

THE SYSTEM OF RECOVERY (REHABILITATION) IN HUNGARY FOLLOWING NATURAL DISASTERS¹

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ABSTRACT

Since 2000 up to date, Europe has suffered over a hundred of flood phenomena. These floods demanded the lives of more than a thousand human lives, over half a million people had to be evacuated and temporarily resettled, the economic losses amount to at least EUR 30-50 billion. The extreme flood of the Danube in 2013, hitting Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia has further increased this number. Intense gales, torrential rainfalls, floods, inland waters and hailstorms, developed due to the extreme weather of the past decade, devastated in almost the entire territory of Hungary. Damages of different types and magnitude occurred in almost all the counties. They were of such severity that their rehabilitation could not be financed by the municipalities or the victims from their own resources. The governments of Hungary granted, sometimes voluntary, support and assistance to the municipalities and the local victims following the most violent and extensive natural disasters, and undertook the responsibility of centrally controlling their management.

Keywords:

Mitigation, elimination of consequences, disaster management, damage assessment

ABSTRAKT

Od roku 2000 až dodnes Európa zaznamenala viac ako sto povodňových javov . Tieto povodne si vyžiadali životy viac ako tisícky ľudských životov , vyše pol milióna ľudí muselo byť evakuovaných a dočasne vystáňovaných, ekonomické straty siahali minimálne 30-50 biliónov eur. Extrémna povodeň na Dunaji v roku 2013, ktorá zasiahla Nemecko, Rakúsko, Slovensko, Maďarsko a Chorvátsko následne zvýšila tieto čísla. Intenzívne víchrice, privalové zrážky, povodne, vnútrozemské privalové dažde a krupobitie , ktoré sa vyvinuli v dôsledku extrémneho počasia v posledných desiatich rokoch, zasiahli takmer na celom území Maďarska. Škody rôznych typov a veľkostí došlo takmer vo všetkých krajoch. Boli takej závažnosti, že ich odstránenie

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¹ This study describes the standard procedures of rehabilitating private real estates damaged during disasters

nemôže byť financovaná mestami alebo postihnutými občanmi z vlastných zdrojov. Samozrejme vláda Maďarska poskytla podporu a pomoc mestám a obciam ako i dotknutému obyvateľstvu najviac zasiahnutých rozsiahlymi prírodnými katastrofami a zaviazala sa zodpovedne centrálnie riadiť ich správu.

Kľúčové slová:

zmiernenie, odstránenie následkov, zvládanie katastrof, hodnotenia škôd

1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, many records were left behind for us, in which nature posed challenges to people against their own actions through its overwhelming power. Human beings, since their appearance, have been constantly striving to develop a safe environment, to satisfy their deficiency-based or growth-based needs. Mankind is seeking protection against hazardous natural processes and striving to avoid vulnerability. People tried, during the development process, with more and more complex technological solutions, to create, above all, a safe built environment. The conception of scientific circles is still divided whether today's extreme weather phenomena belong to the range of ordinary fluctuations, or there are noticeable signs of global climate change on Earth. [1] Nevertheless, as the studies of a major project named “VAHAVA”, organized under the auspices of the Hungarian Academy Sciences, call the attention of organizations, having responsibility for preventing and responding to natural disasters and emergencies, to the fact that they should be prepared in due time for the occurrence of weather conditions that can nowadays be still regarded as extraordinary. [2]



*Figure 1 2001, Flood of the Tisza River
Photo by the author*



*Figure 2: After heavy rainfalls, Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén County, 2003.
Photo by the author*

Tens of thousands of family homes were destroyed or damaged throughout Hungary as a result of natural disasters, especially floods and inland waters, gales, heavy rainfalls, continuously recurring for over a decade. The creation of elementary conditions of housing – rehabilitation – was often beyond the possibilities of stakeholders. Neither the Government of Hungary, nor the European Union has statutory or contractual obligations to eliminate the consequences of natural disasters. Nevertheless, to mitigate the damages, the Government may decide to grant budgetary support as a voluntary commitment, based on the number of people affected, the extent of the damage, the economic, employment and social situation in the affected area.



*Figure 3: 2013, Flood on the Danube, protection efforts,
Voluntary students of the National University of Public Service
Photo by the author*

2 LEVELS AND TYPES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM OF DAMAGE MITIGATION

As far as the levels of controlling damage mitigation operations, they may be differentiated by the types of support to be implemented through central organization, from the funds available at municipalities and, last but not least, through the municipalities. The selection of the type of control can basically depend on the damages to life and property safety and also on its extent, on the type, intensity of the incident, on the size of the area damaged, on the number of victims, on the proportion of assets and personnel available, and also depends on whether governmental actions are needed or not in order to eliminate the circumstances (rehabilitations). [3]

3 NOTIFICATION OF DAMAGES

The assessment and estimation of damages may start on a sole governmental decision concerning the deadline of notification. The damage assessment is preceded by the notification by the victim. The mayor is responsible for organizing the notification of damages. The mayor announces the method and deadline of the notification of damages as locally usual. The applicant makes a declaration on a form whether he consents to the management of his data, to the transfer to a third party associated with the mitigation. The notary must keep a record of the damages reported, and he prepares a summary on it within 5 working days after the deadline for the notification of damages. This is sent to the competent county disaster management directorate with a copy of the notification forms each. He may also initiate to the Chairman of the Protection Committee to appoint a local reconstruction commissioner to coordinate the damage assessment team(s), as well as to perform additional rehabilitation and reconstruction tasks. During professional verification, it is necessary and appropriate to compare the reports with the already available damage data and areas affected by the disaster.

