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THE CONTROL OF MAJOR-HAZARD ACCIDENTS: PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EUROPEAN LAW IN POLAND

Representatives of the State Fire Service actively participate in drawing up all regulations and acts, related to any aspect of safety management. They are getting more and more harmonised with regulations being in force in European Union countries. The projects of all new legal regulations have been tested in accordance with EC directives, since the moment Poland started its activities for joining European Union.

Polish Parliament has introduced a new Environmental Protection Act into force since 1st October 2001. This act implements *SEVESO II Directive of 9 December 1996 on the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances* requirements on Polish ground. Notification process, preparation and introduction required documents (accident prevention programmes included safety policies, safety reports, emergency plans) have started since half of 2002 and should be finished by the end of this year, e.g. deadline of all safety reports and internal emergency plans submission to the competent authorities is 30.06.2003 or drawing up an external emergency plans for existing upper tier establishments by provincial commanders of the State Fire Service by the end of 31.12.2003.

There are some ordinances on the above act delegation base, e.g.:

- ordinance of Minister of Economy on kind and quantity of dangerous substances;
- ordinance of Minister of Economy on safety reports;
- ordinance of Minister of Economy on internal and external emergency rescue plans;
- ordinance of Environmental Minister on notification of major-hazard accidents to the Main Inspector of Environmental Protection;
- ordinance of Environmental Minister on the detailed scope of information required for public announcement by the Chief of Provincial Headquarters of the State Fire Service.

According to the Environmental Protection Act, the State Fire Service deals with inspection and rescue activities concerning control of major-hazard accidents involving dangerous substances. Provincial and district commanders of the State Fire Service are the main administrative bodies (competent authorities – CA in meaning of SEVESO II Directive) in this area (they lay out administrative decisions to put installation into exploitation – acceptance of safety reports and safety programs) – provincial commanders in scope of requirements referred to Art. 9, district commanders in scope of requirements referred to Art. 6 and 7 of Directive SEVESO II

Also in scope of public information about all threats mentioned above in Poland all responsibility is up to the provincial commanders of the State Fire Service. Therefore we have just started appropriate preparation for these tasks. So far, we performed (arranged):

I. Training and education.

To appropriate complex preparedness of the State Fire Service staff, industrial establishment employees to carrying out requirements of Polish law in scope of Directive

SEVESO II, the State Fire Service and the Main School of Fire Service in Warsaw has organised post-graduate studies on control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances. After studies graduates will have a knowledge of:

- risk assessment methods;
- evaluation of major accident prevention programs;
- leading and preparing inspection activities in lower and upper tier establishments;
- preparing external and internal emergency plans and evaluation of safety reports.

By this time 50 experts was finished this studies. Furthermore we take European experts advice in field of control of major-hazard accidents from many countries, e.g. Austria, France, Germany, etc.

The State Fire Service also participates in the European Union – PHARE Twinning Project PL 2001/IB-EN-04 “Control of SEVESO II Accidents”. This project aimed at training 100 selected Polish representatives of provincial and district levels being in charge of implementation tasks of SEVESO II Directive (both the State Fire Service and the Environmental Protection Inspection) in the following fields: general items, such as notification, general procedures in implementing SEVESO II matters in Poland, classification of substances, information to the public and public participation, major accident prevention programs, safety reports and safety management system assessment, etc. The training of 100 persons shall be performed in two groups of 50 each during 3x5 working-days. The training shall be accomplished by a final test of the contents of the training and those having passed the test shall be awarded with certificate. This certificate is to be issued by the contractor.

II. Performance.

To better and proper hazards recognition and preparing external emergency rescue plans the State Fire Service has organised hazard database and hazard catalogue which includes:

- a list of industrial plants using dangerous substances (approximately art.9 –120 establishments; art.6,7 – 160 establishments) with:
 - name and address,
 - type and maximum amount of dangerous substances,
 - ways of using,
 - size of dangerous zones and number of exposed people;
 - final list will be prepared for the end of this year,
- routes of transport of dangerous goods including railway routes and car routes according to ADR and RID requirements.

The SFS National Headquarters gains information about threats existing at their turn-out areas from the following sources:

- inspections on conformity with fire regulations at buildings, industrial plants and other premises,
- information given by fire protection experts about the acceptance of newly designed buildings,

- carried out identification of technical, chemical and ecological hazards in selected plants,
- carried out training exercises,
- submitted for acceptance rescue plans of industrial plants using hazardous materials, which can cause extraordinary hazard to environment.

III. Public information.

As mentioned above the provincial commanders of the State Fire Service are responsible for public information about all threats concerning all existing industrial establishments in the province. Detailed range of realization this task was defined as mentioned before ordinance of the Environmental Minister on the detailed scope of information required for public announcement by chief of provincial headquarters of the State Fire Service. Also in the Environmental Protection Act a required scope of information for citizens regarding threats of major-hazard accidents occurrence refers to registers of dangerous substances, safety reports, draft external emergency plans before they are subjected to the public participation procedure and external emergency plans following their adoption and other instructions.

The instructions to be followed by citizens in the case of accident shall contain:

- types of threats which may occur upper tier or lower tier establishments;
- citizens alarming and notification methods relevant to each threats referred above;
- how citizens should behave in case of threats referred above;
- list of emergency telephone numbers and addresses and telephone numbers of provincial and district authorities and services responsible for undertaking emergency and rescue operations and of course other important information for the safety of citizens.

Mentioned above ordinance only defines requirements but not a practical ways of realization this tasks. So according to above and informing citizens about natural calamities, technological accidents, fire dangers and chemical threats and other the National HQ of the State Fire Service in cooperation with the Danish and Polish Labour Inspection prepared “Safety Guidance” for citizens to warn them against any threats.

IV. Cooperation.

As a result of above considerations the most important issue is very closed cooperation between different bodies responsible for major-hazard accidents both national and international level.

Among many our international cooperation partners and activities also mentioned above we also would like to add that the State Fire Service has also taken a part in the project concerning “Management of Natural and Technological Hazards in PECO¹ Countries” in Ispra, Italy. This project aimed at the development of information systems for supporting authorities in the management of risk and emergency situations due to natural and technological hazards. It also concerned summarized achievements and knowledge about SEVESO II establishments – the status of relevant information collection activities in PECO

¹ PECO – „Pays d’Europe Centrale et Occidentale” – Eastern and Central Europe Countries.

countries, transposition and implementation of the SEVESO II Directive in PECO countries and also risk assessment methods and tools.

On the national level the State Fire Service leads a closed cooperation between the State Fire Service, the Environmental Protection Inspection and the Labour Inspection in field of prevention major-hazard accidents and other threats organizing many workshops, practical exercises and conferences concerning major-hazard accidents also with transboundary effects.