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GOVERNMENT OF
THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

ЦЕНТАР ЗА УПРАВУВАЊЕ СО КРИЗИ

CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTER

CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

CITIZEN'S HANDBOOK



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We are living in times characterized by great dynamics and outstanding globalization of communications and movement of people throughout the world. The fast technical-technological progress and the application of high scientific achievements in various fields have had an exceptionally positive impact on the quality of life in most of the world. However, at the same time the contemporary civilization also faces great challenges, which are more and more often threatening human life and health, the environment, the material, cultural and other resources of the countries.

The modern world is increasingly facing the non-traditional risk types and forms, such as global terrorism, illicit trade of drugs and arms, and trafficking in human beings, threats of weapons of mass destruction, infectious diseases and large scale epidemics, unemployment, poverty, effects of the global climate changes, natural disasters and catastrophes caused by natural phenomena, degradation of the environment, technical-technological accidents, etc. A common trait of the above is the fact that such risks know no borders and have global effect.

History abounds in disasters and catastrophes, which, unfortunately, have caused unforeseeable consequences and tremendous suffering of the human civilization. Such phenomena are also not rare in the present days, and for this purpose, the world is mobilizing and taking as yet unprecedented efforts to mitigate the effects of such phenomena, which are becoming increasingly frequent, more aggressive and are causing great loss of human life and of property, on all continents.

Big world organizations, such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU), NATO, etc., within the framework of their institutional mechanisms, dedicate an increasing amount of attention to planning and undertaking concrete measures and activities aimed at prevention and reduction of the risks of disasters and catastrophes throughout the world. We are living in a decade (2005-2015) which the UN, as the largest world organization, dedicated to strengthening the nations' and communities' resilience to the more and more frequent occurrences of various disasters and catastrophes.

The humanity has been always lived and shall continue to live in the presence of many various sources of insecurities; the hazards that surround us are continually changing, and, unfortunately, are causing more increasing human suffering, consequences and damage¹. It is our common task to learn more about such hazards and to get prepared to face them!

¹ In the period from January to November 2009, the total of 245 natural disasters occurred worldwide, with nearly 9000 casualties, 58 million people affected, and with economic damages in the amount of USD 19 billion. <http://www.unisdr.org/news/v.php?id=12035>.

At the end of the last, and at the start of the current century, the world has demonstrated serious institutional and organizational weaknesses in the field of protection of people, environment and the material heritage, which were frequently exposed to big disasters and catastrophes. In order to overcome such weaknesses, the world organizations and individual countries have made their best efforts to reduce the risks of disasters, and to strengthen their capacities and abilities to deal with various crisis and crisis situations, as well as to remedy the consequences thereof.

The Republic of Macedonia, from the day it has got its independence to the present day, within the scope of its ability, has been keeping pace with the trends in this area. It has been taking continual normative, organizational, and institutional measures and activities aimed at building a modern and accountable system, which shall provide for a high level of security for its citizens, as well as for protection of other material resources and values of the state.

So as to achieve a full compatibility and interoperability with the global and regional security systems, the Republic of Macedonia established a crisis management system, which includes the functions of prevention, early warning, and dealing with all types of risks and hazards². The specific objectives of the system are aimed at providing a standing level of consultations and coordination among all competent authorities, decision making at the highest level, regular risk assessment, prompt response, and efficient and adequate utilization of the available capacities and resources.

The intention of present Handbook, through its practically refined and selected contents, is to present the general functions of the Crisis Management System in the Republic of Macedonia, its institutional and organizational setup at national and local level, and to stress the rights and obligations of the citizens and local communities, as the basis of the system's mechanisms.

By presenting the characteristics of the Republic of Macedonia and its exposure to specific risks, it emphasizes the challenges with the highest rate of occurrence in the recent years and caused more serious threats, and by presenting more detailed data on them, the Handbook aims to inform us better about the phenomena, how they occur, and about their potential negative effects.

While the main purpose of this material is to raise the awareness of the citizens and local communities about the fact that we live in times of various forms of insecurity, and to convey the message for the necessity of the permanent personal and institutional preparedness, for preventive action and reduction of the risks of disasters and catastrophes, it also provides instructions how to tackle all of the potential threats to human life and health, and to the material, natural and cultural heritage and resources and the general security in the state.

²This area is governed by the Law on Crisis Management ("Official Gazette of RM" no. 29/05)

General information on crisis management or managing crises

If we make an attempt to define crisis management, then the general definition will be that it is a set of undertaken measures and activities of preventive and reactive character, by which the competent authorities in the state seek to eliminate all sources of threats against the security of the citizens, or to reduce effects thereof within the tolerable limits.

In the broadest sense of the term, the primary objective of crisis management is the response to crises, i.e., managing of the phenomena (risks and hazards) that can cause a crisis or a wider crisis situation in the entire country, or in parts thereof.

The conceptual and normative basis used to determine the tasks of crisis management starts from the completely diverse nature of challenges and threats that we face in the present day. Namely, the actual risks and hazards are, by their nature, unpredictable, and the forms of their occurrence are hardly recognizable, while their effects are tremendous. The building of capacities of crisis management, and of its mechanisms and abilities to respond to contemporary risks and hazards, puts special emphasis on the following elements:

- prompt identification and assessment of the likelihood and intensity of potential risks and hazards that may endanger the citizens and the values of vital interest of the state;
- focus on the preventive function and undertaking measures to reduce the intensity of identified risks by the competent authorities;
- planning and implementing comprehensive measures for preparedness of the institutions, communities and citizens, which are to be implemented in a highly coordinated and organized process, led by a competent state authority;
- emphasis on the need for a high level of intersectoral and international cooperation in all stages of crisis management;
- effective and efficient use of resources and capacities at local and national level;

In essence, crisis management is a new security concept and a different approach to the process of dealing with new security challenges. Taking into account the completely diverse nature of the risks that we are frequently facing these days, in most modern societies the crisis management is based on the principles adopted by the collective security systems. Due to the complex global state of play, crisis management has been ranked very high in the security agendas of UN, EU and NATO. The Republic of Macedonia, making efforts to keep the pace with the above mentioned organizations, undertakes all necessary measures to incorporate crisis management in the implementation of policies for disaster risk prevention and reduction, and in policies aimed at providing for a peaceful and safe prosperity for its citizens.

Crisis management in R. Macedonia

The main reason for the establishment of the crisis management system in the Republic of Macedonia may be found in the need to provide a permanent level of consultations and communications among all stakeholders, decision making at the highest level, maximal coordination, timely response, efficient and adequate use of the available capacities and resources in the case of a crisis or a state of emergency in the country.

Crisis management, as an activity of high interest for the state, is established for the purposes of prevention, early warning and dealing with crises that threaten human and animal life and health, material, natural and cultural goods, as well as the general security in the country. The general principles governing the field of crisis management in the Republic of Macedonia may be found in the National Concept for Security and Defence, which has been adopted by the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia in 2003. The National Concept presents the perspectives of the crisis management system and issues the general recommendations for its implementation in the Republic of Macedonia.

The crisis management system in the Republic of Macedonia is established with a view to improve the mechanisms of the National Security Policy, and the main reasons for its implementation are the following:

- the great diversity of laws and regulations governing the subject matter, and the lack of a specific law (*lex specialis*),
- the lack of a specific state authority with primary function and competences in this field,
- the existence of a departmental (partial) approach to risk assessment, and the lack of a unified assessment of all risks and threats,
- raising the level of coordination and efficiency in the utilization of the resources by several state institutions.

The above mentioned, as well as other reasons have led to inefficiency and tardiness in the undertaking of the necessary activities by the national authorities with competences for the implementation of the national security policy instruments. For the purposes of comprehensive regulation of the field, establishment of an institutional system, and in order to achieve the required harmonization of the normative solutions with those of the NATO and EU Member States, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted a Law on Crisis Management at its session held on 22 April 2005.

Law on Crisis Management

The Law on Crisis Management (“Official Gazette of R.M.” no. 29/05) is the basic document governing the crisis management system in the Republic in Macedonia, in particular: its organization and operation, the decision making and the use of resources, communications, coordination and cooperation, assessment of the national security threats, planning and funding, as well as other matters in the field of crisis management. The law is structured in ten thematic entities (chapters), with a total of 63 articles, and it provides for the adoption of several by-laws (decrees and rulebooks).

The primary objectives of the Law are, in particular:

- to improve the coordination of the national authorities, to provide for regular communications and exchange of information;
- to build a crisis management system that shall provide for a prompt, fast and efficient prevention and response in the case of threats to people, their lives and property, as well as threats to the national security posed by any risk or hazard;
- to establish a specific governmental body, the main function of which shall be to pursue activities related to crisis management;
- to provide for coordinated, effective and efficient use of resources in the case of crises and crisis situations.

One of the main characteristics of this Law is the fact that it introduces the possibility to declare a “crisis situation” in the entire country, or in a specific part of its territory, as opposed to the “state of war” and the “state of emergency” which are provided by the Constitution, as the highest legal act in the country³. The Law defines the term “crisis situation” as follows: “a crisis situation is a situation caused by risks and hazards that may endanger the property, health and life of people and animals, and the security of the Republic, the prevention or mitigation of which requires the use of a greater scope of resources”.

Another significant feature of the law is the fact that its mechanisms are within the scope of competencies of the Government and the relevant governmental bodies that are established by the law. This means that the Government has a legal possibility to declare a crisis situation if the risks and hazards are of such nature that they directly threaten the constitutional order and the security of the Republic of Macedonia or parts thereof, where the requirements are not met to declare a state of war or a state of emergency. Although it grants such strong competences to the Government, the legislator also sets forth the mechanisms that provide for parliamentary scrutiny.

³Constitution of R. Macedonia (“Official Gazette of RM”, no. 52/1992, articles 124 and 125.

According to the Law on Crisis Management, the Government adopts a decision declaring a crisis situation, defines the territory affected by the crisis situation, and activates the mechanisms for resolution of the crisis accordingly. It notifies forthwith the Assembly and the President of the Republic of Macedonia about the adopted decision. The Government shall inform the Assembly and the President about the activities related to the decision within a period of 48 hours verbally, and once per week in writing, while, no later than 30 days following the completion of the activities that are laid down by the decision to declare a crisis situation, it shall submit a report in writing to the Assembly and to the President of the Republic of Macedonia. The decision declaring a crisis situation shall expire no later than 30 days upon its adoption. If the crisis situation persists longer than 30 days, the Government shall ask for approval by the Assembly to extend the validity of the decision, or shall propose the declaration of a state of war or a state of emergency.

For the first time since it gained its independence, the Republic of Macedonia declared a crisis situation in July 2007 so as to overcome the problems caused by widespread forest fires. The then experience with the application of the mechanisms of action undertaken within the frames of the declared crisis situation has proven to be considerably efficient, and the highly coordinated measures and activities undertaken by all competent structures in the country have yielded good results and success.

Crisis Management System in the Republic of Macedonia: competences, organizational and institutional setup

Crisis management in the Republic of Macedonia is set up in the form of a system in terms of norms and organization. The systemic organization indicates that we are dealing with a complex organizational structure, which provides for the undertaking of measures and activities of all types (preventive and reactive) by many stakeholders (competent authorities) within the system, in various situations and under various conditions. The successful functioning of such a system requires the development of efficient mechanisms for its management and control under conditions of threats to the national security.

Organizational setup of the authorities and bodies within the Crisis Management System

In order to provide for the unobstructed functioning of the crisis management system in the Republic of Macedonia, to propose decisions and provide for regular consultations, coordination, timely response, efficiency and adequate utilization of the available resources in the case of a crisis situation, as well as to provide for a prompt, high quality and realistic assessment of the threats to the national security, in accordance with the Law on Crisis Management, the following authorities and bodies shall be established within the crisis management system: Steering Committee (SC), Assessment Group (AG), Crisis Management Centre (CMC), Regional Units of the Crisis Management Centre (RUCMC), Headquarters of the Crisis Management Centre (CMC HQ) and Regional Headquarters (CMC regional HQ).

Steering Committee and Assessment Group

The **Steering Committee** is the highest governmental body which the Law entrusts with the coordination and management of the crisis management system. The Steering Committee is composed of the Ministers of: Interior, Health, Transport and Communications, Defence, Foreign Affairs and the Head of the Assessment Group. The legislator has provided that a representative of the Security and Defence Committee of the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia and a representative from the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of Macedonia can also take part in the operations of the Steering Committee. In accordance with article 15 of the Law, a proposal for determining a crisis situation may be submitted to the Steering Committee by an official who is heading a public administration body, a member of the Steering Committee, the Head of the Assessment Group, and by the Director of the Crisis Management Centre.

The Steering Committee reviews the proposal and proposes to the Government to determine that the requirements to declare a crisis situation and a crisis affected area have been met. Accordingly, the Steering Committee issues a proposal for activation of the mechanisms for resolution of the crisis in accordance with the Law on Crisis Management. The Steering Committee is headed by a person appointed from the ranks of its members by the Prime Minister of the Government of RM.

