THE HUMANITARIAN AID ABROAD AFTER NATURAL DISASTERS CARRIED OUT BY USAR TEAMS

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Abstract
The humanitarian aid abroad after natural disasters is the integral part of the foreign policy of the Czech Republic. According to the legislation, the Ministry of Interior together with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs implements the principles of the Czech participation domain at emergencies abroad during the international rescue operations. The paper describes the USAR, i.e. urban search and rescue, team activities, which are performed in urban regions after catastrophes.

Key words
Humanitarian Aid. USAR Team. Civil Protection.

1. Introduction

Humanitarian aid abroad is an expression of solidarity with the affected, and it is a part of the International Community effort to deal with critical situations and challenges in areas, where their solution is beyond the capabilities of affected countries. Therefore, it is an integral part of the Czech foreign policy. The Czech Republic provides humanitarian aid (hereinafter “HA”) according the urgency and needs of the affected country, economical possibilities, available resources of the state budget, in accordance with policies and resolutions of the International Community, and with own priorities and interests. One of the possible forms of HA is to dispatch the USAR team. Urban Search and Rescue Team, abbreviation USAR team, is a search and rescue team (specifically organized and equipped group of rescue workers) intended to work in urban areas after disasters, which caused damage to buildings.

2. Characteristics of the international environment for USAR teams operation

The major international organizations dealing with humanitarian assistance are UN, EU, NATO, and Red Cross and Red Crescent [3,4]. The longest history has
got the Red Cross and Red Crescent, which has been proving its activities for more than 100 years. Within the UN, there operates the UN Committee on Humanitarian Assistance – UN DHA (Department of Humanitarian Affairs), which establishment resulted from the initiative of Michail Gorbacov at the UN plenary session in 1991, and has become a covering institution that is responsible for providing and coordination of potential prompt assistance in case of large-scale emergencies. UN DHA has become a legatee of the UN Committee regarding to activities coordination in case of disasters (UNDRO).

INSARAG is an International Search and Rescue Advisory Group, which has been operating within the UN since 1991 and coordinates international operations. It includes: Steering Group (SG), Interagency Working Group (IWG), and three Regional Groups – Europe/Africa, America, Asia. INSARAG is a practical instrument of OCHA (Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) within the area affected by the disaster. The task of OCHA is to gather information useful for rescue groups. OCHA has two basic parts - UNDAC (The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination), a group of UN experts regarding to assessment, prediction and evaluation of the disaster scale, and OSOCC (On-Site Operations Coordination Centre). Their objective is a functional preparation of rescue brigades and teams. In the case of international rescue operation within EU, UN or NATO, it is usual to send reconnaissance and coordination teams to support national authorities of affected countries. The mentioned teams overtake registration/command/communication and support of international assistance in a close cooperation with local bodies (e.g. UNDAC) The named teams organize registration points, so-called Reception and Departure Centers (RDC), to ensure registration of arriving international teams and supplies. Furthermore, they determine activities or deployment of other teams, and they establish OSOCC close to the local command bodies LEMA (Local Emergency Management Authority). After the mission is over, RDC helps with procedures ensuring return of the teams back to their countries. The command of international teams is usually a duty of OSOCC with local authorities assignment. The close cooperation is commonly ensured by contact personnel [1,3,4].

To support the operation strategy, there has been created a comprehensive methodology for the complete preparation, management, broadcast, security, dispatch, and other activities of search and rescue teams in 1998 [1,3,4]. Many resolutions have been adopted, namely the most important two – UNGA (United Nations General Assembly) No. 46/1982, on enforcement of international assistance efficiency and coordination by urban search and rescue [5], and the UNGA Resolution No. 57/150 from 16th December 2002, on enforcement of effectiveness and on assistance coordination by international search and rescue operations [6]. The named resolution specifies, among other things, the responsibility of affected country government, and at the same time emphasizes the fact that assistance can be provided only on the request of affected country and with its approval, because it is a significant factor of international aid provision, and moreover this procedure is in accordance with UN Charter.
Within the EU, there is created an own Community Mechanism to support enforced cooperation during assistance operations in the field of civil protection [7-10]. The coordination is ensured by MIC (Monitoring and Information Centre). The EU countries statement from 30th January 2008 notes that HA is a challenge, which is a fundamental demonstration of universal value of solidarity between people, and moral imperative. European consensus on HA provides a common vision that guides EU activity in the HA field in third world countries, both at national and Community level.

