

Czech Defence Industry & Security REVIEW[®]

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EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

This year's first issue of CDIS Review will introduce product portfolios and activities of Czech defence and security industry companies presented at the DSA 2018 International Fair in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia held between April 16 and 19, 2018, at the official stand of the Czech Republic. Our magazine will support Czech companies also at other international events held in May, of which we are an official media partner, namely IDEB 2018 in Bratislava, Slovakia, and KADEX 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

This issue with a new graphic layout is also available for you in an electronic format at www.msline.cz.

The magazine features an opening word on the DSA 2018 fair of His Excellency Rudolf Hykl, Ambassador of the Czech Republic to Kuala Lumpur, and a summary

of bilateral commercial and other relations between the Czech Republic and Malaysia.

It also contains information on business opportunities of Czech defence and security industry companies in Slovakia and on defence and security cooperation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as a similar summary on Kazakhstan, including the country's cooperation with the Czech Republic and business opportunities that Czech companies can find there.

I wish you good luck and every success in 2018!

The next issue of CDIS Review, 2/2018, will be published on the occasion of the EUROSATORY 2018 International Fair. Please send any questions that you may have to: scook@msline.cz.

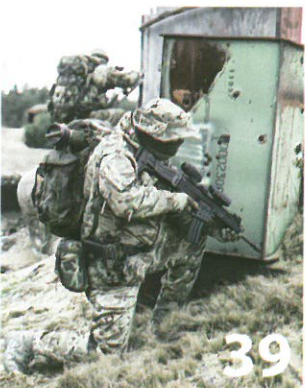
Šárka Cook
Editor-in-chief



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Interview

with the General Director of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic

During the past few years, we have been meeting top representatives of the Integrated Rescue System of the Czech Republic on the pages of our magazine. At the end of 2017, we asked General Director of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic to recap the year 2017.



Major General Drahošlav Ryba

Director, can you recap the year 2017 in a nutshell? Which were the key tasks that the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic had to fulfil?

2017 was again a year of hard work in every field of activity of the Fire Rescue Service. And not only in terms of the number of actions; many conceptual and strategic documents dealing with protection of population and crisis management were prepared as well.

However, I will start with what people tend to associate us with most frequently, i.e. interventions. Compared to 2016, the number of events that required our response rose by 20 %. However, this does not mean that there were more fires; fires no longer represent the most frequent cause of an intervention, and accounted for only 13 % of all responses in 2017. The bulk of our work now comprises technical interventions and other types of assistance, which account for more

than 50 %. The main reasons why the number of intervention was higher were the Herwart storm and activities related to avian flu and African swine fever. The longest-ever intervention in the history of the Fire Rescue Service was also going on throughout the year in the munitions depot in Vrbětice, where our members were participating in the removal of debris and remnants of unexploded ordnance left by the explosions in October and December 2014.

Every intervention starts with an emergency call. The emergency call system has undergone a major upgrade during the last three years, and we added a new functionality to it in 2017, namely the reception of distress calls from vehicles, known as eCall. It can significantly reduce the response time of rescue services, thus saving lives or making consequences of injuries less serious. If all vehicles in the EU were equipped with the eCall system, the number of fatal road accidents could be reduced by as much as 10 %, which translates into saving 2,500 lives a year.

The Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic does not operate only in the territory of our country, but its activities also extend into the area of long-term international assistance. The MOLDEX exercise last year concluded a five-year assistance programme in Moldova provided under a project known as "Improvement of readiness and capabilities of Moldovan firefighters". During its first phase, a fire-fighting simulator was built in Ghisinau; the second part of the project was focused on training in dealing with hazardous substances (Moldovan firefighters were provided detectors and received training

in this field). Furthermore, cooperation with psychological services and experience sharing between operations centers of both countries are also planned.

As to protection of population, we have successfully completed a project named "Pilot proposal of a system solution of the inclusion of soft targets (shopping centers) in the agenda of protection of population", which we have accomplished in cooperation with the Chodov and Černý Most shopping malls. The aim of the project is to improve safety of visitors and personnel of shopping centers. We want people who visit the centers to shop or to have fun to feel safe not only while there, but also on the way home. The project also involved threat analyses for both shopping malls and their immediate surroundings. The analyses produced risk levels, consequences, IRS alert level, and circumstances under which an emergency can be declared for each threat. Results of the analyses have been used to draft instructions (guidelines) for the shopping malls' personnel and visitors. In addition to the new documents, an additional 19 existing sets of instructions have been amended to include and reflect various emergencies (terrorist threat, fire, power/gas/heat supply breakdown or disruption etc.). The project was concluded on November 23, 2017, when authorized personnel of each shopping center received their training certificates as "experts in the field of protection of population in shopping centers". A joint exercise of the shopping malls and the Fire Rescue Brigade of the Capital City of Prague will take place next year.