The **Assessment Group** is also a governmental body which carries out regular assessment of the risks and threats to the security of the Republic and proposes measures and activities for their prevention, early warning and for handling of crisis situations. According to the Law on Crisis Management, the Assessment Group is composed of: the Directors of the Public Security Bureau, Directorate for Security and Counter-Intelligence, the Intelligence Agency, the Directors and Deputy Directors of the Crisis Management Centre and the Protection and Rescue Directorate, the Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Army, as well as the head of the Security and Intelligence Service within the Ministry of Defence. If necessary, other representatives of the public administration bodies, municipalities and the City of Skopje, as well as experts in the relevant area, are invited to take part in the operations of the Assessment Group. The Assessment Group is headed by a person appointed from the ranks of its members by the Prime Minister of the Government of RM.

Crisis Management Centre

The Law on Crisis Management, in addition to governing the area of crisis management, also has the character of articles of association. It provides for the establishment of an independent public administration body within the crisis management system, positioned and functioning as a directorate, and having a status of a legal person. The title of the independent public administration body is Crisis Management Centre, and its responsibility is to provide the full organizational, administrative, and expert support to the bodies and stakeholders in the crisis management system. Its scope of competences includes the following:

- providing continuity of the inter-departmental and international cooperation, consultations and coordination of the crisis management;
- development and updating of a unified assessment of the risks and threats to the security of the Republic;
- proposing measures and activities for resolution and recovery of crisis situations,
- performs other activities, laid down by law.

A headquarters is established within the Crisis Management Centre, as an operational and professional body that pursues the activities for prevention and management of crisis situations. The Headquarters is composed of representatives of the stakeholders participating in the Steering Committee. Headquarters' members shall also be the head of the medical emergency department in Skopje, the director of the Protection and Rescue Directorate, representatives of the Army, the Intelligence Agency and the Directorate for Security of Classified Information. The Director of the Crisis Management Centre is chief of the Headquarters.

More information about the competences and activities of the Crisis Management Centre, as well as about the current situation, events and trends in the country, region and worldwide may be found at the Centre's web page: www.cuk.gov.mk.

Regional and local organization of the system

In order to inform, monitor the situation, exchange information and data, and make proposals for management of crisis situations, as well as to develop a unified assessment, the crisis management system is established on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia, and its regional organizational structure, in accordance with article 23 of the Law, is set up in 35 Regional Crisis Management Centres, including the city of Skopje.

The regional crisis management centres (RCMCs) shall have their seats in the following municipalities: Berovo, Bitola, Valandovo, Veles, Vinica, Gevgelija, Gostivar, Debar, Delchevo, Demir Hisar, Kavadarci, Kichevo, Kochani, Kratovo, Kriva Palanka, Krushevo, Kumanovo, Makedonski Brod, Negotino, Ohrid, Prilep, Probishtip, Radovish, Resen, Sveti Nikole, Struga, Strumica, Tetovo, Shtip, Gazi Baba, Karposh, Kisela Voda, Centar, Chair, and the city of Skopje. The spatial coverage and the borders of the areas covered by the Regional Centres are presented on the figure in Appendix 1 to the present Handbook.

Crisis Management System in the Republic of Macedonia: competences, organizational and institutional setup

In order to provide for the effective and efficient operation of the crisis management system, its operational structure at regional level has established 8 main regional crisis management centres (MRCMC):

1. MRCMC HQ Skopje, responsible for the northern region,
2. MRCMC Kumanovo, responsible for the north-east region,
3. MRCMC Tetovo, responsible for the north-west region,
4. MRCMC Ohrid, responsible for the south-west region,
5. MRCMC Bitola, responsible for the southern region,
6. MRCMC Veles, responsible for the central region (Vardar region),
7. MRCMC Strumica, responsible for the south-east region, and
8. MRCMC Shtip, responsible for the eastern region.

These centres operate 24 hours per day, 7 days in the week. The duty officer services within these centres can be reached by dialling, free of charge, the unique emergency number 195, which is to be replaced by the universal European emergency number E-112. The spatial coverage and the borders of the areas covered by the Main Regional Crisis Management Centres are presented on the figure in Appendix 2 to the present Handbook.

The local coverage of the remaining local self-government units (up to their total number of 84) shall be done by individually appointed persons from the relevant regional crisis management centres, in accordance with the territorial setup of the system, presented in Appendix 1.

A detailed overview of all 35 Regional Crisis Management Centres, including their addresses and contact details is provided in Appendix 3 of the present Handbook.

The regional centres establish Regional Headquarters, as the operational and professional bodies which are managed by the Head of the Regional Centre. The regional headquarters within the regional centres shall be composed of representatives from the regional units of the ministries and other public administration bodies that take part in the Steering Committee, as well as of one representative from each municipality and from the City of Skopje, the territories of which are covered by the Regional Centre. The regional headquarters shall become operational by a decision of the Director of the Centre.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The full organizational and institutional setup of the bodies and authorities within the Crisis Management System of the Republic of Macedonia is presented on the following chart:

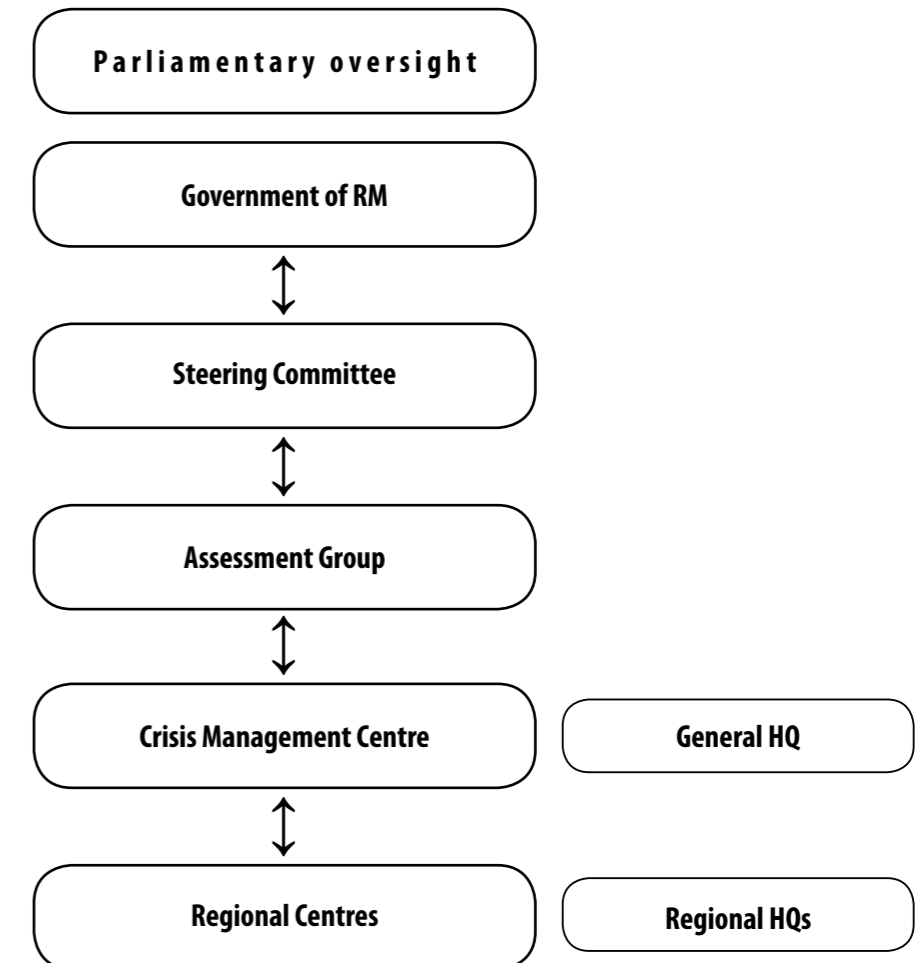


Chart no. 1. Organizational setup of the authorities and bodies within the Crisis Management System of the Republic of Macedonia

Competences of the entities within the crisis management system

The Law sets forth the following stakeholders of the crisis management system, which have different rights and obligations: public administration bodies and the state authorities, the armed forces such as the Army of the Republic of Macedonia and the protection and rescue forces, and the bodies of the municipalities and the City of Skopje, public enterprises and institutions, trade companies, citizens and their associations, non-governmental organizations, and other entities, as necessary.

Competences of the Government and the state authorities

As it has been stated under paragraph 1.3, the mechanisms of the crisis management system fall in their entirety within the scope of competences of the Government, governmental bodies coordinating and managing the system (SC and AG), and the Crisis Management Centre, as the competent public administration authority in the field of crisis management. The Government, which is vested with the executive power in the state, performs the following competences within the crisis management system:

- Adopts a decision declaring a crisis situation, defines the area affected by the crisis situation, and undertakes the necessary measures and activities to resolve the crisis;
- Informs the Assembly and the President of the Republic of Macedonia about all activities related to the crisis situation,
- Upon the end of the crisis situation, it submits a written report to the Assembly and the President of the Republic of Macedonia, notifying them about all undertaken measures,
- Adopts a decision about the use of resources by the public administration bodies, bodies of the municipalities and the city of Skopje, and decides on the management of the resources,
- Submits a proposal to the President of the Republic of Macedonia about the deployment of troops of the Army of the Republic of Macedonia for the purpose of dealing with the crisis situation,
- Sets forth the manner of utilization of the resources owned by public enterprises and institutions, trade companies of special interest, and by the citizens, and determines the compensation for the use of such resources,
- Decides on the acceptance and delivery of humanitarian aid and cooperation in crisis management,
- Adopts a unified assessment of all risks and hazards that may threaten the lives and health of the citizens, their property, material goods, natural and cultural heritage of the state, as well as its general security,

- Decides on the amount of the funds from the Budget of R.M. to be allocated for prevention, early warning, and crisis management,
- Lays down the public alerting in the Republic and prescribes the alert signals,
- Prescribes the use of measures of crypto-protection and electronic security counter measures for the purposes of the crisis management system,
- Prescribes the type and manner of planning and implementation of trainings and exercises, as well as the mandatory procedures that are implemented in the crisis management system,
- Performs other activities in accordance with the law.

The ministries and the other public administration bodies participate in the prevention, early warning and dealing with the risks and threats that may cause a crisis and a crisis situation in the country, pursuant to the Law on Crisis Management and other laws that govern their respective competences.

The ministries and other public administration bodies perform the following activities:

- They undertake the necessary preparatory activities to provide for unobstructed performance of the tasks within their competences in the case of crises and a crisis situation in the country,
- They plan and allocate funds within their budgets for the preparatory measures, as well as for the measures for mitigation and recovery of the consequences of the crisis,
- They are obligated to put, upon request of the bodies and authorities governing the crisis management system, to make available their own resources for the purposes of crisis management,
- They perform other duties in accordance with the law, and enforce the decisions adopted by the Government.

The Protection and Rescue Directorate has a particularly important position and function within the crisis management system. It is the competent authority for the planning and organization of the Protection and Rescue System in the Republic of Macedonia, and for the establishment, training and maintenance of the protection and rescue forces, which are deployed in the case of a crisis and a declared crisis situation so as to deal with serious disasters and catastrophes.

Competences of Public Enterprises and institutions and of companies of special interest

The public enterprises, public institutions and services, as well as trade companies of special importance for operation in a crisis situation, which shall be defined by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, are obliged to get prepared for the performance of their tasks and duties related to prevention and handling of risks and threats that may cause a crisis or a crisis situation in the entire territory of the country, or in specific parts thereof. Their specific competences and obligations include the following:

- They are obliged, upon request of the bodies and authorities governing the crisis management system, and upon a decision of the Government, to make their own resources available, for an adequate compensation, for the purposes of handling of crises and removal of the consequences of crises,
- They are obliged, without a specific request by a competent state authority, in case of a sudden and unexpected disaster or other crisis event, to undertake activities within their capacity and to inform the Crisis Management Centre thereon through the universal emergency number,
- They are obliged, within the scope of their competences or business processes, to plan and undertake the necessary measures of prevention, and to develop capacities required to handle crises and disasters with a greater intensity,
- The public enterprises, public institutions and services, as well as the trade companies of special interest, which by their operations may cause serious threats to people, animals, and the environment, are obliged to undertake all measures of prevention and to finance such activities using their own resources,
- They perform other duties in accordance with the law, and enforce the decisions adopted by the Government.

Competences of the local self-government units and of citizens

The Law on Crisis Management assigns a special position and functions to the local self-government units and to citizens, as the most numerous stakeholders within the crisis management system. In order to provide for regular exchange of information and monitoring of the situation on the entire territory of the country, 35 regional crisis management centres have been established, with seats in the municipalities laid down by article 23 of the Law on Crisis Management.

According to the Law on Local Self-Government, and in line with the principles of subsidiarity, the municipalities are entitled to perform competences of public interest and of local significance, such as the competences in the field of crisis management and protection and rescue, primarily of the lives and health of their citizens, and of all material goods within the territory of the municipality.

