

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

from the forum

“Crisis Management and the Safety and Rescue System in the Republic of Macedonia,”

organized by

**The Association of Macedonian Alumni of the
“George C. Marshall” European Center for Security Studies**

Skopje, 5th of May, 2009

The forum, part of the association's 2009 program, was held at the Army House in Skopje. The event was attended by numerous association members, as well as by representatives from the NGO sector, the media and the government of the Republic of Macedonia. The event got under way with welcoming remarks by the president of the association, Prof. Dr. Stojan Kuzev. Introductory remarks were given by Prof. Dr. John Clark, director of the European Center for Security studies “George C. Marshall”, Prof. Dr. Pande Lazarevski, director of the Crisis Management Center and Mr. Shaban Saliu, director of the Safety and Rescue Directorate.

The role of moderator of the forum was undertaken by Associate Professor Dr. Mende Solonchevski, an associate member of this Association. The following presentations were given: Prof. Dr. Pande Lazarevski, director of the Center for Crisis Management, “The National Platform for reducing risks of emergencies and catastrophes in the Republic of Macedonia”, Mr. Vlatko Jovanovski, adviser in the Section for International Cooperation in the Safety and Rescue Directorate, “Organizational and Functional Structure of the Safety and Rescue Directorate within the safety and rescue system in the Republic of Macedonia” and Mr. Ragner Boe, deputy head of the Euro-Atlantic Coordination Center for Crisis Response (EADRCC), “NATO civilian planning during emergencies – organizing crisis management”.

The main goal of the forum was to highlight and analyze the way that crises caused by natural disasters and other situations are handled within the Euro-Atlantic structures at the national level in the Republic of Macedonia. In line with that, a realistic picture was presented of the current approach to the handling of such crises, setting forth both positive and negative features, as well as ways in which weaknesses might be overcome

Prof. Dr. Pande Lazarevski, director of the Center for Crisis Management, presented the history and development of the crisis management system in the Republic of Macedonia and its legal framework. According to Dr. Lazarevski, the Crisis Management Center coordinates the activities of all individuals and organizational units involved in the crisis management system. The National Platform for reducing risks from emergencies and catastrophes provides a solid foundation for effective prevention and management of crises in the Republic of Macedonia. It functions as a coordinating mechanism, with the aim of ensuring that the principles of risk reduction are included in policies, plans and development programs, in accordance with the recommendations of the Hyogo Framework for Action.

The platform is directed towards meeting the needs of the country for a sustainable nation-wide system that will reduce risks from emergencies and catastrophes. By effective and efficient use of the available resources and capacities at the local, regional and national levels, we will ensure an effective integrated approach to risk reduction and the consequences of emergencies and catastrophes. This will encompass prevention and early warning, as well as management of and reduction of threats from catastrophes. The national platform deals with twenty-one distinct risks. In order to handle these threats efficiently, it is envisaged that a networking process will be implemented, which will draw on the

networks of the national laboratories, the academic community, the NGO and business sectors, and religious communities, etc.

Mr. Vlatko Jovanovski, an adviser in the Safety and Rescue Directorate, briefed the audience on the history and development of the Directorate for Safety and Rescue in the Republic of Macedonia. The system for safety and rescue was organized to identify and prevent the appearance of and eliminate the consequences of emergencies and other events in peace and war, as well as military activities jeopardizing the population and its welfare. The Directorate for Safety and Rescue is an autonomous governmental authority, founded exclusively to perform safety and rescue activities in the event of emergencies and other disasters. It was established in 2005 with the transformation of the Ministry of Defense - Sector for Civil Protection. It has jurisdiction over prevention, damage control, operational work and reconstruction. As the authority in charge of safety and rescue, it coordinates the activities of the organizational units participating in the safety and rescue system and at the same time participates in the system for crisis management.

Practical experience acquired during this short period (forest fires - 2007) has shown that changes need to be made to cope with overlapping jurisdictions among the other participants in the safety and rescue system and the crisis management system. The safety and rescue forces need to be revamped, they need to be furnished with sophisticated equipment and tools, and they need to undergo continuous human resources development through training and exercises.