As to the prevention, we continued to draft a Fire Prevention Concept laying down fundamental development trends in the fields of building prevention, inspections, and determination of causes of fires. The conceptual document will be linked to specifications of the "Determination of fire safety of buildings in the Czech Republic" safety research project, which will include a thorough analysis of the domestic environment and selected countries of Europe and of the world and a subsequent proposal of a new approach to these issues. The Prevention Department also played a significant role in the development of international cooperation with experts in the field of investigation of fires from the Netherlands, United States, United Kingdom, and Albania. Members of the Prevention Department were also at the cradle of the Fire Investigation working group established under the aegis of the CTIF (International Technical Committee for the Prevention and Extinction of Fire), where the Czech Republic has got the Vice President's seat, thanks to which the next meeting will be hosted by Czechia. A week-long training course for fire investigators was organized for Albania.

Due to changing needs of the society and the necessity to react to new legislation, there were changes of requirements applying to the education and training of safety experts. The government has therefore approved an updated "Concept of Crisis Management Education" this year, which sets new education rules reflecting current trends, legislation, and develop-

ments in this area. The Concept was discussed by the Civil Emergency Planning Committee and the National Security Council, and subsequently approved by the government in June 2017.

Since a few years ago, the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic has been attempting to improve the preparedness of population, in particular of pupils of kindergartens and elementary schools. The Ministry of Interior – General Directorate of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic undertook a major analysis of the current state of teaching of safety- and security-related subjects at schools last year. Its results are presented in the "Report on results of a detailed analysis of the current state of teaching of all safety- and security-related subjects at schools, including proposals for future actions", which has been approved by the government of the Czech Republic this year. The report describes the current state of teaching of all safety- and security-related subjects at schools; in particular, it focuses on the teaching process, training of teachers, support of education and training by various ministries, or possibilities of a feedback, and also outlines deficiencies in this area. On the basis of the report, the government of the Czech Republic has tasked the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports to optimize the inclusion of safety- and security-related subjects into framework education programmes of elementary and secondary schools, including regular measurements of their results. To this end, an interdepartmental expert





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working group was established, which started working in September 2017 and will continue also in 2018.

Psychologists of the Fire Rescue Service have issued cards for communication with hearing-impaired people present at emergency sites. The card is a methodological aid for firefighters and will be issued to all response vehicles. Cooperation with colleagues abroad, whether under international projects of the European Union, or on the basis of partnership and experience sharing, in particular with V4 countries, Germany, and Moldova, is also well on its way.

The equipment and materiel of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic is now, more than at any time in the past, dependent on funds provided by the EU. Can you give us some examples of major projects financed from EU funds in 2017?

Last year saw the ongoing implementation of the "Improving the preparedness of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic to deal with and manage risks caused by climatic changes". The project is co-financed by European structural

and investment funds, namely by the 2014 – 2020 Integrated Regional Operating Programme. The projects reacts to an increasing incidence of risks related to climatic changes – drought, cyclones and windstorms, snowstorms and massive ice buildup – in the Czech Republic, which require the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic to be adequately prepared for such emergencies. To this end, special equipment and materiel are being procured. In 2017, initial deliveries of high-capacity fire tenders and special truck-mounted articulated ladders with a basket took place.

In 2017, the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic was also using vehicles, equipment and materiel procured under projects co-financed by structural funds of the European Union in previous years, i.e. prior to 2017. These included, for example, equipment for dealing with emergencies such as flash floods, floods or other natural disasters, improving the efficiency and quality of responses to emergencies, or ensuring efficient voice and data communication. In addition, the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic was using outputs of projects in the area

of information technologies and systems, namely operational control and reception of emergency calls. The total volume of the projects co-financed by structural funds of the European Union in the 2007 – 2013 programme period was more than 3.5 billion CZK (with 85 % of the costs financed by structural funds of the European Union).

Improving the quality of vehicles and equipment of fire rescue brigades is practically a permanent and ongoing necessity. Have you been successful in this respect? And can you give us a few examples?

In this respect, I would like to mention the issue of replacement of firefighting equipment, in particular rapid response vehicles. The Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic operates almost 1,700 rapid response firefighting vehicles the average age of which is 12.2 years. Approximately 500 of these vehicles are even older than 16 years, i.e. beyond the technical and engineering lifetime, and replacing them is an absolute necessity. Assuming a price of CZK 7 million per vehicle, this means that we urgently need to purchase equip-



ment worth more than CZK 3.5 billion. The annual equipment replacement costs, i.e. minimum costs needed to prevent further ageing of the equipment, amount to CZK 900 million. It must be mentioned that the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic has not yet been receiving necessary funds from the government budget. We must therefore do our best to raise them elsewhere. In the last five years or so, for example, we have been able to make use of European structural funds. Under the last two of these programmes, we have either purchased or will buy, by the end of 2018, equipment worth almost CZK 2 billion. Furthermore, we have managed to push through an amendment to the act on liability insurance for damage caused by operation of motor vehicles, and the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic can thus draw money from the so-called Damage Prevention Fund of the Czech Bureau of Insurers to the tune of more than CZK 300 million for the purpose of equipment procurements. Regional Fire Brigades also strive to raise additional funds from other sources, such as regional governments or businesses. The outcome of these efforts is that the average age of rapid response fire tenders of professional firefighters is just slightly above 8 years. However, the average age of high-capacity fire tenders and ladder/basket trucks continues to be a problem, being 16.5 and 17.7 years, respectively.