From the extensive list of competences of the local self-government units, for the purposes of the present Handbook we may emphasise the following:

- Spatial (urban and rural) planning, construction of buildings of local significance, as laid down by the law, and landscaping;
- Protection of environment and nature;
- Planning of local economic development, establishing developmental and structural priorities, managing the local economic policy, etc.;
- Public utilities – supply of potable water, supply of technological water, disposal and treatment of waste waters, disposal and treatment of atmospheric water, supply of natural gas and heating, regulation, maintenance and use of river beds, bridges and other infrastructural facilities;
- Social protection and child protection – kindergartens and homes for the elderly, care for disable persons, children without parents and parental care, children with educational and social problems, children with special needs;
- Healthcare – management of the network of public healthcare organizations and primary healthcare facilities;
- Undertaking preparatory activities and measures for protection and rescue of citizens and property against war destruction, natural catastrophes and other disasters, and effects thereof;
- Fire protection carried out by the territorial fire fighting units;

National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction

In addition to the competences that the LSU perform under the Law on Local Self-Government, their scope of competence also includes the following activities:

- Decide on the amount of the municipal budget which is allocated for financing of activities related to crisis management and protection and rescue of the citizens and of other local interests,
- Adopt the municipal assessment of risks and threats,
- Decide on the amount of the funds allocated for compensation of damages caused by natural, extreme weather and other disasters,
- Decide on the distribution of humanitarian aid in the cases when their territories have been affected by a crisis or a crisis situation,
- Lay down the obligations of the public enterprises, institutions and services that are established by them,
- Provide for the preparedness, equipment, and deployment of the protection and rescue forces established by their decision,
- Decide on requests for assistance of other municipalities or public institutions, when their resources are insufficient for dealing with the crisis and its consequences,

The City of Skopje, as a specific LSU, and as a capital of the Republic of Macedonia, coordinates the activities in the field of crisis management through a specific Regional Crisis Management Centre of the City of Skopje.

The competences and obligations of the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia for the purposes of the crisis management system include the following:

- fulfilling the duty to participate in the protection and rescue operations, in accordance with the Law on Protection and Rescue,
- fulfilling their material obligations for the purposes of the crisis management system,
- undertaking individual measures of preparation and self-protection.

In the spirit of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction of the United Nations (UN ISDR)⁴, as well as in line with the general guidelines of the Hyogo Framework for Action, adopted at the World Conference on Disaster Reduction organized by the UN, the Crisis Management Centre, in the period 2007-2009, have implemented the necessary activities for the establishment of a National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NP)⁵. The National Platform is established as a wide framework of enhanced interdepartmental cooperation and consultations and as a forum for exchange of information and experiences among all relevant stakeholders in the country, in the function of risk prevention and mitigation, and represents a multi-sectoral mechanism providing analyses and consultancy on matters in this area. The expected benefits from the establishment of the national platform, as a concept for disaster risk reduction, by making systematic efforts to analyse and manage with the causes of such risks, include the following:

1. Reduction of the exposure to risks of disasters and catastrophes, reduction of the vulnerability of individuals and communities, accountable land use planning and environmental management, improved preparedness for potential disasters, etc.,
2. Effective incorporation of the disaster risk reduction approach in the policies, plans, and programmes for sustainable development at all levels, with special emphasis on risk reduction and prevention, mitigation of consequences, and reduction of vulnerability,
3. Development and strengthening of institutions, mechanisms, and capacities at all levels, in particular at the local community level, which may provide a systemic contribution to the building of resilience to disasters and catastrophes,
4. Structured incorporation of disasters risk reduction approaches in the plans and programmes on crisis management, response and recovery of the communities affected by disasters and catastrophes

⁴<http://www.unisdr.org>

⁵http://cuk.gov.mk/images/stories/Platforma_MKD.pdf

The objective of the establishment of a National Platform is to provide for integrated efficient and effective approach to prevention, early warning, response and recovery of the effects of natural and man-made disasters and catastrophes, at the same time providing for a functional unity of the state authorities, local self-government, non-governmental sector, the academic and the business community. Such objective implies the development of a management system that shall guarantee the prompt, systematic, and coordinated response of the National Platform's stakeholders, conceptualized development and optimal utilization of available resources (human, material and technical, and financial).

The Steering Committee, in its capacity of a governmental body that coordinates and manages the Crisis Management System, has been cast the role of a managing body of the National Platform, but this time in an extended composition as opposed to the one laid down by article 13 of the Law on Crisis Management. The extended composition of the Steering Committee includes the officials heading the: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of the Local Self-Government, Crisis Management Centre and the Protection and Rescue Directorate. Such extended composition provides for an adequate institutional coverage of all risks and hazards that are within the scope of the National Platform.

Individual platforms that are specialized according to the risk and hazard types have been established within the framework of the National Platform, while it also provides for the establishment of National Committees for prevention and management of specific risks and hazards. More information about the specialized platforms and the risk domains that they cover, as well as about the relevant public administration bodies within which scope of competences they fall, may be found in Appendix no. 4 of the present Handbook.

Single Communications-Information System with a universal emergency call number - 195 >>> 112

The Crisis Management Centre, for the purpose of performing its competences related to the maintenance of regular communications, exchange of information, cooperation and coordination with all stakeholders in the crisis management system, has a legal obligation to establish and maintain "a single communications and information system with a universal emergency call number in the case of risks, hazards, and other disasters, on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia."⁶

Currently, the universal emergency call number used by the Crisis Management Centre is the emergency number 195, which is operational 24 hours per day, seven days in the week, at the level of operative crisis management centres, and the signal has coverage on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia. The citizens, in the case they observe any phenomenon or event that may cause greater threats, or in the case of any emergency, may reach the duty officer service of the competent regional centre in the territory where the location of origin of the call belongs by dialling the call number 195. The call will be accepted, and, depending on the nature of the event, the relevant service or services will be alerted so as to undertake coordinated measures and activities to deal with the relevant event. The emergency number 195 is reachable from all telephone networks in the Republic of Macedonia, fixed and mobile, free of charge. In addition to the call number 195 of the Crisis Management Centre, currently there are also operational the other characteristic call numbers in case of accidents and other emergencies, such as 192 for the police, 193 for the fire fighting services, and 194 for the medical emergency.

The Republic of Macedonia, fulfilling the criteria and standards for accession to the Euro-Atlantic organizations, since several years has been undertaking normative and organizational measures and activities to introduce the single European emergency number, E-112. The establishing of this system and of the single emergency number has been laid down by the provisions of the Law on Crisis Management and the Law on Electronic Communications, and its implementation is an obligation that arises from the Directive on universal service and users' rights relating to electronic communications networks and services (2002/22/EC), by which the EU Member States are obligated to implement the single European emergency number.

⁶Law on Crisis Management, ("Official Gazette or RM" no. 29/2005), article 40.

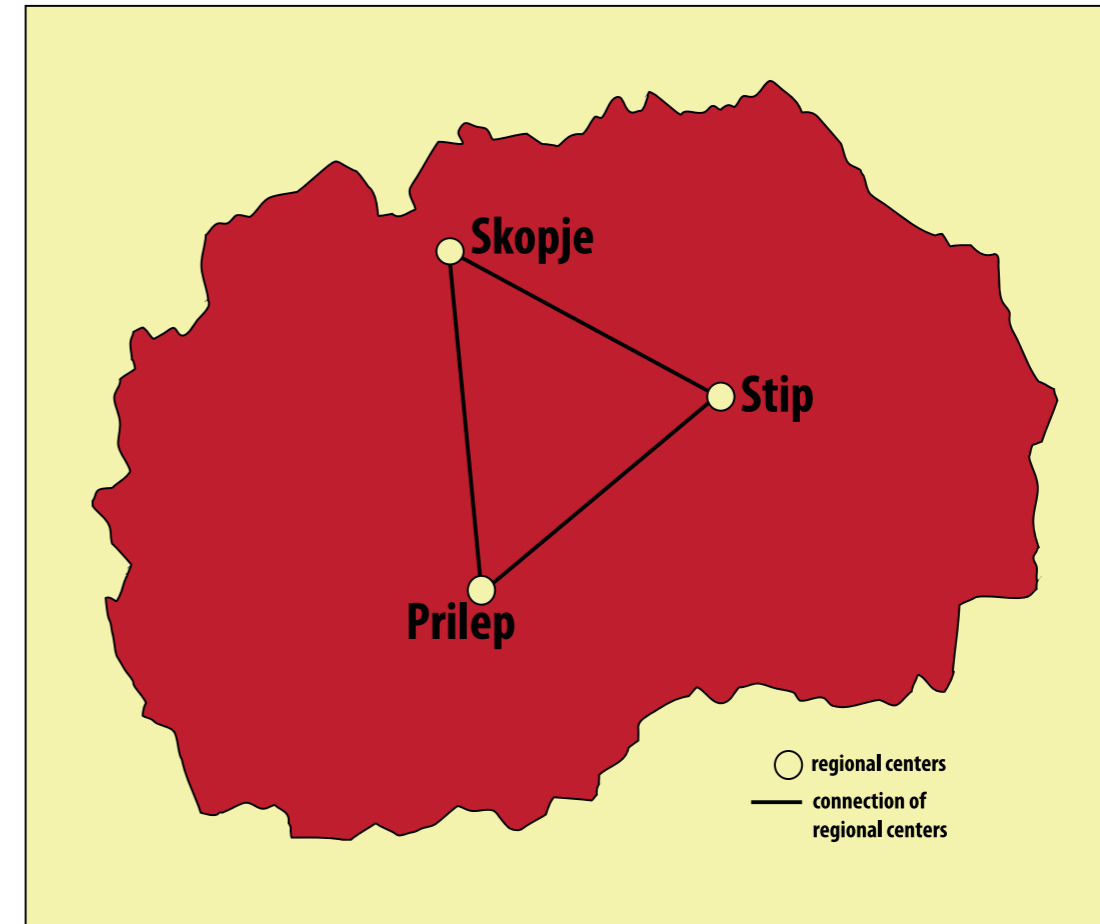
The E-112 system to be established in the Republic of Macedonia shall have the following characteristics:

- The E-112 system shall receive all types of calls from any location within the territory of the Republic of Macedonia;
- All operators of public telephone networks shall be obligated to enable the users of public telephone services, including the public pay phones, to dial the emergency numbers free of charge, and to make the E-112 system accessible even from mobile phone without SIM cards;
- Operators of public telecommunications networks shall not restrict the access to, and the use of the emergency numbers;
- The E-112 system shall enable the reception of all types of electronic calls from vehicles, in the case of a traffic accident;
- This system should have the capability to provide for equal access to the E-112 number and use of telecommunications means for the persons with disabilities;
- All calls from the territory covered by one E-112 regional centre shall be automatically redirected to that centre by the public telecommunications network operators;

The introduction of E-112 in the Republic of Macedonia is realized in two phases. The first phase is the conceptual design phase, while the second one is the implementation phase. The conceptual design has been defined and adopted by the Government, and the design shall be implemented in practice in the course of 2010 and 2011.

The previous emergency numbers – 192 for the police, 193 for the fire fighting service, 194 for the medical emergency, and 195 for the Crisis Management Centre – shall be replaced after an interim period when they will function in parallel with the number E-112. With its introduction, the citizens can make all emergency calls and receive a service by the relevant department easier and will have to remember only one number, rather than four.

The E-112 system provides for the functioning of three operative centres receiving the emergency calls, and provide for the coordination with the police, medical emergency service, fire fighting units and the protection and rescue teams in case of an emergency. These centres should be located in Skopje, Prilep and Shtip. Each of them shall have the capability to receive calls originating in any point within the territory of the Republic of Macedonia and coordinate the activities of the emergency service in the region of its coverage, and, if necessary, on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia.



Geographical position

The Republic of Macedonia is situated in the southeast part of Europe and it occupies the central part of the Balkan Peninsula. It borders Serbia and Kosovo to the north, Bulgaria to the east, Greece to the south, and Albania to the west. The total length of its borderline is 849 km. Within the borders referred to above, it covers an area of 25,713 km² and it ranks as a small country. The country stretches between 40° 50' and 42° 20' north latitude and between 20° 27' and 23° 05' east longitude. Along the meridian, its greatest length is 170 km, while along the parallel its greatest length is 215 km. Due to the characteristics referred to above, the territory of the Republic of Macedonia has its specifics which determine its geographical susceptibility to particular risks, which have to be taken into account in the planning of the measures for protection against natural disasters and elemental catastrophes.

Demographics

According to the data from the last Census of the population, households and dwellings of 2002, the Republic of Macedonia had a population of 2.022.547, which is a 3.9 percent more in comparison with the 1994 Census. However, measured in terms of population growth rate, it is expected that in 2010 the country will mark a negative annual growth of 0.04, and that this trend will continue in the forthcoming period, while until 2050 it is estimated that the population will decrease by 14.4 percent⁷. The population density at national level is 79.3 people per km², which places the Republic of Macedonia in a relatively favourable situation in this aspect. However, in terms of the regional distribution, the values are less favourable. The Skopje region has the highest population density with 326 per km², followed by the Polog region with 128 per km². As opposed to them, the Vardar region has the lowest population density with 39.3 people per km². The statistics on the spatial dispersion of the population indicates that out of the total of 1762 settlements, only 34 have an urban character, and ca. 58 percent of the population is concentrated in such settlements, while more than 20 percent of the total population live in only one of the urban settlements (the City of Skopje). On the other hand, 141 settlements of rural character have been completely depopulated, and pretty soon additional 455 settlements may share the same fortune. The Republic of Macedonia is facing an exceptionally high regional disproportion of the population growth, as well as prominent differences between the urban and rural areas, which, to a great extent, is owing to the overall economic and social situation in the recent years. These and other demographic data are of particular significance to the process of planning of crisis management and protection and rescue measures, in terms of the population density and the effects of the urban and rural exposure to specific risks.

⁷Government of R.M., Strategy on Demographic Development of the Republic of Macedonia 2008 – 2015.