The aim of EU humanitarian aid is, based on the needs, to provide emergency response focused on lives protection, prevention and mitigation of human suffering, and preservation of human dignity in all areas, where it is essential, if governments and local actors are paralyzed, unable or unwilling to intervene. HA of EU includes help, operations to mitigate suffering, lifesaving and life protection within humanitarian crisis or immediately after their termination, and also activities, which aim to facilitate or to gain free access to people in need, and free help-supply. HA of EU is, as needed, provided in response to crisis caused by humans (including difficult incidents of all kinds), and in cases of large natural disasters.

EU is strongly determined to maintain and promote basic humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, objectiveness, and independence, respectively. Conscientious approach is crucial, when receiving assistance. It is also important for EU (and humanitarian actors generally) when operating in a territory under difficult security consequences. Perception of EU and its determination to enforce above mentioned basic fundamentals within the humanitarian operation is connected with negotiation and involvement of all EU actors on the spot. EU humanitarian assistance consists of three main parts: immediate help, food supply, and support to refugees coming from the regions affected by a conflict, and people expatriated from countries or regions affected by a war.

EU emphasizes that humanitarian operation using military support still have to keep the civilian form and character. This means that the entire humanitarian operations must remain under general competence and under the command of responsible humanitarian organization, especially OCHA and humanitarian coordinator (with general responsibility for rescue efforts), while military means will be subjected to military command. This does not result in any civilian command and military means control [1-4,6-9]. The Community policy on humanitarian aid is governed by the directive of Council Regulation (EC) No. 1257/96 from 20th June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid, which sets out the main objectives of humanitarian assistance of the Community to the third world countries [10]. The Community humanitarian assistance includes operations to help, suffering mitigation, and protection based on non-discriminatory principle in order to help people in the third countries, particularly those, who are the most vulnerable, and in preference of those, who live in developing countries, natural disasters victims, victims of man-made crisis like wars and armed conflicts, or emergency situations or circumstances comparable to natural or man-made disasters.
disasters. The assistance takes the time needed to meet the humanitarian requirements resulting from the mentioned situations.

Valid policies, standards, and evaluation criteria of humanitarian aid, which are worldwide respected, were deduced based on principles, which enforces the OECD, and are following:

1. Assistance and protection must be provided in accordance with respect for human dignity, humanitarian values, and human rights as defined by international law. This requires that provision of assistance is not influenced by any special interests, whether economic, political, cultural or religious. The assessment of needs must be in every case the base of humanitarian program. This concerns the humanitarian principles of objectiveness, neutrality, and independence on any political, economic or religious program including foreign policy of any government or a group of governments.

2. High quality assistance in emergency situations must be provided immediately and to the largest number of affected people with respecting the available resources. This requires the development of efficient and timeous reaction capacities, and emergency preparedness.

3. Workers engaged in assistance provision must be responsible not only for resources managing, but also for results and effects of their efforts. They must be responsible to affected people and taxpayers of donators.

4. Professional planning, monitoring, evaluation and audit are the instruments to responsibility and transparency achieving.

5. All affected people must be treated as dignified and rightful human beings, and not as helpless objects. The way assistance is provided has the same importance as the assistance itself. Affected population has to take part in making decisions, which influence their lives. The right of participation is a universal right and proven managing practice.

6. The assistance must be provided in a way that takes into account the complexity and diversity of human vulnerability, and must include cross-sectional questions such as a gender equality, and immediate and long-term impact on the environment.

7. Men’s needs are not identical with the needs of women. Even children’s rights and needs are not identical with those of adolescents or adults. Likewise, special ethnic or religious groups may require special treatment, considerations and sensitive approach, concerning for example type of food provided for their consumption.