4 DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

After a natural disaster, the damage assessment is performed by the capital's and county government offices, geographically competent, by the county disaster management directorates, and, if applicable, pursuant to the request of the capital's and the county government offices, geographically competent, in the case of protection against floods or inland waters, by the Environment and Water Directors, geographically competent, in the case of damages to roads, ferries and bridges, by a representative of the Coordination Center for Transport Development, and in the case of collapse of cellars or embankments or landslides, by a representative of the Commission of Experts on Cellar and Embankment Emergency Response. [4]

If the damages in a settlement or in a part thereof affect a minority, by a significant proportion, and the minority has a minority self-government in the locality, the minority self-government is to be asked to participate in the work of the damage assessment teams. Prior to beginning of damage assessment activities, the Chairman of the capital's or county Protection Committee, in cooperation with the territorial bodies

of the professional civil protection agency, organizes a training for the members of the working group on damage assessment guidelines and methods, key construction standards and local specificities. The members should be provided with credentials, signed by the county or the capital's Chairman of the Protection Committee. Damage assessment forms must be filled out in triplicates. Damages must be documented by photos taken during damage assessment. The contents of the damage assessment form is may be supported by other documents (property registry, contract, layout design, previous valuation, expert, witness, protocol, photograph, video, declaration on being insured, etc.). A copy of the damage assessment form remains at the office of the mayor; for municipalities operating district notary offices, at the district notary office. The mayor shall forward a copy to the disaster management directorate and to the victim.

Depending on the nature of damages, additional tasks must be determined, resulting from the damages occurred (soil mechanics analyses, the scope of secondary, collateral damages, static tests). The valuation is the amount calculated based on m²/forint price provided by the tax agency with territorial jurisdiction. The assessment of damages can be monitored and controlled by the central organ of the professional body for disaster management. The county disaster management directorate summarizes the damage data and the rehabilitation, reconstruction, purchase cost estimation data received form the settlements of the county, and submits them through the central organ of the professional disaster management body to the minister responsible for the protection against disasters. Against this background, the Government decides on the nature and extent of compensation and provides for the possibility of reimbursing the costs of damage assessment. The minister, based on the Government's decision and the damage assessment data, determines the amount of each settlement's support allocation. [5]

5 CONCLUDING SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

The compensation support may be paid based on the damage notification by the victim and its adjudgement, as well as on the grant agreement. The agreement, taking into account the considerations of need, as determined by the act on social administration and social benefits, is concluded by the local government. It should include the type and amount of compensation, the amount of support, payment dates on behalf of the local government, adjusted to the construction; the stipulation of control entitlement of first and second instance building authority and regional and local organs of the professional disaster management organization, the purpose of use and documents of proof of proper use, accountability, its method and the final deadline, and mortgage and the provisions for the ban on sale and debit; clause on the repayment liabilities in the event of use other than the intended purpose, and the victim's statement of the existence of insurance contractual relationship or undertaking of the obligation of contract. It should include the rules of purchase of second-hand housing, or in the case of new construction of housing, of ownership of the local government and the rules for accounting. The victim must prove to the notary the

conclusion of an insurance contract, and the fact that insurance policy may not be concluded with an insurance company, latest at the conclusion of the agreement. [6]

6 THER FEATURES OF CONSTRUCTION

The relevant legislation displays it markedly that the reconstruction of destroyed buildings shall not be allowed in a place where there is an increased risk of the possibility of the occurrence of natural or man-made disasters. Reconstruction can only be done in an area designated by a resettlement plan or in a pre-approved area. By application of exceptional building regulations related to the rehabilitation of building damages occurred due an emergency declared, represents a change in the built environment and a ground for prevention. The notary or an administrator of the office of the mayor commissioned by it, as well as the regional and local organs of the professional disaster management authority controls the construction on the site. [7]



*Figure 4: Reconstructed residential building, 2001, Bereg
Photo by the author*

7 SUMMARY

The general legal framework of rehabilitation and reconstruction of private residential properties developed a few years ago. Through the adoption of rules relating to recovery and reconstruction, included in the Chapter XI of Government Decree 234/2011, on the implementation of Act CXXVIII of 2011 on disaster management and the amendment of certain acts in relation, through the development of procedures for decision, created a regulated management plan; for the sake of responsible, cost-effective and legal use of public funds, the reduction of the extent of the damages to residential property after natural disasters, in order to promote the mitigation of damages, provided a possibility to use various forms of self-care (being insured, permanent maintenance of buildings and the residential environment).

However, the rehabilitation of buildings of local governments is carried out in a specific regulatory framework, which support includes specific procedural rules.

Lessons learnt from rehabilitation and damage incidents are necessary to be re-implemented partly in prevention, within the framework of authoritative specialized authoritative procedures, enforcing regulations, on the other hand, in the harmonious unity of developments and investments, and for the reverse resolution of force majeure conditions, which cannot do without international cooperation. European regional cooperation should be continuous; therefore, considering the responses to the challenges of disasters of natural origin, joint action programs should be implemented, creating the system of prevention, built on each other, the community interests of damage mitigation.

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