THE PROFESSION OF CRISIS MANAGER IN THE CONTEXT OF DISASTER AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION

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ABSTRACT

The process of crisis management includes measures that can significantly interfere with society and restrict the fundamental rights and freedoms of individuals during the crisis events. In this context, the ethical dimensions of crisis management must be considered and awareness of such principles should be reflected from both the crisis manager's point of view as well as the society point of view. The proposed article therefore deals with identification of the person of the crisis manager and with analysis of the current problematic situation of the given profession. The amount of legal provisions and the diversity of situations in which crisis managers may find themselves multiply the need of implementation of the ethical principles in this profession. Consequently, we also want to indicate, on the basis of an analysis of a concrete example, the problematic aspects of the implementation of ethical principles in the profession of crisis manager. Moreover, the knowledge and awareness of the society on ethical principles of crisis managers is also discussed.

Keywords: crisis management, crisis situation, awareness, professional ethics

1 INTRODUCTION

By asking the question "Who the crisis manager is?", there are a number of issues raising. There is no uniform opinion among the professionals about the person of crisis manager. Generally speaking, we could designate each manager as a crisis manager. Being a crisis manager would in this case means just a "role" of each manager [1]. The reason is that risks and threats affect all spheres of human life and therefore there is the requirement for assessment, evaluation and management of such risks by all managers. From this perspective, it is necessary to perceive safety as the highest value of human society. In order to preserve its dominant position, the crisis management measures put the value of human freedom down to the second place. In general, safety is perceived as a condition for the existence of freedom, but crisis management measures do not always fully accept this commonly used sequence.

Of course, risk factors can be identified in every area of human society. From this reason work of all managers include tasks related to the risks minimization and subsequently responsible decision-making about performing necessary actions. However, assigning the role of crisis manager to any individual who "manages" [2] would make it impossible to identify a crisis manager as a member of a particular profession.

2 DEFINITION OF THE CRISIS MANAGER PROFESSION

There is an opinion that the crisis manager is "a specially prepared expert for solving the crisis situation" [1]. We are therefore convinced that a degree of specialization is a necessary condition for identifying such a manager within the crisis management profession. It is based

on the sociological definition of the profession. In general, there are four basic features that Czech sociologist Jan Keller describes in his thesis Introduction to Sociology (1999) as follows: 1. existence of systematic theory, 2. professional authority, 3. professional association, and 4. professional ethics [3]. The first feature of the profession is the existence of a systematic theory. On theory can the practical side of the profession underpin, because at the same time, practical skills also requires the mastery of a theory with which the profession is closely intertwined. The formal condition for adopting a profession is therefore to master a university degree in the relevant discipline.

The second feature of the profession is the professional authority. A prerequisite for filling that feature is the knowledge that a common person does not have. Precisely due to expertise it is possible on the one hand to determine what is right for the society or for the particular person/client and what, on the other hand, is harmful to him. The professional authority puts a monopoly on competences in the particular field into the hands of experts.

The professional association is the third feature that complements our vision of the profession. It is an organization that brings together individual members of the profession and in particular cares for their qualitative growth. This approach strengthens their monopoly on professional competencies. One of the tasks of the professional association is also the definition of standards and rules of professional behaviour that should guarantee the "professional honour" of the members of the profession.

The last fourth feature of the profession is the professional ethics. Its role is to regulate, in a normative manner, the behaviour of the expert towards the society or the particular person/client, but also the relations between the individual members of the profession [3]. Such defined perception of the profession clearly identifies crisis managers as university-educated professionals with relevant theoretical assumptions that predestine them to solve and deal with crisis situations.

However, when identifying a crisis manager as a member of a particular profession, we encounter a serious problem. Uniform access to members of this profession makes it impossible for us to divide the internal division of the study department itself, in which future members of this profession are trained. One of the areas of their potential application is the economic environment of business entities. Efforts to optimize profits, increase efficiency, and ubiquitous competitive fight create a space for crisis management measures. Whether the division of companies into small, medium and large or a wide range of risk factors threatening individual entrepreneurs complicates the potential effort to establish a professional association or apply the principles of professional ethics.