8. While immediate lifesaving and necessities of life have the absolute priority, the emergency situations assistance must be a solid foundation for a long-term human development including cultural and environmental one. Long-term planning and coordination together with developing donators is necessary to perform integrated programs, which interconnect programs for emergency situations with medium-term ones, particularly renewal, reconstruction and development programs, respectively. Help to population to re-establish and strengthen their traditional ways of coping with the situation must be the aim of assistance.
9. Available sources for dealing with emergency situations must be managed professionally, and a full attention must be paid to anticipated costs. Verified procedures for staff managing and supporting are the key management function, whereas the safety of employees, welfare, rights, dignity and effectiveness are priorities.

10. Potential unintended harmful effects of humanitarian response (e.g. extension of the conflict) or effects, which support unfair access to beneficiaries, must be identified in the initial phase of program design, and actively prevented.

Module types of USAR teams in the field of EU civil protection are the following:

1. A module for high capacity pumping (HCP). This module pumps out water from flooded areas, and pumps water for fire extinguishing.
2. A module for water purification (WP). This module ensures drinkable water and performs water quality control.
3. A module for urban search and rescue works in the medium difficult conditions (MUSAR). This module searches, localizes and saves victims, which are trapped under rubbles of houses, rescues car accident victims stuck in the vehicle, and provides first aid.
4. A module for urban search and rescue works in the heavy conditions (HUSAR). This module searches, localizes and saves victims, which are trapped under rubbles of houses, rescues car accident victims stuck in the vehicle, and provides first aid.
5. A module for forests air-firefighting with helicopters (FFFH). This module performs air-firefighting within large-scale forest fires and vegetation fires.
6. A module for forests air-firefighting with planes (FFFP). This module performs air-firefighting within large-scale forest fires and vegetation fires.
7. Advanced medical personnel (AMP). They perform victims triage, their stabilization, and preparation for transport to the hospital on the spot of humanitarian disaster.
8. Advanced medical personnel with surgery (AMPS). They perform victims triage, necessary surgery operations to save lives, stabilization, and preparation for transport to the hospital on the spot of humanitarian disaster.
10. Disaster victims air evacuation module (MEVAC). This module transports victims to the hospital.
11. Emergency temporary shelter (ETS). This module ensures shelter and basic services, until local institutions or humanitarian organizations take care over victims. There are tents with heating, power generators, hygienic facilities, drinkable water, and shelters for social activities at disposal.
12. Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear detection, and sampling (CBRNDET). This mode detects the danger, encloses contaminated areas, and performs sampling.
13. Search and rescue works in CBRN conditions (CBRNUSAR). This mode ensures search and rescue works with the use of special suits.

Named modules create the EU capability to provide rapid response to the disaster (EU Rapid Response Capability). The Rapid Response System consists of USAR teams, which also Czech Republic, as an EU Member State, has to co-create \[1,4,10\]. Civil protection modules are units formed from intranational sources of one or more member states based on voluntariness, and represent a contribution to the EU ability to response rapidly and coordinately to large-scale emergency situations. Civil protection modules must be able to work self-sufficiently for a determined period of time. Facilitation of international assistance provision consist in standardization of specific types of assistance, modules composition, and performed activities \[4,10\]. To support USAR teams, EU established an education and training system – Resolution 2001/792/EC \[4,10\]. Target groups of training program are:
- rescue teams of member states,
- rescue team leaders, their deputies and liaison officers,
- experts of member states,
- staff of the key national point of contact,
- officials of the Community institutions.

USAR team work follows the ICET 98, which means the “Tampere convention on the provision of telecommunication resources for disaster consequences mitigation and rescue works”, from 1998, which is connected to a number of UN documents. The United Nations Secretary General is a depository of this convention. Other conventions in the subject area are either in-process or in the stadium of ratification. Following institutions are involved within the NATO \[11\] humanitarian assistance:
1. SCEPC (Senior Civil Emergency Planning Committee),
2. EADRCC (Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre),
3. EADRU (Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Unit).