Relief

The relief structure of the Republic of Macedonia is predominantly mountainous, since 2/3 of the total territory is under mountains. There are approximately 40 mountains, the greatest number of which are low mountains (elevation up to 1000 m), followed by the medium high (1000-2000 m elevation), and the high mountains (more than 2000 m). The lowest elevation point in the country is the bed of the river Vardar at the border with Greece (44m), while the highest elevation point is the summit Golem Korab (2753m). The average elevation is 830m, by which the country is reckoned among the higher countries in Europe. The Republic of Macedonia can be classified in 4 more significant relief regions: the east-Vardar group of mountains and basins, the river Vardar region, Pelagonia and the Shar Mountain region. The relief structure is determined by several internal and external factors. The former are related to the geological structure and the movements within the Earth's crust, while the latter are caused by exposure to external factors, such as the sun, precipitation, wind, ice, etc., the final effect of which being erosion. The influence of both groups of factors causes permanent, lesser or greater negative effects in the form of natural disasters and hazards, frequently with tremendous consequences for the population and the material resources of the country.

Climate and climate factors

The weather is the state of the air or atmosphere at a given point of time within a specific geographic region, while the climate denotes the long-term average state of the meteorological element, such as temperature, precipitation, winds, etc. The climate is a very important geographic factor for any country; it determines the amount of precipitation, the watermark of rivers, the richness and diversity of plant and animal life, and it contributes to the overall wellbeing of the country. The most important climate factors determining the climate in the Republic of Macedonia are: the geographic position, relief, proximity of seas, atmospheric circulation, and, a of late, activities of men. The effects of these climate factors have enabled the presence of 4 climate types on the territory of our country, in particular: altered Mediterranean, mild continental, continental and mountainous climate. Climate and climate factors are factors that have a significant impact on the country's exposure to risks of natural disasters and catastrophes that can have serious consequences for the people's life and health, as well as for the material and natural resources of the country.

Hydrography of the Republic of Macedonia

The richness of a specific area in surface and ground waters is a very important geographic factor. It is determined by the climate, average precipitation, relief, forest resources, the quality and structure of the soil, etc. These factors have made our country averagely rich in ground and surface waters. Their spatial dispersion varies, so that the western parts of the country have greater water resources than the central and eastern ones. There are approximately 5000 registered water springs on the territory of our country, of which around 60 have an average yield of more than 100 l/s. The river network of the Republic of Macedonia falls within the category of dense river networks and belongs to three sea basins: the Aegean, the Adriatic, and the Black Sea basin. Out of the numerous rivers in Macedonia, only 5 (Vardar, Bregalnica, Crna Reka, Pcinja, and Treska) are more than 100 km long. Nearly all rivers are characterized by a fluctuating flow during the year, which means that in the dry, summer period they have a low flow, while during the rainy seasons, their water levels rises abruptly, and they pose a potential risks of floods, which has actually happened, sometimes even of greater scale. However, over the years the compete tent authorities have taken structural measures for regulation and clearing of the watercourses, thus considerably mitigating this risk. The three natural tectonic lakes, the Ohrid Lake, the Prespa Lake and the Dojran Lake, are of particular importance for the hydrological situation in the Republic of Macedonia. In addition to those lakes, approximately 120 larger and smaller artificial lakes have been built, which are used for various purposes: electricity generation, water supply, irrigation, fishing, etc, as well as facilities in the function of prevention and mitigation of the risks of floods throughout the country.

Vegetation

According to its geographical position, the Republic of Macedonia is situated in two major geographic regions, the Mediterranean and the Euro-Siberian. The plant life in the country is grouped in several associations, such as forest flora, weeds and grasses flora and agricultural crops flora. Forests occupy 1/3 of the surface area of the country, but the greatest part accounts for a low dendriform degrades forests, while only a smaller portion belongs to the category of high dendriform quality forests. The weeds and grasses flora is composed of meadows, pastures, rock and wetland vegetation, etc., where the pastures account for the greatest part of this category. In addition to the natural vegetation, agricultural crops are grown on large surfaces, at industrial and individual farmer levels. Recently, under the influence of the global climate changes, extreme weather conditions with droughts and storms, as well as due to human negligence, there are frequent occurrences of various forms of disasters and catastrophes that cause serious and lasting consequences on the entire plant life within the territory of the country.

Communications

The geographic position of our country does not provide access to sea or other water communications routes; hence, it is said that the Republic of Macedonia is a landlocked, continental country, which implies isolation. Nevertheless, our communications network is evaluated as being favourable. The territory of the Republic of Macedonia is the crossroads of important communications routes that connect the Balkans with the remaining parts of Europe. Due to the geographic location and the natural advantages of our valleys and basins, a lot of important traffic routes pass through out country. The basin of the river Vardar is particularly important, since the international motorway and railway lines pass through it. They connect the Republic of Macedonia with Europe to the north, and with Greece and the Mediterranean to the south. This transport corridor passing through our country is known as Corridor 10. Another significant transport route is corridor 8, which connects the country with Bulgaria and the Black Sea to the east, and with Albania and the Adriatic to the west. Out of the remaining communications routes, a more significant one is the road and railway corridor which, along the basin of the river Lepenec, via Kosovo and Montenegro, connects the country with the Adriatic corridor and ports. The condition and the quality of the country's communications routes is essential to the planning and implementation of preventive and operational measures and activities for disaster risk mitigation and recovery.

Characteristics of the Republic Macedonia and its exposure to risks and hazards

Phenomena that may threaten your life, health and property

The experience with the exposure and vulnerability of the territory of the Republic of Macedonia to specific types of risk in the last 3-5 decades indicates that natural phenomena, the effects of the forces of nature and human activities, which are categorized as intentional and unintentional, have been a cause of major consequences. Furthermore, economic activities and non-compliance with the measures for protection of nature and environment from the detrimental effects of the production processes have also had a serious impact.

The analyses and estimates relating to the current and potential risks that have a greater likelihood of occurrence in the present day are once again associated to risks of natural disasters, effects of climate changes, effects of human activities and the impact of the economic and technological processes. Some of the specific phenomena that may occur, with a lower or higher intensity, within the territory of the Republic of Macedonia, or parts thereof, are the following:

- Earthquakes and earthquake related causal effects, such as landslides, fault lines, etc.,
- Floods caused by the overflow of natural watercourses, collapse of dams and water accumulations, and by heavy and torrential rains,
- Wildfires that threaten forests, pastures and agricultural crops, fires in urban areas and building fires,
- Extreme weather conditions, as a consequence of the global climate changes, manifested by low temperatures and frost in the winter, high temperatures and drought during in the summer, and the occurrence of thunderstorms, hailstorms and torrential rains.

The phenomena referred to above are only a part of the full spectre of risks that occurred more frequently on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia in the recent years, and unfortunately caused the death and injury of people and great damage to the material resources and the cultural and natural heritage of the country. Within this context, the text below elaborates such phenomena in greater detail, in order to better inform the citizens about their characteristics and likelihood, emphasises the need for preparations and willingness to face and deal with them, as well as to recover from their consequences.

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Earthquakes

The earthquake is the shaking or trembling of Earth's crust, caused by underground volcanic activity or shaking and/or rupture and displacement of geological faults under the surface of the Earth. By rule, earthquakes last only for several seconds, but some of them can last up to a minute. Lower intensity earthquakes can cause shaking of windows and furniture in the house, while those of higher intensity can cause shaking of the ground. The ground movement causes shaking or collapsing of buildings and other structures. Earthquake casualties are seldom caused by ground movement, and mostly result from collapsing walls, falling debris, shattered glass and fires that are caused by the earthquake.

The strongest earthquake that has hit the Republic of Macedonia was the 1963 Skopje earthquake, which killed over a thousand people and left a large number of the population homeless. Since then there were several minor earthquakes in the Skopje seismic area, none of them even remotely close to the intensity of the big earthquake of 1963. There are four more seismic areas in the country, located in the region of Ohrid and Struga, the Debar Region, the Berovo region and in the region of Valandovo and Gevgelija. Naturally, earthquakes which have their epicentres in the neighbouring countries, such as the Montenegro earthquake in the 80-ies of the XX century and the one in the Aegean Sea in the past decade, can also be felt in our country. Earthquakes are rare phenomena, but considering the great destruction that they cause, we have to be prepared for them.

Measures for preparedness in the case of earthquake

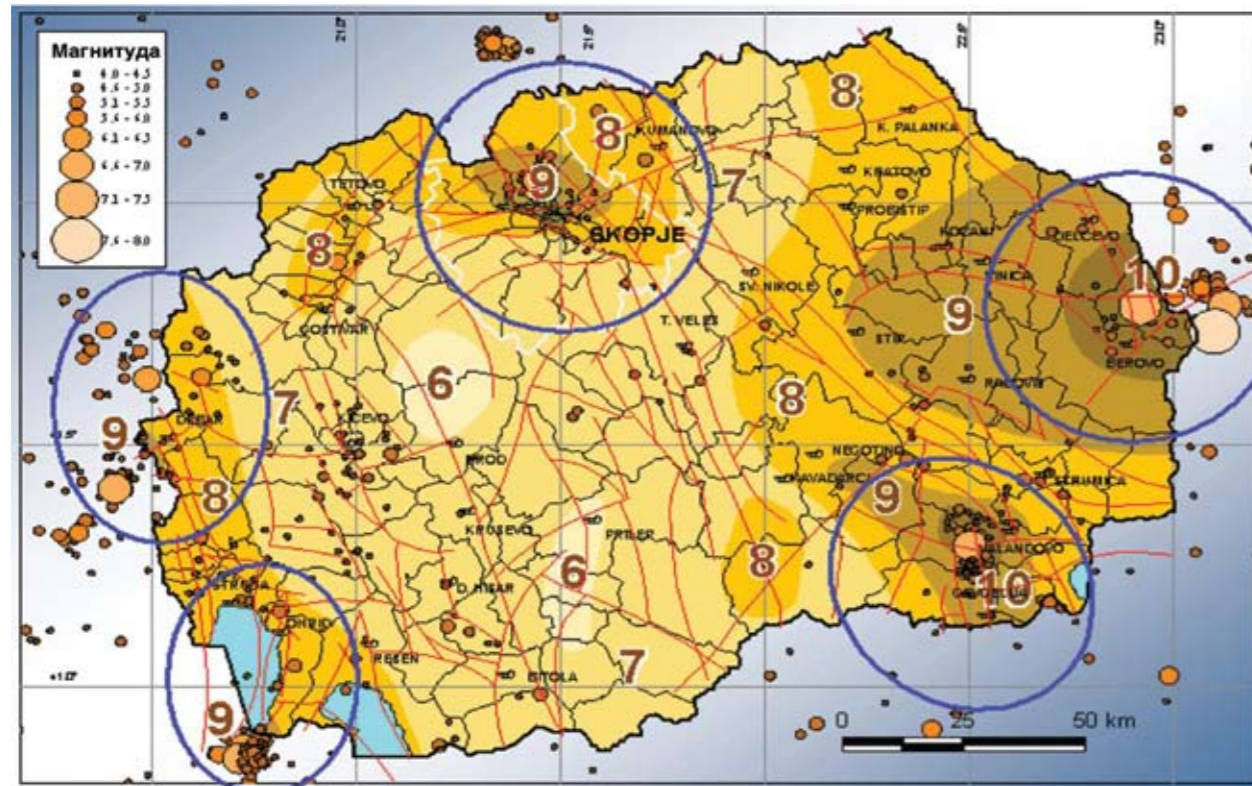
Check your home for potential risks and hazards and take steps to reduce such risks and hazards. The second important step is to make sure that your family knows what to do in case of an earthquake. You should also learn about the safe places where you can protect yourself in case of an earthquake.

Furthermore, you should carry out the following activities:

- If you are living in an area of high seismic activity (an area that is prone to frequent or occasional earthquakes), you should fasten and secure your water heater, refrigerator, as well as the tall and heavy furniture pieces to the walls or floors. You can prevent the movement of the refrigerator and other heavy appliances by chocking their wheels;
- Place large and heavy objects on lower shelves or in lower partitions;

Characteristics of the Republic Macedonia and its exposure to risks and hazards

- Install latches or other types of locks or devices for locking or fixing of cabinet and cupboard doors;
- Install additional brackets for the air conditioning units, in particular for those installed on the roof;
- Remove all flammable liquids and products, such as paint, cleaning agents, lacquers, varnishes, and similar from the parts of the home where you live and store them in the garage, or fully out of the house, in a shed. Make sure that such items are stored away from any sources of heat and flame.
- Move the beds away from the windows and do not hang paintings or other decorative items above them,



CRISIS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

During an earthquake

1. Stay calm. Do not run and do not let panic get the best of you. Stay where you are. The greatest number of injuries occur while people enter or exit buildings.
2. If you are indoors, take cover under a table, bench, chair, or stand by a wall or under a doorway, distributing your weight equally to both feet. Watch out for falling objects, flying debris or objects that are sliding toward you. Stay away from external doors, sources of heat, heaters, windows, fireplaces, chimneys, and heavy objects, such as refrigerators or other appliances, which may turn over or slide on the floor.
3. If you are in a multi-storey building, take cover under a table until the shaking stops. Look for a safe place in a close proximity of your location. Do not use the elevators to leave the building. The falling debris in the vicinity of buildings pose a big risk to your safety.
4. If you are in a public building, take cover under a table or under a doorway within the building. Avoid standing under an item that may fall. Do not run toward the exit. If you must get out, choose the way to the exit carefully.
5. If you are outdoors, move to a clearing away from buildings, streetlights, utility wires or walls, away from bricks that may collapse and fall. Once in the open, lie down or sit on the ground so as to avoid losing your balance while the earthquake lasts.
6. If in a moving vehicle, stop as quickly as safety permits and proceed only after the earthquake has stopped. Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses and utility wires. When you proceed with the driving, take caution of the momentary effects of the earthquake, such as fallen debris, utility wires or posts, or damages roads.
7. If trapped under debris:
 - a. Cover your mouth and nose with a handkerchief or clothing to protect you from the dust;
 - b. Stay calm and do not move about so as to avoid kicking up dust;
 - c. Tap (on a metal pipe or a wall) to raise some noise so rescuers can locate you - shouting often cannot be heard in a big building.