On the contrary, the space for supplementing the current two features of the profession that the crisis management fulfils can be seen in its application in the public administration. The public administration gives a space for crisis management measures and moreover, laws directly defines their performing in practice. The very clear identification of professional members within the public administration would allow us to create a professional association of crisis managers and implement professional ethics. The structure of the crisis management system in public administration of the Slovak Republic can be found in relevant literature ([4], [5], [6]).

The education of crisis managers is also in this case the issue, because currently it is not precisely defined. Ideally, at every level within the public administration, the position of crisis manager would be supported by an expert in the field of crisis management. The only person from whom, even ideally, it is not possible to require professional education, is the members of the elected bodies at the municipal level. However, this requirement is currently being replaced by the implementation of training courses that are attended by elected representatives of municipalities. However, training cannot fully replace the education system.

3 ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT PROCESS IN RELATION TO AWARENESS OF THE POPULATION

If we go back to Keller's definition of the profession with four basic features, we can see that there is, ideally, no obstacle preventing the definition of the crisis manager as a member of the relevant professional organization. However, in practice, we are getting to other issues. Since we do not see fulfilment [3] and the continuity of individual features as a condition for their implementation, we believe that creating an ethical code and endeavouring to implement it in this profession is possible without the appropriate organization or higher education. However, in crisis management, we encounter some specific features that considerably question the issue of the existence of a code of ethics.

These specificities result, on the one hand, from the diversity of ethical principles and, on the other hand, is it caused by the ambiguity of situations in which crisis managers can find themselves and have to make a decision. Crisis managers perform their work in the public interest, which may be contrary to the interests of individual members of the society. Security is a main value and goal, and in pursuit of its preservation it is possible, under certain conditions, to limit the interests of individuals. The legal framework of the Slovak Republic defines how and when such restrictions or limitations can be applied.

We are convinced that the need to take into account the ethical principles in the crisis manager profession is directly guided by the formulation of laws defining crisis management activities. Act no. 42/1994 Coll. on Civil Protection and also on Constitutional Law no. 227/2002 Coll. on the State's security at the time of war, state of ware, state of exception and state of emergency (called as states of crisis), gives a certain power to the competent local government authorities (the crisis managers) and they can impose obligations on citizens in the affected area or in the imminently threatened area in order to protect their lives, property, environment or the overall functionality of the state. The secondary issue is that people are not aware of such possibilities.

One of these obligations is the civilian duty, which is specified directly in Act no. 179/2011 Coll. on economic mobilization and defines that a civilian duty is a legal obligation of a person who has a permanent residence in the territory of the Slovak Republic to carry out the specified work (e.g. to stay in employment and to work elsewhere than an agreed place or work of another kind) or to accept the job offered to the extent necessary to resolve the crisis situation [7].

As a more serious interference with citizens' rights, we see the potential state's ability to restrict our rights and freedoms. An example may be Law no. 227/2002 Coll. This law directly defines the possibility of the state in the affected or directly threatened territory to the extent necessary and to the necessary time according to the severity of the hazard to restrict the fundamental rights and freedoms [8] of the population. The question remains the potential for the abuse of these rights, the way they are put into practice and the possible impact on society.

This concern is led by a series of events that took place in the Slovak Republic in 2011. Slovak doctors, inspired by the practice of their Czech colleagues, announced in April 2011 the possibility of leaving the hospitals if the Ministry of Health does not agree with them to fulfil the submitted requirements. During the following months, trade unions collected about 1,500 employees (doctors) were about to end their contract in the next period. On October 1, 2011, a total of 2,400 doctors have quit their jobs and notice periods began to run. The Government's response to the situation was Resolution of the Government of the Slovak Republic no. 752 of 28 November 2011, the State of emergency has been declared.

Point D.1 of this resolution prohibits from the date of the declaration of the emergency state the right to strike for persons who have been subjected to a civilian duty [9]. This particular point of the government's resolution is the most controversial. There is the understandable

effort of the government to provide medical care for the people, however, in the interest of collective good, the freedom of individuals has been abolished and, at the same time, one of the fundamental rights - right to strike has been restricted.