3. Humanitarian assistance and USAR teams in the Czech Republic

3.1 History and specifications of USAR teams in the Czech Republic

The USAR teams history in the Czech Republic has begun after 7th December 1988, when there was a heavy earthquake of 7 degrees of Richter scale in Armenia. Based on the decision of the Major Administration of Fire and Rescue Service of the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic, there was dispatched a 78 members unit of Czech fire-fighters to the Leninakan. The major task of Leninakan operation was rescuing people from damaged buildings, and other help to affected people. Most activities were carried out in the city center in rather difficult conditions. It was a very rare dispatch of the
Czechoslovak rescue unit abroad at that time. Till then, Czechoslovakia had provided almost exclusively financial or material humanitarian aid abroad [1].

History of special detachment with a clear concept, which is designed for search and rescue people from rubbles of damaged buildings, has begun as late as in 1999, thus in year, in which all worlds available rescue capacities were focused on areas affected by huge earthquakes – Turkey and Taiwan. After valuable experiences from 1999 it was clear, that the Czech Republic in not prepared to provide rescue aid abroad. There was a lack of support in legislation, contractual agreements, negotiated and agreed rules and guidelines, special technical means, there was not any selection of rescue unit members, there was not organized any special training etc. However, there were not missing many people’s enthusiasm.

To improve the situation in the area of assistance provision abroad, and after operations mentioned above, there was used an interdepartmental will to deal with issue of involving forces and means of the Czech Republic into the international rescue operations, and provision of humanitarian assistance abroad. The situation started to change fundamentally. The culmination was the adoption of the Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on the Integrated Rescue System, which determined the tasks performance in this area. This Act assigned the Ministry of Interior responsible for decisions on assistance and its provision following the agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Consecutive Government Order No. 463/2000 Coll. determined basic rules of involving into the international rescue operations [1,2].

In this context, there should be mentioned a material "Involvement of the Czech Republic into the peace and rescue operations and humanitarian assistance", which was adopted by the Government Resolution No. 458, from 9th May 2001, and which was followed by series of documents approved by the Czech Security Council and the Czech Government.

The provision of the Czech humanitarian assistance abroad is further based on:
- Government Resolution No. 381/1999 on the selection and provision of humanitarian aid abroad,
- Act No. 199/1994 Coll., on Public Procurement, as amended particularly in the Act No. 28/2000 Coll.,
- Act No. 238/2000 Coll., on the Fire and Rescue Service of the Czech Republic,
- Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on the Integrated Rescue System,
- Act No. 240/2000 Coll., on Crisis Management (Crisis Act),
- Act No. 219/1999 Coll., on the Armed Forces,
- Act No. 221/1999 Coll., on professional soldiers,
- Constitutional Act No. 300/2000 Coll., which governs decisions on dispatching the Czech Armed Forces into the peace operations, and their
participation in rescue works abroad during natural disasters, industrial or ecological accidents.

Since 1999 there were used forces and means of Prague Fire-Brigade to establish the first specialized search and rescue unit, mainly because of large personal and material base, connections to the international airport, and the base of the Czech Army Transportation Air Forces, which was able to allocate aircrafts for the transport of humanitarian aid. Conditions for establishing the second USAR detachment team were created in 2006. Forming of the team, membership and material equipment is in the Moravian-Silesian regional Fire-Brigade competency [1].

Regarded to the need to obtain timely information on possible dispatch of specialized rescue units abroad, conditions in disaster affected area, and coordination within international rescue operations, it is also important for the Czech Fire-Brigade operating structures to be continuously connected to the international organizations providing coordination of international forces within international rescue operations. Czech Republic started to be connected to the International Advisory Group for search and rescue works (INSARAG) through the Ministry of Interior – General Directorate of Fire and Rescue Service in 1999. This group discusses rules and guidelines for all procedures linked with broadcasting, transportation, receiving and coordination of international forces within large-scale disasters causing damage to buildings and infrastructure in the affected area [1].