Mr. Ragner Boe, deputy head of the Euro-Atlantic Coordination Center for Crisis Response, presented NATO's crisis management model, identifying the participants in the civilian planning for emergencies and their roles. The strategic concept adopted in 1999 identifies the fundamental security issue goals and responsibilities, based on which effective procedures have been developed for consultations with those involved in the planning for, preparation for and management of crises. According to this concept, those responsible are as follows: Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee (SCEPC), Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC), personnel for civilian planning for emergencies, planning bodies and committees and international civilian experts.

Crisis management procedures have been developed which draw on NATO civilian and military components, as well as international organizations, institutions and NGOs. The concept aims at helping states to protect and rescue their populations from the effects of weapons of mass destruction, natural catastrophes, terrorists attacks and other misfortunes, by providing and developing resources and advice about the availability and efficient use of resources. The Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) operates as a focal point for exchange of information on catastrophes. It also coordinates the efforts of the national, regional and international bodies responsible for dealing with crises caused by natural disasters and other misfortunes.

The seriousness and importance of this issue have provoked considerable discussion. In particular, there have been calls for the elimination of ambiguities in documents governing the order in which assets are deployed in any given crisis. The lack of clarity on this matter is seen as causing an overlapping of jurisdiction among elements of the safety and rescue system and the crisis management system.

Based on the presentations and extensive discussion concerning efficient networking in dealing with natural disasters and other misfortunes, the following conclusions and recommendations were put forward:

First, a concept for crisis management has been developed within the Euro-Atlantic structures. This concept deals with complex and efficient procedures for prevention and handling of crises arising from natural disasters and other misfortunes. Experience has shown that successful crisis management depends not only on governmental structures but on the NGO sector as well. Together they create the conditions and engage the available resources for the efficient management of crises at the national and international level.

Second, the Republic of Macedonia has been developing crisis management and safety and rescue systems for use in the event of natural disasters and other misfortunes. Participants in these systems are: the state authorities, public enterprises, institutions, business sector, NGO sector, ordinary citizens, etc. Responsible for coordinating the activities of those involved in the crisis management and safety and rescue systems are the Center for Crisis Management and the Safety and Rescue Directorate. Practical experience in the short history of its existence (since 2005) has revealed a number of weaknesses, among which are the following:

- Overlapping of jurisdiction among responsible organizations;
- Inadequate development of operational procedures for efficient engagement of resources in dealing with crises due to emergencies and other misfortunes;
- Inadequate operational procedures for efficient receiving/giving of assistance from other nations through international institutions, especially institutions within the Euro-Atlantic structures;
- Shortage of human resources trained and practiced in the handling of crises in emergency situations and other misfortunes;
- Shortage of sophisticated and appropriate equipment needed to deal with emergencies and other misfortunes, and
- Lack of unified assessments of the risks and threats to the security of the Republic of Macedonia.

Third, to overcome the weaknesses brought to light during the forum, it is necessary to undertake the following activities:

- Changes in operational documentation to eliminate overlapping jurisdictions;
- Transformation of the National Platform for reducing risks from emergencies and catastrophes into an effective and efficient mechanism for the coordinated reduction of such risks. It should be in line with the needs of the country and should foster the development of standard operational procedures for deploying the participants and their available resources in the handling of crises;
- Intensification of training and exercises and provision of adequate equipment, and
- Preparation and regular updating of a unified risk and threat assessment for the Republic of Macedonia.

The Association wishes to express its readiness for further engagement in the government's efforts to achieve efficient crisis management in the Republic of Macedonia. In line with that, the Association will be glad to contribute its intellectual capacities in the ongoing development of operational documents and human resources training. We believe that the Association of Macedonian Alumni of the "George C. Marshall" European Center for Security Studies, Skopje, has once again demonstrated that it is a significant member of the NGO sector.

The Association has its own areas of expertise, but it can also draw on that of the George C. Marshall Center, Garmisch Partenkirchen (Germany). In addition, the Association will maintain its commitment to the area of security studies and will continue to contribute its intellectual capacities to the government's efforts in this area. In this case, its contribution has been the organization of a forum that yielded a set of recommendations and conclusions on how the Republic of Macedonia will achieve efficient crisis management in the event of emergencies and other misfortunes.

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**Association of Macedonian Alumni of
the “George C. Marshall” European
Center for Security Studies**

President
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