Of course, law itself no. 227/2002 Coll. gives the government such a power, but it is worth considering whether the government should use this option or whether the government has a right to use it because the wording of the law is such: A state of emergency may be declared by the government only on the condition that there is a threat, or there is a danger that there will be a threat to the life and health of people, even in causation with the emergence of a pandemic, the environment or significant property values as a result of a natural disaster, catastrophe, industrial, traffic or other operational accident; an emergency sate can only be declared in a affected or imminently threatened area [7].

The aforementioned Article 5 of the Act identifies pandemics, natural disasters, catastrophes, industrial, traffic or other operational accidents as a triggering threat for declaration of the state of emergency. It follows that in this particular situation the statutory conditions for the declaration of the state of emergency were not met and the indignation of the medical staff was justified. We are convinced that in this particular case, the government mistakenly assessed the situation and abused its power. The imposed civilian duty and the ban on the right to strike resulted in an agreement between the Labour Trade Unions and the Government of the Slovak Republic by the end of 2011.

The strike of doctors in 2011 was also reflected in the amendment of the Criminal Code in 2013. On June 25, 2013, was passed the Act no. 204, which amends Act no. 300/2005 Coll. The original § 290 was replaced by § 290a and § 290b. The new wording defines a criminal sanction for non-performance of the imposed duty. Thus, a person who, in the event of a crisis situation, refuses to carry out or deliberately fails in performing duty (or in intention to avoid this obligation harm himself, faking illness or uses another trick) related to defend the state and preserve its safety, to protect the life and health of persons, to protect property, to respect fundamental rights and freedoms, to avert threats or to restore a disturbed economy imposed by the public authorities… shall be punished by imprisonment for up to two years [10]. So formulated amendment can have an impact not only on doctors but on each person of society.

From this reason it is necessary to consider professional ethics and the resulting responsibility of the crisis managers for application of the regulations restricting the rights and freedoms of the population, which should be binding on every member of the profession. As part of the sociological definition of the profession, we have mentioned the first feature of the profession a university graduation during which future crisis managers would be familiar with the theory of the relevant study field. The requirement for education and training of crisis managers is not currently defined in Slovakia in legal or other regulations. In the public administration, it would be more than desirable for these positions to be held by specialists with relevant education obtained from an educational institution designated for that purpose.

Generally, from the society point of view, people are not properly aware of possible restriction of their rights and freedoms during the mentioned states of crisis. We assume this is due the facts that (1) they have no direct experience with declaration of such a crisis state or even common crisis events, (2) they are not adequately aware of possible consequences of disaster to such an extent as well as consequences of climate change, (3) they have low knowledge of procedures of crisis situation solving and features of self-protection, in particular because there is missing (or it is not properly addressed) a systematic approach to the enhancing of disaster preparedness of society and compulsory military training was cancelled few years ago. Moreover, all these assumptions are valid also for the common crisis events when such restrictions is not applicable. Therefore, here appears to be significant also the other side of the crisis management ethical principles issue, that people should know defend against violations of their rights and freedoms [11], even if such events occurs.

4 CONCLUSION

Based on the above, we consider necessary to perceive the crisis manager in the narrower sense than it is so far. The need to limit its scope on public administration is seen as the real possibility for creating a professional association that would cover the work of individual crisis managers at different levels of government. Of course, we do not question the application of crisis management measures e.g. in the business environment, but we tend to think that in the given environment it is rather one of the roles of each managerial position than the profession.

One of the tasks of a professional association is to create and adopt ethical principles that regulate the behaviour of members of the profession. We see the need for its creation very intense, because the many legal provisions and the variety of situations in which crisis managers can find themselves multiply the need to implement ethical principles in this profession. It is necessary for the members of this profession to be able to take a stand, make a decision and to be responsible for the (predictable) consequences of their action [12]. Of course, moral principles and ethical principles affect the life of each individual as professionals as common people, and therefore they should be the priority of each activities even without the authority of a professional association. However, from professionals' perspective, the declared moral obligation arising from belonging to a particular profession can improve the overall confidence of the society towards the activities carried out under the supervision of crisis managers. From the perspective of the general population, the profession of the crisis manager, its tasks and duties with relevant ethical aspects of crisis situations solving should be more clarified within basic preparation of society. We assume that clarification of the crisis manager profession could prevent future misunderstanding and mistakes as well as enhance the disaster awareness of general population.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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