Important components of USAR teams are dog-handlers with special trained dogs to search for live people from rubbles. Therefore it was necessary to proceed with systematic work with cynological organizations operating in the Czech Republic, and their use, and to create Cynological Service at the Czech Fire-Brigade. USAR team members were subsequently equipped with individual protective and care equipment. This procedure was followed by ensuring of technical and logistical means from the funds of Prague Fire-Brigade and the Czech Ministry of Interior – General Directorate of F&RS. Currently, it can be said, that the USAR team equipment has been improved in all aspect as well as the preparedness of individual members of fire-brigade and other personnel (including cynological organization members with dogs, liaison officers, medical doctors) predetermined to meet the challenging tasks within the international rescue operations.

The Czech USAR teams are dispatched in the case of large-scale emergency situation, e.g. earthquake, cave in, earth slide, tsunami, etc. They specialize in rescuing from rubbles, heights and depths. Teams are prepared to be transported abroad by air or by land in a few hours, and to intervene effectively in cooperation with local emergency units.
3.2 Summary of conditions for the provision of humanitarian assistance in the CR

According to § 7 par 1, letter b) Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on Integrated Rescue System and modification of certain codes, as amended, the Ministry of Interior fulfills tasks connected with the involvement of the Czech Republic into the international rescue operations within the emergency situations abroad, and provision of humanitarian assistance abroad in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The tasks of the Ministry of Interior in this area fulfills the MI – General Directorate of Fire and Rescue Service of the Czech Republic.

Based on § 7, par 2, letter i) Act No. 239/2000 Coll., the Ministry of Interior makes decisions (in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) on humanitarian aid abroad provided by the state, and on involvement into the international rescue operations. Detailed rules are stated in implementary regulations, particularly the Government Regulation No. 463/2000 Coll. on the rules definition of the involvement into the international rescue operations, providing and receiving of humanitarian assistance, and the reimbursement of expenses invested by legal persons and private entrepreneurs in the population protection, as amended.

The Czech humanitarian aid abroad is realized from the financial resources allocated by the Government for each year in the state budget - into the purposefully bound reserve of the General Treasury for humanitarian assistance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs draws funds from this bound reserve, and is obliged to inform the Government regularly (twice a year) about their use.

Another important legal regulation is the Act No. 133/1985 Coll., on Fire Protection, as amended, which enables the Ministry of Interior to concentrate and deploy forces and means of fire-protection in the provision of international aid, regardless who manages or possess them. Cooperation between the Czech Fire and Rescue Service and international organizations is enabled by the Act No. 238/2000 Coll., on the Fire and Rescue Service of the Czech Republic, as amended. The main principles of involvement of the Czech forces and means into the international rescue operations and humanitarian assistance provision abroad were described in the material "Involvement of the Czech Republic into the peace and rescue operations and humanitarian assistance", which was adopted by the Czech Government Decree No. 458, from 9th May 2001.

The Czech Republic has, for several years, provided based on above mentioned legal regulations following types of assistance abroad - rescue, material, financial, advisory, and combined, respectively. The Czech Republic provides humanitarian assistance abroad based on bilateral level or through international organizations. The Czech point of contact for international organizations and their operation centers, as the EU-MIC, NATO-EADRCC, MAAE, UN-OCHA etc. are, is the Operation and Information Center of the MI - General Directorate of Fire and Rescue Service of the Czech Republic [1].

In any emergency situation, when the affected state requests for assistance through competent international organization or a Czech diplomatic body in the
affected state, the information is received at the Operation and Information Center of MI – GD FRS CR, which in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs prepares a draft to provide assistance. Furthermore, the MI – GD FRS CR Operation and Information Center cooperates actively with the international organization in preparation, coordination and realization of humanitarian assistance.

Here are the criteria for providing aid in the CR:
- situation urgency,
- needs of the affected state,
- economic possibilities,
- possibilities of state budget available resources,
- compliance with principles and resolutions of the International Community,
- own priorities and interest.

The Czech Republic provides urgent, renewal, and development assistance. The Act governing specific rules for the humanitarian assistance provision is in the approval process.

The MI – GD of FRS CR keeps on cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) within the realization of humanitarian aid provision. MFA ensures for example communication with a diplomatic body, information from the affected state, visa for the rescue unit team members (hereinafter “Unit”) or visa for the material humanitarian aid accompany. Furthermore, MFA ensures the protocol of humanitarian aid transfer.