However, we should not speak only about firefighting vehicles. The Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic invests a lot into equipment that facilitates the

firefighters' job and makes it more efficient, such as thermal cameras, various detectors, personal protection aids, pumps, overpressure fans etc. It may be interesting to note that the rapid response fire tender mentioned above is equipped with more than 200 items of accessories the approximate value of which is CZK 1.5 million.

Funds are also invested into buildings and facilities of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic; existing fire stations are renovated and new ones built, and each project of this type generally represents an investment of several hundred million of Czech Crowns. Two new bases for rescue companies of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic have also been recently built, one in Zbiroh, the other in Jihlava.

The above notwithstanding, lack of operating and particularly investment funds continues to be a major headache of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic. On the other hand, it should be noted that the election programme of the ruling party calls for an increase of these funds.

General, does the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic have a consistent long-term acquisition policy? If so, what is its priority?

The Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic is currently working on a long-term strategy of the service until 2021, with a view until 2030. It is expected to provide a comprehensive insight into where our

organization should move in order to maintain and improve the services we provide to all inhabitants of the Czech Republic in the field of security and safety. It is also necessary to bear in mind that the role of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic is not limited to responses to emergencies, although one of our long-term objectives is to achieve a stabilized cycle of reproduction of firefighting vehicles and equipment where we currently have a substantial internal debt. Our service is also responsible for answering emergency calls, in respect of which we would like to improve the localizing of callers by 2021, operates two Integrated Rescue System radio networks, and also the warning and notification system (the well-known sirens). The radio networks will have to be upgraded by 2021 so that they meet current requirements.

Director, almost all top representatives of executive military, security and rescue organizations have given our magazine an interview this year. Can you, by way of conclusion, evaluate cooperation with other elements of the Integrated Rescue System of the Czech Republic and tell us whether the Czech Republic has again made some progress in this field?

In 2017, we made an assessment of the 25 years since the birth of the idea and initial activities in the field of coordination of various elements and public authorities dealing with emergencies. I am glad we came to a conclusion that the Integrated Rescue System had proved its value, both when dealing with day-to-day emergencies and when facing major natural disasters, such as floods or cyclones we can still remember. The division of emergencies into three coordination levels – tactical, operational, and strategic – is functional, easy to find one's way in, and acceptable by all elements involved in the Integrated Rescue System. Basic IRS documents, such as IRS alarm plans, emergency plans of regions and potentially dangerous industrial facilities, or standard operating procedures for each element participating in a joint response, have been prepared and implemented. IRS operating centers can make use of the National IRS Information System. The reform of civil defence and competencies in the field of protection of popula-



tion which the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic acquired in 2000 have unquestionably contributed to more efficient rescue and disaster relief measures. We have literally resurrected the area of evacuation, warning and emergency survival which today comprises modern and usable emergency-handling procedures.

As of now, the Integrated Rescue System has signed some 350 agreements on planned assistance upon request, which open the door to the IRS for different organizations, institutions and authorities (termed "other IRS elements"). Their number is fairly high, and it is a great challenge for us to employ them properly when dealing with an emergency. This is, as a matter of fact, our latest task. Although it may not seem so, it is an ongoing and permanent task because of the never-ending exchange of personnel in various IRS elements. This is why we run a number of exercises of the IRS elements, whose topics are related to the emergency plans and standard operating procedures on the emergency site; this is why we meet with leaders of IRS elements or run training courses and education programmes in our IRS training facilities. We are trying to implement educational programmes employing virtual reality, e-learning etc. The work in this particular field of professional education and training is very hard, as it involves potentially high numbers of people. It is a well-known fact that it is too late to explain basic principles



of cooperation during an emergency response in which multiple elements are involved.

To answer your question, i.e. whether we have made any progress, I have to say, we have made a great leap forward during those 25 years. Last year, for example, we were making, together with other IRS elements, steps toward better cooperation by introducing new information technologies, equipment, amendments of regulations, and professional training. To put it figuratively, we are not that much interested in the length of the step forward; it is its imprint and the imprint's depth in our everyday rescue and firefighting work. The imprint in the form of more

than 100,000 joint responses, hundreds of rescued and thousands of evacuated people, and saved property worth billions is indisputable, and it is the result of our collective work, the work of all elements of the Integrated Rescue System. I think that our people know very well whom they can turn to for help and that they trust us.

Director, thank you for your answers and good cooperation of the Fire Rescue Service of the Czech Republic with the media during the previous period.

Eva Soukupová

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