil Security Services) with the regional governors.

The White Paper analyses each of these alternatives also from a legal perspective issuing recommendations for concrete legislative changes. The fundamental points of a special Population and Infrastructure Protection Act are formulated and are envisaged to regulate the activity, rights and obligations of the units within the civil security system.