The provision of humanitarian assistance abroad is also a political decision of the CR. HA is provided considering the political situation in the world, and the relationship between the CR and affected state. The CR has signed intergovernmental bilateral agreements on cooperation and assistance within disasters, natural disasters, and other emergency situations, with all neighbour countries and Hungary, which enables rescue units, in the case of emergency situation, to cross borders in a simplified regime. Units of the particular region operate in the particular region of the neighbour state in terms of cross-border cooperation, based on the above mentioned agreements. Request for assistance is transmitted among operation centers of the particular regions, in the Czech side it is the Regional Operation and Information Center of FRS CR or the operation center of local division. Any operations performed in the territory of other state are reported to the Operation and Information Center of the MI – GD of FRS CR. The bilateral agreements also govern for instance joint seminars, training, information exchange, use of radios, possible damage compensation, the use of aircrafts, etc.

Special Units are prepared within the rescue humanitarian aid abroad. The Units are always composed to meet the needs in the emergency location (fire Unit, flood Unit, USAR team Unit, etc.). Firefighters are the Unit members, mostly. Dog-handlers, members of The National Institute for Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Protection, National Radiation Protection Institute, Police of the CR etc., could be other members.
Fundamentals for establishing Units for assistance between regions, and within the CR involvement into the international rescue operations are stated in the Director General of FRS CR and Minister of Interior deputy’s directive No. 45, from 9th October 2003, as amended in the Director General’s directive No. 7, from 2nd February 2004.

**Material humanitarian aid abroad** is provided based on the specific request of the affected state. The request has to be considered by the Czech side, and after that the humanitarian aid can be provided. To provide material humanitarian aid abroad the MI in agreement with the MFA makes a decision [1].

To provide **financial humanitarian aid abroad**, the MFA in cooperation with the MI – GD of FRS CR makes a decision. The aid is mostly provided through international organizations or directly to the bank account designated by the affected state [1].

The Czech Units providing rescue operations abroad are classified according the INSARAG methodology, which has the CR obliged to accept it by adopting the UN General Assembly Resolution No. 57/150, from 16th December 2001, on effectiveness enforcement and on assistance coordination within the international search and rescue operations. The Units composition enables continuous work of two rescuer groups for at least 72 hours in 8 hour shifts.

The USAR team Unit for air transport designed to carry out search and rescue operations abroad is compiled by the Prague FRS members, who have sufficient background for the personal selection of appropriate members – requirement of foreign languages knowledge, command functions, and specialization. The connection to the international Prague Airport is crucial to alert the Unit. There are 66 Prague firefighters in the Units, who are determined for the initial dispatch, i.e. 22 members in each shift. These firefighters are selected based on health and mental fitness, pre-vaccinated against infectious diseases, and specially trained. The USAR team Unit leaves the Czech Republic within 4 hours since our offer has been accepted by the affected state. Early initiation of search and rescue works in the affected area is the Unit’s priority. The USAR team Unit designed for the land transport, may be completed by fire-brigade members from other regions [1]. This Unit is prepared for:

1. Firefighting of oil chemicals, forest fires or alternative activities providing. The Unit is self-sufficient in operation activities and logistic support for 10 days stay (as for fuel, it is admitted to use local sources as an alternative). The Unit has a maximum of 25 members including a medical doctor. In the case of neighbour state is affected, this Unit may be substituted by predetermined fire-brigade forces and means of the region neighbouring the affected state.

2. Rescue works during floods, i.e. rescue and evacuation operations from the area affected by floods, and mitigation of floods consequences or excessive rainfalls. The Unit is self-sufficient in operation activities and logistic support for 10 days stay (as for fuel, it is admitted to use local sources as an alternative). The Unit has a maximum of 25 members including a medical doctor. In the case of neighbour state is affected, this Unit may be substituted
by predetermined fire-brigade forces and means of the region neighbouring the affected state.

3. Operations during chemical and ecological accidents, i.e. liquidation of dangerous chemicals including oil substances on the surfaces of watercourses and backwaters.