Do not be surprised if you feel more than one earthquake. Once the first earthquake shock is felt, the shaking may subside, and then you may feel aftershocks. This phenomenon is the result of the different time of arrival of the different seismic shockwaves of the same earthquake. These are secondary earthquakes that follow the primary earthquake. They can occur in the first minutes, hours, or days after the primary earthquake. The aftershocks can be strong enough to cause additional damage or collapsing of structures that have already been weakened by the primary earthquake.



Characteristics of the Republic Macedonia and its exposure to risks and hazards

Floods

The flood is a result of the presence of large quantities of uncontrolled water that may endanger people's lives and cause material damage.

The floods usually occur as a result of prolonged rains which may endure for several days continuously, or with periodical pauses. In such situations, water flows out the river beds or lake basins and the swollen water overflows the areas that allow continuous flow. However, there are drenching floods that might occur very quickly due to storms and heavy rains, or regular rains if the geography of the terrain is such that allows fast flooding of a certain area. Also, drenching floods can occur due to collapse of dams and embankments, where the water suddenly starts to flow out of its regular watercourse and floods the nearby areas. The water falls from steep areas very fast, and it causes overflowing of the natural draining systems and it carries deadly bulk of rocks, mud, broken trees, and other waste.

Remember, even brooklets, small rivers, dry river beds, or lowered land that may seem harmless when the weather is dry, might be flooded as a result of drenching rains and/or collision of dams and embankments.

Wherever you live, be aware of the potential flood risks. If you live in an area at a lower sea level, near river or under the level of a nearby dam, you need to be prepared in case of flood. Find out how much above or below the possible level of flooding is your property. Then you can determine whether your home might be at risk relating to the amount of rainfall.

If you in a place that is exposed to flood risk, keep materials such as sandbags, wooden boards, plastic covers and logs at hand for emergency flood protection. If the flood is inevitable, do not put sandbags around your house in order to keep the water out of your basement. The water going downwards, under the sandbags, or the water going above the sandbags may gather around the basement walls or under the floor, and create a pressure that might damage the walls and raise the entire basement. In most of the cases, the best way is to let the water freely enter into the basement, or to flood the basement by yourself with clean water, if you are positive that it is going to be flooded. Thus, the pressure of the water outside the basement walls will be balanced and damages of the house foundations will be avoided.

If the flood is most likely to occur, and you have sufficient time, then move the most important domestic appliances and other valuable items to the higher floors. Disconnect all the appliances that cannot be moved, but do not touch them if they are wet and under water.

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Evacuation in case of flood

If the authorities recommend that you should leave your home and temporarily move (evacuate) to another location, there are several things to be remembered and done.

Follow the instructions and suggestions of the state authorities and local institutions.

If they instruct you to evacuate, do it quickly. If they instruct you to go to a certain location, go there and to no other place. If the evacuation routes are given, use those routes, do not look for shortcuts. It would be of help if you were introduced to those routes in advance. If you were told to turn off the water, electricity and heating before you leave home, do it. In case you need water or electricity, ask the competent local institutions, radio or TV news, for information where you can find organized accommodation and food in case of emergency.

Lock your home before you leave. If there is sufficient time, and you were not instructed to immediately evacuate your home, take the following steps before you leave:

- Put the yard items into the house, or tightly tie them to where they are placed. This refers to outside furniture, garbage bins, gardening and other tools, as well as other movable items that might be carried away by overwhelming waters.
- Disconnect all the appliances or equipment that cannot be moved, but do not touch them if they are wet and you stand in water.
- Close all the windows and lock the doors.



After the flood

Move carefully. If you walk or drive to another location, consider the following:

- Set out as early as possible to avoid being trapped by flooded roads;
- Make sure you have enough gasoline in the car;
- Follow the recommended routes;
- While traveling, listen to the radio to get additional information and instructions from the local authorities;
- Be careful of the flooded or damaged roads, broken sewage pipes, or water supply pipes, fallen utility wires and cables, and fallen or instable structures;
- Be aware of areas that might be suddenly flooded by rivers or streams;
- Do not try to cross any streams or morasses, unless you are positive the water is not above the knees or above the vehicle tyres. Sometimes, the water can cover bridges or parts of the roads. If you decide



that it is safe to cross to the other side of the flooded road or bridge by your vehicle, let it be in first or second gear and drive slowly to prevent waves that might enable the water to enter in the car engine and cause a breakdown. Also, remember that brakes will not work as expected after the wheels of your car have been under water. Step the brakes several times after you reach dry land. In case of flood, no motorcycles or any other two-wheel vehicle should be used for transportation if you have to cross flooded roads.

- Do not use fresh water if it has been in contact with the flood water. The water should undergo chemical and bacteriological testing whether it is potable or not. The wells should be pumped and the water should be tested before you can drink it.
- Do not visit the flooded regions. Your presence might obstruct the saving efforts.
- Do not operate any electrical devices connected to the power supply system until they are wet. Electrical devices should be checked and dried before it can be used again.
- Use battery operated lights, and not lightning caused by combustion of flammable liquids to check the buildings. The buildings might contain flammable substances.
- Report all disconnected power lines or water supply pipelines to the competent authorities.
- The flooded rooms and other premises inside the house should be rubbed with hot water and soap. Special attention should be paid to surfaces for food handling and places where food is kept - tables, shelves, refrigerators, cookers, etc. The same refers to places where children play. In addition, everything needs to be rinsed with a solution consisting of half a glass of bleach per four liters of water.
- Wash the sheets and clothes in hot water and then dry them. It is the best to throw away the items that cannot be washed at home or taken to the dry cleaner's, such as bed linen, upholstery, etc. If you need to keep such items, air-dry them and then clean them with a vacuum cleaner and disinfectants. Rugs should be cleaned by steaming devices, or to be thrown away.

Characteristics of the Republic Macedonia and its exposure to risks and hazards

Fires

The rules concerning fire protection are particularly significant during emergency situations, but they should be implemented every day to prevent fire occurrence.

Most of the fatal cases due to fire happened at home. Although in the Republic of Macedonia there is no practice to install fire alarms that detect the presence of smoke at homes, they are cheap device which is proven to be efficient in saving lives. Fatal cases at home can be drastically reduced if there is a smoke or fire alarm installed. Such device should be installed as near as possible to the bedroom. Also, in multi-storey houses it is usefull to install a fire alarm on each floor of the house near the stairs. Fire alarms should be subject to regular testing and maintenance. Each member of the family should know what to do when the fire alarm goes on. A little time spent on selecting exit routes and fire drills can save your and your family's lives. Choose a location to meet outside the home to make sure that each member of your family got out of the house safely.

Procedures for prevention of fires

The rules of common sense are of particular importance for fire prevention during emergency situations.

- Keep the basement, cupboards and garage clean. Do not allow the garbage and unnecessary objects to build up.
- Do not overload the extension leads. Check whether they are burnt and avoid putting them under carpets. Extending cords for the appliances that spend a great amount of electricity should be with proper length and capacity in accordance with the appliance needs.
- Keep the flammable liquids in their original containers and, if possible, outside your home. Never use gasoline, oil, and alike, inside your home because their vapours can be easily ignited by any kind of sparks. Towels covered with cleaning substances or turpentine might be self-combustible and they should be thrown away immediately after usage. Do not smoke when working with flammable liquids.
- Check the heating devices. Fires at home can start due to broken heaters or cookers with cracks or rusty parts, or due to dirty chimneys. Make sure that regardless of the type of the heating device you use, they are clean and in working condition.

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- Lately, in the Republic of Macedonia, due to the increased price of the electricity and central heating, people more and more orient towards alternative heating sources, such as wood, coal, etc. Such thermal energy sources are prone to causing fires. Therefore, there should always be enough air ventilation. Provide enough clear space around the heating device and insulate the nearby walls. Use only the fuel intended for your particular heating device. Remove the ashes into a metal container far away the house or the building. When the heating device involves open fire, keep the furniture, curtains and other flammable items away from it.
- When you install the insulation, make sure there are no electrical wires through it.
- It is mandatory to know whether the breakers, so that you can turn them off in case of fire.



Remember the ways to extinguish a fire

First, take the flammable liquids out. Take the oxygen from the fire. Cool the fire with water or fire extinguishers. Special types of fire require different extinguishing techniques. Whichever method you use, act quickly.

Never use water to extinguish fires caused by malfunctioning electrical installations. Use chemicals intended for such purpose. If you manage to disconnect the power supply, then you can use water or anything that might help you to extinguish the fire.



Fires caused by oil or greasy substances can be smothered by bleach for household purposes or salt, or by covering the fire if it is in a small pot on the stove.

Small fires can be controlled with water or fire extinguishers; nevertheless do not try to handle fire that got out of control. Take all your family members out of the house and call the fire fighting service.

Extreme weather conditions

Extreme cold, snowfall and ice

Heavy snow and cold weather can impede the traffic and hinder all kind of movement in the affected region. Even regions where usually there are no heavy snows and frost can be affected by extremely low temperatures supplemented with snowdrift. Consequences can include traffic chaos, inability of cars and other means of transport to move due to snow and icy roads, cutting off and isolating certain villages or regions, with additional lack of power supply, difficulty to regularly provide the basic alimentary products, and blocked roads because of the stuck vehicles. Whatever it may be, heavy snows and cold weather can threaten your health and life, as well as cause other material damage.

As during the other types of foul weather, the most important thing is to know what can be expected, that is to obtain information regarding the possible snow storm. Therefore, media can be of great assistance, even if we learn about the storm only few hours in advance. If in the past your region was frequently exposed to snowstorms, follow the weather forecast to find out whether there is going to be a storm or not, especially during the season when they usually occur. However, even if your region is not exposed to snowstorms and blizzards, they can occur virtually on the entire territory of the Republic of Macedonia.

Especially, if you live in rural areas, you need to be prepared for a certain period of time, maybe for a week, to survive on your own, that is you need to have sufficient provisions for various usages that will make you self-sustainable. This is important, because you can be cut off and unable to reach to larger populated areas within several days until the roads have been cleared. Therefore, you need to have sufficient quantities of oil or wood for heating purposes, and to use them rationally. When it comes to wood, households usually are provided for the entire winter season, but if you use oil, or gas stoves for cooking, then you should save, because you might be cut off from the supplier. If it is necessary, you might temporarily stop heating a room or two.

Also, you should possess an emergency heating device, especially if you use the electricity for heating purposes, which might go out if you are temporarily cut off. If you lack experience in handling heating devices working on the principle of oil or wood combustion, you should be aware that such heat sources require proper ventilation so as to avoid accumulation of harmful gases. If you have a fireplace, you should have dry and cut wood at hand. When the blizzard occurs, one of the first things to do is to check whether the wood for heating purposes is well-protected from moisture and out of snow's reach.

Apart from that, you should have emergency food supplies, water and mobile cooking device - a gas stove, for example. Certain portion of your emergency supplies needn't be frozen. If you lack experience in handling heating devices working on the principle of oil or wood combustion, you should be aware that such heat sources require proper ventilation so as to avoid accumulation of harmful gases. It can be a small fire extinguisher, as well a barrel with sand or water.

The fashion of dressing should be fitted to the weather conditions. This especially refers to cold weather, particularly if you spend a lot of time outdoors. The best advice is to dress in layers, wearing comfortable and not so heavy clothes, rather than one layer of thick winter clothes. Wear hoods to protect the head and neck and scarves to protect the face, mouth and lungs from the cold air.

If, during winter, you have to travel in extremely cold weather or snow period, it is best to use the public transport. Buses and trains are less likely to break down or leave you stuck in blizzard. If you are constrained to use your own vehicle, then take the following measures:

- Make sure that the vehicle is in good condition and that all critical segments are checked before the journey. Make sure you have antifreezing solution. You are legally obliged to carry winter equipment, such as tyre chains, and it is advisable to have special winter tyres.
- If possible, take someone with you. The companion might be of critical significance if the car needs to be pushed when the tyres skid.
- Just in case, make sure to inform somebody where you are going and when you expect to arrive at your destination.
- If you own a mobile phone, or any other wireless communication device be sure to take it with you, but check the battery status afore.
- In the vehicle, carry the necessary items for winter storms, such as small shovel, windscreen snow and ice scaper, towing cables, battery-operated flashlights and extra batteries. Also, it is recommended to have working gloves, heavy shoes or boots, spare pair of wool socks, water-resistant jacket with hood and two blankets, in case you are constrained to spend the night in the car in extreme situations.
- If possible, travel only during day-time and use the magistral and regional roads where the traffic is more frequent, so that the other drivers can help you or the competent authorities can reach you more easily. Turn the car radio on the radio station regularly informing about the weather and road conditions.
- Drive carefully. Do not attempt to save on time by driving fast if the weather and the road circumstances do not allow it.
- Do not be reckless and take risks. This particularly refers to overtaking the car in front of you - which is impossible during winter storms - although the experience tells you it is easy only because you have done it before when the weather conditions were different. By risky and careless driving you increase the chances to get stuck in the snow, to get lost and stay isolated, to have to return or to ask for help. If you are caught in winter blizzard, with snow and wind, immediately look for a shelter.

- If your car breaks down due to the storm, or you are stuck in deep snow and you cannot continue, the most important thing is not to panic. Think about the situation you are in and your location, and then decide what is best to do considering the circumstances. If you are stuck on a road where there are many vehicles, show them that you are in distress. Turn all the lights on, or put a piece of clothe on the radio antenna or the window. Stay in the car and wait for the help to arrive. If you run the engine to warm yourself, open the window from time to time to provide ventilation. Make sure the tailpipe is clean and there is no snow in it, because that can send the carbon monoxide back to the passenger cabin. Do not leave to vehicle to find help - you might make a mistake regarding the direction or get lost.

Each winter, there are many unnecesseray deaths or injuries because people – both young and elederly – force their organism with increased physical activities, more than the body can endure. The cold weather by itself pressures the work of your heart. And if you add physical activity to that, especially such you are not accustomed to, such as cleaning snow or pushing car, you increase the risk of heart attack or stroke. In winter, avoid physical strain. Of course, this does not mean you shouldn't clean the snow in front of your house or home. On the contrary, it is your legal obligation.

High temperatures and droughts

During the periods of high temperatures and droughts we constantly listen on the media that we should stay in closed rooms and that we should go out in the sun as little as possible. And really, this is the best advice and it should be practised whenever possible. In countries where high temperatures are usual, life is organized in such manner that the hottest periods of the day are characterized with the least physical activities. Although Macedonia is rich with natural sources of water and never in its history have there been droughts that might threaten the supply of potable water to the population or work of industrial capacities due to lack of water for their needs, still, there are droughts that impact crops due to insufficient infrastructure for artificial irrigation. To certain age groups, such as elderly people and children, high temperatures can cause serious illnesses (heart attack to elderly people), even death.

Heat

Heat kills the organism by pushing the human body beyond its limits. In normal conditions, the human internal thermostat tells the body to sweat and the body cools itself through the evaporation of the sweat. In extreme heat and high humidity, evaporation is slowed and the body must work extra hard to maintain a normal temperature.

Most heat disorders occur because the body has been overexposed to heat or has overexercised for his or her age and physical condition. Other diseases might be caused due to stagnant air and its bad quality full of bacteria.

Prolonged excessive heat can have serious consequences on the communities. On the other hand, because of the lack of rainfalls and high temperatures, the need for water is increased and it might lead to shortage or restrictions in certain regions of the country. You should know the following information regarding the excessive heat:

- People living in urban areas may be at greater risk from the effects of a prolonged heat wave than those living in rural areas. Increased health problems in urban areas might occur when the hot air, which does not circulate, traps pollutants, thus the polluted air becomes an additional problem besides the heat.
- Burns can significantly retard the skin's ability to shed the excess heat.

There are preventive measures that can be undertaken before the occurrence of excessive heat, or other natural disasters, as well as to adopt certain habits and behaviour when your area is caught by excessive heat conditions.

Before excessive heat conditions occur:

- Installation of air-conditioners in homes is a modern and growing practice, as the standard of living goes up. In developed countries there are regions that spend far more electricity in the summer than during the winter, and major consumers are the air-conditioners.
- Besides the use of the air-conditioner, or if you do not possess one, you need to do everything that is in your power to improve the insulation of your home, so during the summer the cold air will stay inside, and the hot air will remain outside.
- In the Western countries, some families put temporary reflecting materials over the shutters or the windows, such as aluminum foils, that reflect the incoming sunlight and heat, which otherwise, would find its way to the living room.

Procedures during the hot periods:

- Protect the windows. For example, you can keep the shutters and the curtains always closed. Also, you can put different types of clothe over the windows to keep shadow, such as drapes and tailor-made palls, to stop the morning or afternoon sun from entering. Such ancillary fabrics and shut shutters can contribute to the reduction of heat up to 80% in well-insulated buildings.
- Remain in close space as much as possible. If in your home there is not, or you do not want to use it, transfer the living room to the ground floor, where the temperatures are the lowest. If you use a fan rather than an air-conditioner, remember that it does not cool, but only moved the hot air around, and the effects of its use stop when you turn it off.
- Consume balanced, light meals and regularly drink increased quantities of water. People suffering from chronic disease and cannot drink large quantities of water (epilepsy, heart conditions, kidneys and liver) must consult a physician first. Avoid the use of alcohol, even beer. Drinking alcohol has the same effects as drinking salty water for shipwrecked persons at sea. Although it might seem that light alcoholic beverages satiate thirst, they actually cause even greater dehydration of the body.
- Wear light, loose fitting clothes that cover as much as possible of your skin. Wear light-coloured clothes that do not absorb the heat and help maintain the regular body temperature. Cover your face and head with a hat (preferably straw-woven) with a protective brim, preferably wide brims as in cowboy hats.
- If possible, allow your body to accommodate to high temperatures slowly, in period of 2-3 days, by gradually exposing yourself to sun. In any case, avoid staying out in the sun for too long. Sunburn skin is less efficient in reflecting the heat. If you have to stay outdoors for a longer period of time during the day, use a skin protection cream suitable for your skin type. Persons working outside during extremely hot conditions can use wet scarves over their faces.

- Avoid drastic changes of the temperature. Exposing yourself to the sun directly from inside can cause a heat shock. On the opposite, cold shower after spending a long period of time in the sun can cause hypothermia with elder persons or children.
- Slow down the rhythm of your everyday activities. Reduce, eliminate or reschedule any strenuous activities. Individuals at risk should stay in the coolest available place. During excessive heat, a prolonged rest is recommended in the hottest hours of the day to allow the body's natural 'cooling system' to restore and function.

Thunderstorms and heavy rains

In a regular year, without any crises caused by natural disaster, such as intense earthquakes and not localized floods, that is, floods impacting larger areas (for example, a flood by the river Vardar might affect several regions along its course), in the Republic of Macedonia the death rate due to thunder strikes is the highest.

Protection from thunders and lightning

Plan in advance and do not take any risks. Know where you are going in case of sudden thunderstorm occurs. This particularly refers if you are going for a nature walk when it is not sunny and the weather forecast says cloudy and rainy weather is possible. In such cases, you need to know the weather report and be prepared to find a shelter before a thunderstorm begins.

What to do if you are indoors in case of thunderstorm

- Stay away from the telephone and unplugged it. Telephone wires can conduct atmospheric electrical charge.
- Disconnect all electrical appliances from the power supply network, and if you are watching TV, turn it off immediately. All electrical appliances connected to the power supply network might be affected by electrical discharges from thunders and be damaged, and they can even cause electric shock to your family members if standing near them.
- Close the taps in the kitchen and in the bathroom. Cases have been recorded when electrical discharges were conducted through water pipes.
- Close the shutters of the windows and move away.
- Finally, the same as during all types of storm, listen to a battery-powered radio to get updated information on the situation.

What to do if you are outdoors in case of thunderstorm

- If you are in a boat or swimming, return ashore, move away from the beaches and immediately find a shelter. In general, you should move away from rivers, lakes, or any body of water, because the water is an excellent conductor of electricity. If there is a lightning strike in your vicinity, its electricity may be conducted both by water and soil.
- Hide in a shelter in a sturdy building, protected from all sides, ideally it would be a building. A sturdy building is the best place to be in during thunderstorm. Avoid hiding under gazebos, picnic pavilions, etc.
- If there are no solid structures nearby, hide in a car or bus. Close the windows. Car tyres and plastic shoe soles provide safety from thunders. Although cars have metal roofs, you are safe as long as you do not touch any metal with your body. Keep your hands in your lap.
- If you are in a forest, hide in the bush vegetation and short trees areas. NEVER stand beneath a single tree when there are no other structures or trees nearby.

As a last resort, if you are in a completely open area, without any structures, kneel on a low-laying ground. Stay away from any protruding structures, pipelines, telephone poles, towers, etc. On the other hand, if you are on a low-laying ground, be aware that it can be flooded very fast if the region you are in is known for heavy rains and floods. Crouch low to the ground on the balls of your feet, place your hands on your knees and your head between your knees and cover your ears with your hands. Find a position that will make the least possible target. Do not lay on the ground with your arms and legs stretching, because you become a bigger target and the odds increase for your body to get in contact with humid soil, which is an excellent conductor of electricity.

If lightning strikes somebody:

- Call for help immediately. Dial 194 if you are in a place where the paramedics can reach, or 195 for the Crisis Management Centre. Dial 195 to report lightning damage to pipelines, telephone poles or other infrastructure facility. However, the person who was struck by the lightning needs urgent medical assistance.
- Medical assistance is necessary if the victim stops breathing. In such case, give CPR instantly - you, or any other person trained to do it. The same should be done if the victim's hearth stops working. If the victim's pulse can be heard, and he/she is breathing, look for and treat any other injuries.
- Pay special attention to the burns. Victims of lightning strike usually have burns due to the electric shock they suffered. Lightning strike can cause damages to the nervous system, bone fractures, or vision and hearing impairment.
- If necessary, move the injured person to a safe place. Remember, lightning strike victims carry no electrical charge and it is safe to approach them with no consequences to your health.

Special recommendations in case of sudden downpours

In certain areas, sudden downpours can cause floods very fast. Brooklets, dry riverbeds, lower-laying area can be flooded much faster and endanger people's lives, sometimes without any warning or announcement for such danger. In such cases, the best thing to do is to ask the senior citizens in your community, or even better, your neighbours if they had experienced such floods, whether and where they occurred in your neighbourhood or municipality, so as to avoid places that might be abruptly flooded.

During heavy downpour, be aware of the risk of flash flooding and be prepared to protect yourselves. If you notice and possibility or sign of flash flooding in your vicinity, immediately go to a safer location and then notify the authorities about the danger, so that anybody in similar situation might be informed.

In periods of heavy rains:

- Stay away from natural watercourses of creeks and other draining systems during and after the rainfalls. The water falls from steep areas very fast, and it causes overflowing of the natural draining systems and it carries deadly bulk of rocks, mud, broken trees, and other waste.
- Use maps. Find out where you are and if it is low-laying land. Climb fast as high as possible. Many roads and paths are parallel with riverbeds and basins and can be flooded.
- Stay away from flooded areas. The level of the water can continue rising and currents can be very fast. Never attempt to cross a creek or a river if the level of the water is above your knees.
- Leave the vehicle if you are stuck in the water, if it can be done safely. Water can come up even more, and drag the vehicle and people in it.

If you are stuck in the water, try to keep a flashlight on to become easily noticeable and get help. To stay above the water, hold on to the floating waste, such as branches. As a last resort, tie the sleeves of the shirt or trousers to catch air inside, and use them as safety belts.

There are actions and procedures you can undertake to help you deal with almost all types of disasters and crisis of large scale. Your best protection is to know what to do, and at the same time, it is your duty and responsibility.

Probably, the essential thing to remember is to stay calm. This can be the line between the life and death. During emergency situations people usually lose their lives or get injured because they acted thoughtlessly, or did nothing.

Doing the right activities in the times of crisis can save your life. First think through, and then carry out the necessary actions. It usually is a procedure planned in advance, or a procedure you were instructed to undertake by the competent authorities.

In case of storms or any other potential threat, keep your battery-powered radio on to listen to the weather reports and forecast, as well as other information and advice by the competent authorities.

Use the telephone only to report important events to the police, such as nearby fires, floods, etc. Do not talk on the phone for too long, as you can block the phone lines and obstruct other citizens to make important phone calls.

First aid knowledge can save lives and alleviate the pain injured persons suffer. Both adults and teenagers can acquire such important skills by attending first aid trainings and specialized courses.

Experience gained by analyzing great disasters and catastrophies worldwide shows that most of the life-saving activities were undertaken and successfully performed by the citizens, and then the specialized services.

In case of fire, or other type of emergency, it might be necessary to leave your home – house or apartment, without prior warning. If such is the case, leave the house immediately.

Plan your departure by drawing a map of your home pointing to the location of the doors, windows, stairs and larger pieces of furniture. Elevators, if any, are of no use in this case. On the contrary, if you take the elevators you might not be able to get out, so it is better not to use them at all. On the map, point out the location of previously prepared emergency supplies, fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, if any, fire stairs, vents and buttons to disconnect the electricity, water and heating bodies. In addition, draw an exit line for each room. If there are several exits in the building, draw more exit routes for each room. Finally, mark the location where you and your neighbours, if you live in a building, can meet once the evacuation is over. Also, draw the most important points and facilities outside the building you live in, such as the garages, other accompanying structures, fire stairs, porches, access roads, etc. If you live in multi-storey building, develop emergency exit plans for each floor of the building. Refresh your knowledge of the manners and roads for evacuation at least once to twice a year.