4. Ensuring of special requirements beyond the possibilities of above mentioned Unit types.

3.3 Practical procedure of dispatching USAR team Unit abroad

Putting the predetermined forces and means into alert is ordered by a commanding officer of the MI – GD of FRS CR Operation and Information Center after receiving information about emergency situation occurrence abroad or after receiving assistance request from affected country. After specifying the name list, the commanding officer ensures issuing an order of the Director General of FRS CR to call-in the team members to go and perform emergency tasks. This order designates the Unit commander, assigns persons providing aid, determines target a transport mode, venue, departure time and other requirements according the paragraph No. 4 of the Director General of FRS CR and Minister of Interior deputy’s directive No. 45, from 9th October 2003, as amended in the Director General’s directive No. 7, from 2nd February 2004.

Transport of firefighters or dog-handles to the venue is provided by regional fire-brigade, eventually in cooperation with the state Police based on the decision of the commanding officer of the MI – GD of FRS CR. Simultaneously with putting the Unit to call, following information is found out in cooperation with the MFA and the MI - International Cooperation Division:

- situation in the deployment area,
- assistance requirements,
- contacts to competent authorities of the affected country, its diplomatic body in the CR, and the Czech diplomatic body in the affected state.
- rapid transport through the transit countries,
- need for obtaining visas.

The commander receives an accountable advanced payment in foreign currency before dispatching the team, which is required for a foreign mission by course of reimbursement law and there is also made a contract on insurance. The funds in foreign currency are ensured by the International Cooperation Division of MI together with the MI – GD of FRS CR.

Within the air transport, it is necessary to agree a follow-up transportation to the point of destination from the airport with the competent authorities. Before the unit’s departure, the ORDER of the Director General of FRS CR to call-in members of the Czech Fire-Brigade to go and provide humanitarian aid is read. The ORDER is issued in accordance with § 20 of the Act No. 186/1992 Coll., on the Police of the CR Service, as amended, and § 7b) of the Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on the Integrated Rescue System and modification of certain codes, as amended.
3.4 Personal policy of USAR team Units

Within international rescue operations and dispatching of humanitarian aid abroad, individuals are sent for a short term mission (a few days or up to several weeks). They are dispatched as the MI rescue Unit or as individual experts fulfilling abroad the same tasks, which they fulfill during emergency situations in the CR. In the case of dispatching the whole Unit, the team base is made up by Czech Fire-Brigade members. Others (e.g. Police members or civil experts) only complete the Unit according to the nature of rescue operation. Experts deployed this way work under the command of the rescue Unit commander. Forces and means, eventually experts, are involved in the Czech Integrated Rescue System, and perform determined tasks on the Czech territory. Only those, who meet the determined requirements, are selected to their possible dispatch to the international rescue operation. This means that they are educated and trained in a standard technique in their practice. Theoretical and practical preparation and exercises (screening and tactical) are parts of the training content. The preparation keeps going in a standard procedure in accordance with the act on Integrated Rescue System [1,2].

All persons predetermined for the MI – GD of FRS CR Unit must have valid travel documents. The issue of needed visas is solved operatively in cooperation with the MFA and competent representative of the affected country in the CR during dispatching of the Unit. Members of the Czech Fire-Brigade carry out rescue operations abroad, and they are dispatched as the Unit in accordance with already mentioned legal regulations (the act on IRS, FRS CR and Fire Protection). There is no reason to terminate their service or provide any time off. They travel abroad as members of the Czech Fire-Brigade, not as private persons.

Experts from the Public Service are included in the Unit based on predetermination of the operation abroad, and cooperation agreements within IRS (e.g. policemen, experts of the State Office for Nuclear Safety etc.). The dispatch is organized as the business journey in this situation. There is no service termination or any time off provision. Persons outside the public administration are assigned into the Unit by a form of personal a material request, and are consequently reimbursed (for example according the § 29 of the Act No. 239/2000 Coll., on IRS - e.g. salary reimbursement) [1,2].