Be informed where and how the electricity, water and gas supply in your household, if any, can be disconnected. Although most of the people living in Macedonia do not have a gas supply in their homes, gasification in the Republic of Macedonia has been announced and it can become reality in few years. Always keep the necessary tools and pliers at hand for such purposes.

It is best to keep important documents (such as, title deeds, insurance policies, birth certificates, papers and photos of the property and important objects) and valuables in one place, and in case of urgent evacuation you can easily take them and save them.

Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia have clearly established rights and responsibilities when it comes to protection and rescue. These responsibilities arise out of the Law on Protection and Rescuing and should be taken seriously, because they include financial penalties.

We shall discuss the rights and obligations of the citizens as individuals. Apart from such rights and responsibilities, the law provides for the obligatory measures and activities engaging virtually all types of institutions in the country, and people in case of emergency have rights and responsibilities concerning the workplace. Every employed person in the Republic of Macedonia has rights and responsibilities in the field of protection and rescue, in accordance with the nature of their activity, regardless whether they are employed in state or public institutions, trade companies or NGOs. Employees will be assigned tasks related to these rights and responsibilities at their workplace, but the managers, particularly in trade companies and NGOs, should be aware of these responsibilities and be informed on the Law on Protection and Rescue, so as to develop plans for the implementation of such tasks and activities.

Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia enjoy three types of rights and responsibilities when it comes to protection and rescue:

- a. To participate in the protection and rescue;
- b. To fulfil their material obligation; and
- c. To be prepared for self-protection.

Every employed person at the age of 18 to 55, for men, and 50, for women, is obliged to take part in the protection and rescue forces. Pregnant women, mothers and single parents and custodians looking after a child, two or more children younger than 10 years of age are exempted of this obligation. As citizens of the Republic of Macedonia, we are all obliged to respond to the summons to participate in the protection and rescue actions submitted by the competent authorities. The manner and duration of citizens' engagements related to this duty is prescribed by an Order of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia."

Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are entitled and obliged to be trained and prepared to protect themselves and the others, as well as to enforce the prescribed measures for protection and rescue. The obligation to capacitate the citizens is performed through organized forms of qualification.

If a disaster causing crisis is likely to happen, competent authorities may order an evacuation due to reasons of prevention and avoidance of greater consequences, primarily concerning people's lives. Evacuation is planned, organized and controlled movement of the population, material and cultural goods of the Republic from endangered to relatively safer areas. This measure is enacted if no other measure can prevent the impact of natural disasters or epidemics to people, animals and plants, as well as other types of disasters, and if by not evacuating the threatened area great losses are expected. Population from the evacuated area must move to a different municipality in a previously determined place and time. Evacuation as a protection and rescue measure is prescribed in the Law on Protection and Rescue.

Apart from this measure, the Protection and Rescue System in the Republic of Macedonia in times of crisis situation continues to implement other measures, such as following: sheltering and providing care for the endangered and injured population; protection and rescue from wrecks, fires, flood and not exploded combative means; first aid; protection of animals and plants and terrain restoration.

A crisis situation of virtually every kind can hinder the regular food and water supply, heating, and many everyday needs. Store certain amount of emergency provisions at hand, an amount which would be sufficient to satisfy your needs for a week.

If you stay at home during the crisis, these provisions may help you survive the crisis period with no difficulties. If you need to be evacuated from home and temporarily moved to another location, you can take your emergency provisions with you. Even if you are moved in a temporary shelter, the provisions can reduce the burden of the stay in the shelter or hiding-place and make it easier.

Certain products, which usually can be easily found, might become unreachable during crisis period.

These **basic emergency** provisions should contain:

- A battery-powered radio receiver and a flashlight with extra batteries for each of the devices;
- Bottles of drinking water – approximately 4 litres a day per person and at least three-day supplies for each member of the family, and as many drinking fluids as possible (fruit and vegetable juices, other non-alcoholic beverages) packed in easily transportable packages;
- Canned and sealed food not requiring a refrigerator and cooking, as well a can opener;
- A blanket or a sleeping bag for each member of the family;
- A hammer, pliers and spanner;
- A pocket knife;
- Fire extinguisher;
- A whistle, and if you live in an isolated area far from populated areas, it is a good idea to invest in a smoke signal device (a pistol) to attract the attention if you need any help;
- Soap and towels;
- Laundry detergent;
- Another set of car keys, credit cards, cash;
- First aid kit with instructions;
- OTC drugs, light analgetics and antiseptics;
- Medicine and pills that are used by your family members whose administration cannot be terminated, such as insulin, heart pills, diet food, baby and children food. These provisions should not be stored for a long time before use, but they should be added at the last moment.

Ideally, there should be two kits and each of them should be kept in a water-resistant box or containers. One of them should be kept in the larder or in the basement, or next to the entrance. The other kit may be stored in the trunk of your car.

Complementary provisions

The following items can also be of significant assistance:

- Plastic bags (small and big);
- Salt;
- Paper or plastic glasses;
- Sodium bicarbonate;
- Spoons;
- Matches and lighters;
- Adhesive tape;
- Needle and thread;
- Wet handkerchieves;
- Hand lotion;
- Single-use diapers;
- Cottonwool and cotton buds;
- Bandages;
- Other necessities and provisions typical of your family



Your first concern after the crisis is over is the safety of your family, friends and neighbours. If possible, provide medical care for the seriously injured persons. People with open wounds or deep cuts should be vaccinated against tetanus, unless they have been vaccinated within the last 5 years.

If professional medical assistance is not immediately available, persons with knowledge of first-aid can help in saving lives or alleviating pain. Do not try to move people with serious injuries, unless they are threatened by additional injuries.

Be extremely cautious when entering or repairing buildings that are damaged or weakened by the disaster/crisis - they can collapse without prior warning. Besides, there might be a short-circuit in the electrical appliances and installations. It is recommended to wear high shoes or boots to avoid injuries from glass or other sharp objects.

If there is no heating source, put on several layers of clothes. A fire place or a heating device using wood or coal might be used to provide heat. Fireplaces need to be checked whether they are damaged or whether the chimney is blocked. Such damages can cause fire.

If there are any doubts about damages concerning the electricity (burnt wires, sparks or hot insulation), disconnect the power supply from the main connection. If any of the electrical appliances is wet, turn the main switch off, then disconnect the electrical appliances, dry it and wipe it with a dry towel, then connect it to the power supply network and turn on the main switch. If fuses are blown or disconnected, turn the main switch off and check for short circuits in the wires, electrical appliances and equipment.

(Attention: Do not do any of the aforementioned activities if you are wet or standing in water).

Do not touch the electrical wires immersed in water or any items in contact with immersed electrical wires.

If water is leaking, shut off the water supply by turning off the main shutoff valve. Water for emergency needs can be obtained from the water tanks the local authorities provide in crisis regions.

First check the food intended for emergency situations prior to using it. Food that needs to be kept in a fridge might be spoiled if kept outside for a longer period of time. Food that had any contact with flood water should not be eaten.

Crisis situations may damage the public water supply systems which results in contaminated water. After flooding, all water should be considered to be dangerous for usage. Comply with the public announcements related to the public water supply system in your municipality. If you need to use tap water, boil it for at least three minutes before you use it. If you cannot boil it, add five drops of household bleach per four liters of water. Stir thoroughly and leave it for 30 minutes. Only water which seems clean and contains no smell can be treated in such manner. However, in order to be safe, drink only bottled water, juices or water you previously put in the fridge.

You **MUST** follow the instructions of the local authorities related to the usage of food and water. If necessary, ask for food, clothes and medical assistance in the Red Cross office or the local authorities. Open the cupboards and wardrobes very carefully.

Do not go to areas that are struck by the crisis. Your examination of the terrain may obstruct the first-aid and rescue activities, and at the same time, it can be dangerous.

Do not drive to a region affected by the crisis, and if you do, drive carefully. Be careful of the risks and report the competent services and local authorities thereof.

Do not spread any rumours or invalid reports for excessive damage or demolition.

Follow the recommendations of the local authorities on how to help yourself and your community to recover from the crisis as soon as possible. Be prepared to be evacuated if necessary.

Contact your closest and other relatives when the crisis is over and let them know that you are safe. Competent services may lose precious time trying to locate you and your family, especially if you were evacuated. However, do not block the phone lines that are necessary for official emergency calls.

Personal hygiene and general cleanliness

After the crisis is over, poor hygiene and cleanliness may cause problems.

Always wash your hands with a lot of water and soap before touching and preparing the food to prevent spreading of infections. Make sure the children wash their hands, too. Use plastic or rubber gloves if you have any cuts, burns or infection.

- Wash your hands, kitchen countertops and pots with hot, soapy water after each step in preparing the food. Do not put the cooked meat at the same place where the raw meat was before.
- Keep the towels and cloth clean. Bacteria can survive in the towels and cloths, so wash them often.
- Wash the dishes and kitchen accessories only in potable water. If you are not sure whether the water is potable or not, boil it for at least three minutes.
- Use single-use dinner sets in case of water shortage.

Diseases

During crisis situation epidemics can occur. In case of disease, inform a doctor or a nurse about the symptoms. Persons suffering from diarrhea or vomiting, as well as higher body temperature, sore throat, coughing, or other symptoms, should inform the doctor or other healthcare practitioner. This is particularly important if people with these symptoms are temporarily accommodated in joint shelter centres. Sick person should not assist the preparation of food.

Children can sometimes suffer from intestinal infections without showing any symptoms and their hygiene is usually poor, therefore adults should always check whether children (particularly the younger ones) washed their hands after the use of toilet. This reduces the risk of transmitting diseases. Put the used diapers in a plastic bag or other type of closed container.

Spoiled food and food poisoning

It is important to know that organisms that spoil the food are not the same as the organisms causing food poisoning. If the food looks, smells and tastes unusual, throw it away. Unfortunately, bacteria causing diseases with symptoms such as vomiting, stomach-ache, diarrhea or fever, are not easily detectable. The agents spoiling the food usually do not affect the smell, taste or the appearance, which might indicate that the food is not safe for use. If you follow these simple rules, it might prevent the occurrence of diseases caused by spoiled alimentary products:

- Boil the food thoroughly, especially meat products. It would be the best if you can use a thermometer to determine the temperature of the meat during cooking, by putting it in the thickest part of the meat that is being cooked. Meat should be prepared at the temperature of 200 degrees Celsius.
- The remains of the meal should be put in the refrigerator immediately after finishing the meal. If there are larger quantities to be cooled (more than half a kilo, or a kilo, or more than two litres of fluids), divide the food in several shallow plastic boxes to cool it faster. This prevents the bacteria reproduction in the hot food.
- Do not defrost frozen food at room temperature. Defrost it in the refrigerator or at a cold place, or you can cook it while it is frozen.
- Use only pasteurized milk.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before you start preparing the food, and particularly if you have to touch raw meat.
- Do not leave food high in protein (raw or cooked) at a room temperature. Warm it, or put it in the refrigerator.

Check the canned products

Check carefully the cans if they were flooded, frozen, caught by the fire, or if they are incurved. Some cans are good for use after they have been washed, and others not. Follow the following rules:

- Bottles and other food containers (as jars) with corks or screw-on lids are difficult to be cleaned around the opening after they have been flooded or caught by fire. If there were drastic temperature changes there would be a possibility that the contaminating bacteria and other agent were sucked in such containers. So, throw them away.
- Metal cans are safe for use if they seem undamaged. Wash them in water with bleach (a quarter of a glass per 4 litres of water) for a few minutes and then dry them to prevent them from rustying.
- If there is rust on the cans that cannot be removed with soft cloth, the corrosion might have allowed the contaminating agents to enter into the can through minor wholes on the can. Such cans should be thrown away.
- Throw away the cans with bulging lids. It means that the bacteria are already inside and they produce gases that are responsible for the bulging lids, and if the lid is loose and moves up and down when pushed, it means that the air has entered carrying contaminating agents. Do not taste food from such cans and throw them immediately.
- If the can is chipped or damaged, check whether it is safe to be eaten. If the damage is considerable, or scrapes are deep, throw the can.

If the freezer is out of use:

When the power supply is disconnected, full freezer might keep the food frozen for two or three days if the door is kept closed. A half-full freezer will keep the food frozen for a day. What to do if the power supply is not restored within two days?

- Keep the freezer door closed;
- Divide the food in the your neighbours' freezers, if there is electricity;
- If you are not sure for duration of the period the electricity was shut off, throw away all the food that smells badly, if it is of unusual color, or if it was kept at room temperature;
- If the food is cold when touched, it can be cooked immediately or frozen again.

If the refrigerator is out of use:

When the electricity goes off, it can be expected that the food in the refrigerator will stay cold for 4-6 hours, depending on the outside temperature.

- Food high in proteins (meat, milk, cheese) should be consumed as soon as possible if the electricity is not restored instantly. It is not safe to keep such products at room temperature.
- Fruit and vegetables can be kept at room temperature until they show any signs of decay. Such food can last for a longer period of time if the room is well-aerated. If the electricity is not restored soon, take them out of the refrigerator.

Cleaning

If the property is greatly damaged, heavy mechanization, such as bulldozers, can be used. In such case, underground installation, such as wells or drainage system, should be clearly marked so as not to be damaged by the machines.