It is supposed to send also a liaison officer (coordinator) to the disaster area along with the Unit. The liaison officer is a person with good language and organizing skills, who has experiences from previous deployment in a rescue operation or with humanitarian assistance providing. The liaison officer’s task is to contact with the competent international coordination center or a local emergency management authority, and provide conditions for the Czech Unit operation or assistance provision.

The liaison officer is selected in particular according language demands from the list of liaison officers predetermined to be involved in international rescue operations, which was compiled based on regional fire-brigade concept, and is
conducted in accordance with the § 2 letter b) of the Government Regulation No. 463/2002 Coll., List of Liaison Officers. Medical doctors involved in the Unit are provided by the MI Special Service Medical Institute on request. Medical doctors participating in the Unit serve for the team members, and they are not subjected to the requirements of performing special rescue efforts. Dog-handlers are selected based on the completion of attesting examinations. All of these predetermined members are vaccinated against infectious diseases [1,2].

3.5 Decisive factors for dispatching the USAR team Unit abroad

The decisive factors for dispatching the USAR team Unit abroad are distance to the point of destination, and mode of transport. Land transport of the Unit is supposed within the distance of 1000 km. The air transport is supposed to reach more distant areas up to 2500 km. The rescue Unit uses in particular vehicles of the Czech Fire-Brigade, Czech Army aircrafts or Czech Police helicopters for the transportation. Transport of specialists and experts can be realized by other modes, eventually. The aircrafts for the air transportation of the Unit are provided by the Czech Army General Staff, which has two aircrafts AN-26 (load weight approx. 4 tons) available. The standby time of aircrews is between 3 – 6 hours. It is also possible to use the TU-154 aircraft and Mi-17 helicopter. The air transportation enables to transport 24 persons including their equipment, and is limited by 5 days of deployment and 2 days of travel. The receiving state must provide the connecting transportation on its territory. The Prague Fire-Brigade is equipped for the air transportation with special containers, which are customized for the Subaru terrain vehicle and its trailer [1].

The land mode enables to transport heavy technique and self-sufficient Unit’s activity for 10 days (and 2 days of travel). The Unit is able to perform firefighting and rescue operations, and logistic support. It is financially manageable if containing up to 25 persons with about 6 vehicles. It is preferred to transport persons by bus. The bus is ensured by the MI – GD of FRS CR Operation and Information Center at the Service Department of the MI in accordance with the agreement between the MI – GD of FRS CR and the Service Department of the MI. Other necessary equipment can be ensured at regional fire-brigades. The USAR team Unit designed for the land transport may be completed by fire-brigade members from other regions [1].

In the case of combination of both transportation modes, forces dispatched by air can be completed by land forces, and can intervene up to 2500 km (approx. 60 travelling hours) with full support and logistic support of the first Unit dispatched by air.

4. Conclusion

Humanitarian aid abroad is the integral part of the Czech foreign policy. Humanitarian assistance has been provided on bilateral level either directly to the
affected state, or through international governmental or non-governmental mechanisms to particular groups of population. In the frame of the Czech Fire and Rescue Service, special USAR Units have been established, which have taken already an active part in international rescue operations (e.g. in Turkey, Algeria, Iran, France – during floods, etc.). The main aim of the USAR team is rescuing people, their searching and wrecking. To make the USAR team activity effective, it has been working, within the EU grant, on language skills (English) improvement focused on response and understanding of international orders. Education, focused on mentioned areas, increases the cooperation ability of our and foreign USAR teams, because knowledge of language and unified expert response concept creates the ability on spot, which ensures an optimal response and economic use of available resources, forces and means.

The Czech Republic provided in 2008 material humanitarian assistance to Algeria and Romania, which were affected by large-scale floods. In 2009, the Czech Government provided HA to 20 European countries, Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Gaza, Zimbabwe, Costa Rica, Malaysia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Burma, Congo, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tai-Wan, Brazil, Ethiopia, Uganda, Philippines, Indonesia, Ukraine, Salvador, and Nicaragua). The Czech Republic did not realize any rescue and material HA abroad during 2009, because its provision, regarded to the distance, would not be effective, or there were not any requested commodities available [1].

**Literature**