During the cleaning you should wear protective clothes. Boots, rubber gloves, long-sleeved garments which helps to minimize the contact with the contaminated objects. Be careful not to step on nails or other object protruding from the ground.



While the women's vulnerability in crisis situations is often emphasized, their role in providing assistance and active participation in overcoming and handling crisis is not sufficiently recognized. Women, to a great extent, are marginalized in the development of policies for disaster risk reduction and management, as well as the decision-making processes, so their voices are rarely heard.

The contemporary nonfiction literature contains strong evidence that when women are involved in the disaster risks reduction and policy-creating processes related to this topic both men and women benefit, and consequently the entire communities and countries.

Men and women differently experience, understand and identify the disaster risks. Everybody can be exposed to risks in different ways, but men and women have different level of vulnerability, different manners of accessing the available resources, and therefore, they have developed various skills in crisis management.

A recent study analyzing crises in 141 countries showed that women most often are victims with terminal consequences than men in crisis situations, such as natural disasters and this disparity is mainly connected to the unequal socio-economic status of the woman in the society. In the countries where the socio-economic status of both genders is relatively the same, the death rate per gender is approximately the same.

Acknowledgements related to strengthening the role of women in crisis situations

Women and the communities find solutions that are suitable to the local conditions when they are given access to resources for a longer period of time. Solutions by the women are more integrated and take into account several circumstances and segments of family and community life (apart from working on the risk reduction and environment protection, they attend to the cultural heritage, poverty reduction and improvement of the basic standard of living).

Second acknowledgment is that women are natural, but to a certain extent, invisible 'eliminators' of the crisis consequences. This is due to their role in the communities and which is related to the health care, education and looking after the children, as well as their activities outside the home. However, their roles should be acknowledged and recognized and they should be allowed access to the necessary resources.

Next acknowledgement is that risk reduction, rehabilitation and the endurance are possibilities to support and legitimize women's work, as well as to promote more active roles of women, both in the public sphere and governmental structures.

Women should be actively involved in all phases of the post-crisis rehabilitation and decision making process. Entirely gender approach towards the women's needs in crisis situations cannot be treated separately from the other sectors such as healthcare, sheltering, legal needs, education, everyday living, etc. Involvement of women and youth in developing plans for disaster risk reduction and crisis management as soon as possible has helped the communities to acquire better understanding of women and children's needs and to undertake measures in meeting these needs.

This leads to a conclusion that women should be consulted when planning community rehabilitation interventions. It can be achieved by including women in decision-making teams for crisis management, which also contributes to better understanding of the local customs.

The Eight Point Agenda of the United Nations Development Programme - UNDP⁸

The basic goal of the UNDP's Eight Point Agenda concernign the emancipation of women and gender equality in crisis management and protection is to provide a detailed approach that will answer the women's needs in times of crisis and during the period of handling the consequences. It is a very practical tool which prioritizes women' needs and promotes gender equality.

Comprehensive understanding of the capacities and differences between men and women, bous and girls is indispensable not only for early crisis recovery and sustainable development, but it is also an important tool for crisis prevention. The Eight Point Agenda was adopted in November 2006 and its most important principles are the following:

1. Strengthen women's security in crisis
2. Advance gender justice: Provide justice and security for women
3. Expand women's citizenship, participation and leadership
4. Build peace with and for women: Involve women in all peace processes
5. Promote gender equality in disaster risk reduction Valuing and incorpotating women's knowledge and experience

Women's unique needs must be incorporated in analyses of disaster risk and post disaster risk assessments. Steps must be taken to prevent the increased vulnerability of women and girls.

Gender analysis should be envisaged in the disaster risk and danger assessment. It is necessary to pay attention to women's need, and women's experience and knowledge must be valued and incorporated in any plans or policies for disaster risk reduction.

6. Ensure gender-responsive recovery: Men's and women's support to recovery.
7. Transform government to deliver for women: Include women's issues on the national agenda
8. Develop capacities for social change

⁸ http://www.undp.org/cpr/we_do/8_pa.shtml

Taking steps to include women in crisis management in the Republic of Macedonia

Successful implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action demands complete, active and balanced involvement of both men and women, girls and boys. Gender issues were not considered for a long time, mainly due to the poor understanding of the gender vulnerability and exposure to natural disasters risks. Therefore, it is necessary to undertake serious activities so as to promote the gender component in the disaster risk reduction⁹.

That is the reason why the Crisis Management Centre and the United Nations Development Programme - UNDO implemented the project Strengthening of the Capacities of the Crisis Management Centres during the period of 2008 – 2009. This project introduced the topic of the inclusion of gender issues and practices within the crisis management. The project achieved the following results: development of software application and gender issues database and Web based system for learning including a Guide for Gender Mainstreaming into Crisis Management, establishment of teams on gender issues within the frames of th institution itself, as well as raising the public awareness for gender issues and practices through workshops. In addition, a draft version of aGender Responsive National Crisis Management Plan was developed.

The gender aspect was taken into consideration within the frameworks of the National Platform on Disaster Risk Reduction, whereby a thematic working group on gender issues in the context of disasters was formed (http://cuk.gov.mk/images/stories/Platforma_MKD.pdf). It is a tremendous institutional encouragement for upcoming gender mainstreaming in the crisis management system.

It is a general recommendation to provide for and support the institutional solutions and activities considering and incorporating the gender element. Gender issues experts who will participate in the programming and planning of the activities, as well as the decision making process, should be included within the institutions and communities. Also, it is required that gender sensitive budgeting practices should be introduced, whereupon at least 15% of the annual budgets shall be intended for gender issues and practices.

⁹ Gender Perspective: Working Together for Disaster Risk Reduction Good Practices and Lessons Learned Geneva, June 2007, page III

At the local level, in order to duly emphasize the role of the women in crisis and in creating gender responsive policies, it is necessary that the municipality develops gender systemized data, as well as data on women's role and participation at local level. On the other hand, distributed information in case of crisis should also contain data and plans envisaging the customs of the local population, so they can be useful or they will not become an obstacle during the crisis management planning, or during the actual coping with disasters and crisis.

Annex 1

Annex 2

Location and boundaries of the Regional Crisis Management Centres in the Republic of Macedonia

Location and boundaries of the Main Crisis Management Centres in the Republic of Macedonia



Annex 3

Overview 1: Addresses and contact telephone numbers in all 35 Regional Crisis Management Centres in the Republic of Macedonia

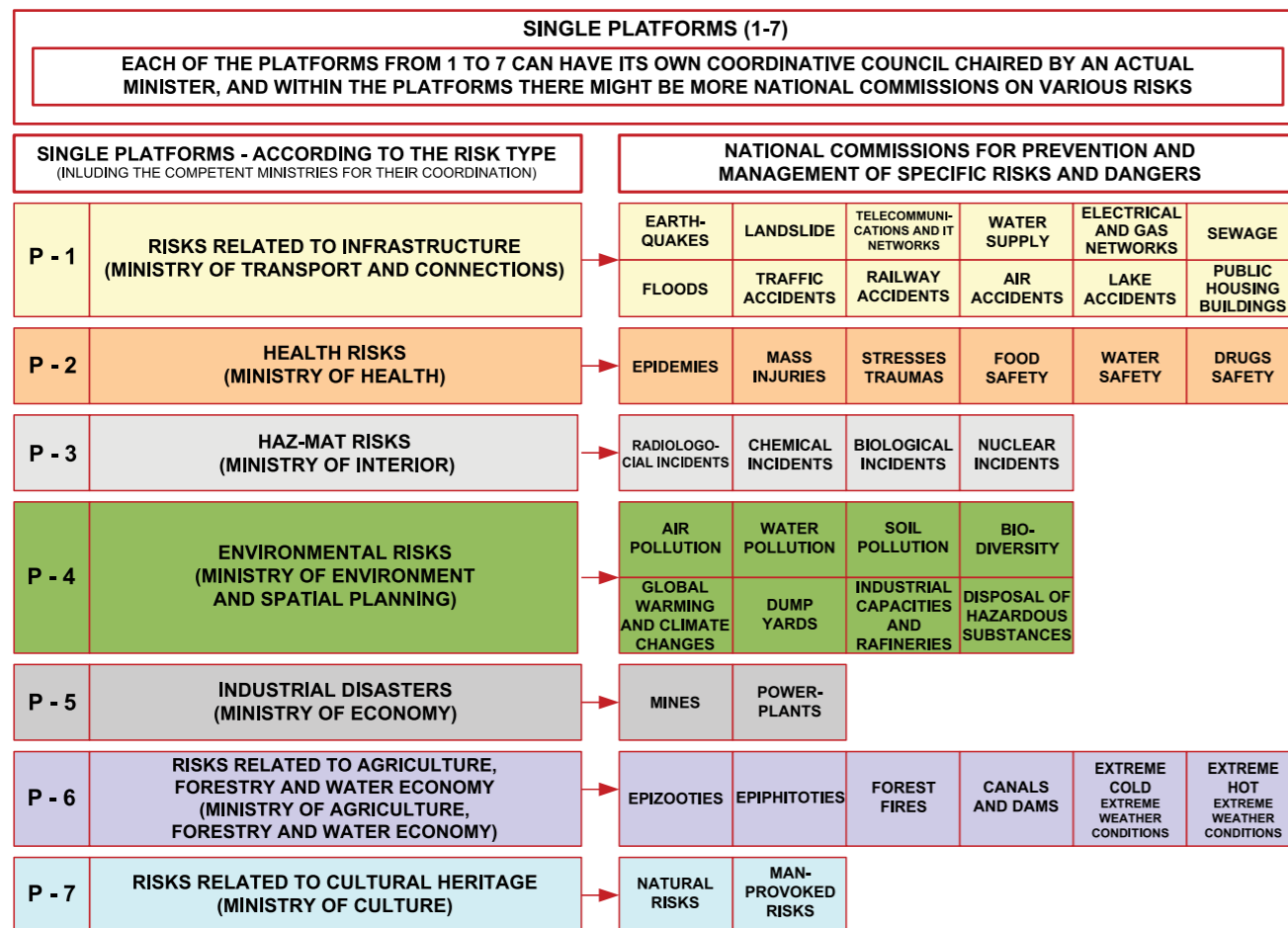
No.	Title of the Regional Crisis Management Centres	Address	Contact telephone
1	Berovo	ul. „Partizanska“ b.b.	033 471 033
2	Bitola	blvd. „Prvi maj“ b.b.	195 / 047 208 630
3	Valandovo	ul. „Nikola Karev“ b.b.	034 382 220
4	Veles	ul. „Panko Brasnarov“ b.b.	195 / 043 215 420
5	Vinica	ul. „Bel Kamen“ b.b.	033 361 342
6	Gevgelija	ul. „Moinski Pat“ b.b.	034 212 900
7	Gostivar	ul. „Braka Ginovski“ b.b.	042 215 822
8	Debar	Dom na ARM b.b.	046 831 051
9	Delcevo	blvd. „Makedonija“ b.b.	033 411 137
10	Demir Hisar	ul. „Bitolska“ b.b.	047 276 601
11	Kavadraci	ul. „Marsal Tito“ b.b.	043 413 826
12	Kicevo	ul. „Boris Kidric“ br. 2	045 225 751
13	Kocani	ul. „Nikola Karev“ b.b.	033 274 797
14	Kratovo	ul. „Goce Delcev“ br. 76	031 481 495
15	Kriva Palanka	ul. „Marsal Tito“ br. 175	031 375 744
16	Krusevo	ul. „Nikola GJurkovik“ b.b.	048 477 062
17	Kumanovo	ul. „11 ^{ti} Oktomvri“ b.b.	195 / 031 475 250

18	Makedonski Brod	ul. „7mi Septemvri“ br. 4	045 274 124
19	Negotino	ul. „Aco Adzilov“ br. 2	043 371 205
20	Ohrid	ul. „Dimitar Vlahov“ br. 57	195 / 046 231 170
21	Prilep	ul. „Egejska“ b.b.	048 401 020
22	Probistip	ul. „Jakim Stojkovski“ br. 1	032 483 146
23	Radovis	ul. „Aleksandar Makedonski“ b.b.	032 632 274
24	Resen	plostad „Marsal Tito“ b.b.	047-454 860
25	Sveti Nikole	plostad „Ilinden“ b.b.	032 444 161
26	Struga	ul. „Vlado Maleski“ b.b.	046 785 390
27	Strumica	ul. „Mosa Pijade“ b.b.	195 / 034 334 430
28	Tetovo	ul. „LJubo Bozinovski“ b.b.	195 / 044 356 590
29	Stip	ul. „Vasil Glavinov“ b.b.	195 / 032 223 450
30	Gazi Baba - Skopje	ul. „Aleksandar Makedonski“ b.b.	02 3240 000
31	Karpos - Skopje	ul. „Partizanski Odredi“ b.b.	02 3092 941
32	Kisela Voda - Skopje	ul. „Prvomajska“ b.b.	02 2786 741
33	Centar - Skopje	ul. „Mihail Cokov“ b.b.	02 3232 699
34	Cair - Skopje	ul. „Bosna i Hercegovina“ b.b.	02 2601 855
35	Grad Skopje	Dimce Mircev, bb, Skopje	195 / 02 3103 120

Annexes

Annex 4

Assigned authorities and mutual connections among specialized platforms



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