

CRISIS COMMUNICATION WITH MEDIA

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Abstract: Appropriate information addressed to the public is one of the basic conditions for both prevention and resolution of crisis situations. Its main relay is mass media, with the help of which it is easiest to reach the recipient. There are rules that condition proper communication in crisis situations, media representatives are also expected to have specific foundations. Proper cooperation with the media may be a factor supporting the activities of the state in crisis situations. The article presents both general content as well as specific solutions applied in the field of communication with the media in crisis situations in the Republic of Poland.

Keywords: crisis situation, crisis, media, communication, Poland.

INTRODUCTION

One of the basic civil rights and freedoms is the right to information, sanctioned by a series of international acts¹, and in the Polish legal order introduced by a clear provision of Article 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland from 1997², concerning the right of access to public information. The scope of this right, entities authorized to use it, as well as the authorities obliged to grant it were indicated. In the era of unlimited access to information, its acquisition and transmission is one of the key areas of life.

The development of information technology has enabled the implementation of universal access to information, at the same time encouraging the emergence of so-called information society that uses information intensively and has developed means of its processing and communication. Access to knowledge resources, open to all, is connected with the functioning of broad-based social communication means, known as mass media³. These are "devices, institutions by means of which certain content is directed to a more numerous and balanced audience."⁴ These include press, radio, television, the Internet, also books, films, posters and others.

By the term "mass media" should be understood everything that allows mass information, in turn mass media information emphasizes the mass nature of the information being conveyed.

¹ For example, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

² Text adopted on April 2, 1997 by the National Assembly.

³ Mass media, publications.

⁴ *PWN Media Lexicon*, PWN School Publishing 2000, p. 125

Mass media of social influence, except for mass, emphasize unilateral exerting influence on the recipient. Mass communication means suggest mass communication and therefore assume a partial feedback between the sender and the recipient⁵. The media are the first sources of information about events in the world, and their strength manifests itself in the fact that they are one of the most important opinion-forming circles with a huge reach.

The aim of this study is to answer the question: *what is the role of the media in case of a crisis situation?* To answer them, literature, legal acts, Internet and other sources were analyzed. Based on the conducted research, conclusions were developed using theoretical methods: synthesis, comparison, generalization, deduction and inference.

The issue of media participation in crisis management is particularly important, in particular when creating preparatory procedures, educating the public, shaping the public perception of a given phenomenon, early warning about threats and formulating assessments of state entities responsible for actions taken during a crisis response⁶. The media perfectly fit into the various phases of crisis management, ie prevention, planning, reacting and rebuilding, playing an important role in the areas of integration, cooperation, control, adaptation, activation, crisis management and education⁷.

1. THE FUNCTION OF THE MEDIA

The media perform certain functions in society, there are no means of social communication that would not fulfill any task, because it is inscribed in their existence. In connection with the above, the following media functions can be indicated:

1. entertaining (recreational) - the media plays the role of a medium that provides viewers with entertainment, fun, mainly by posting interviews with the stars, various types of serial productions, quiz shows, music radio shows, gossip articles;
2. informational - this media function is considered the most important. The media fill it primarily with the use of information blocks (which provide viewers with the most important reports from the world of politics, culture and economy), programs and broadcasts about the nature of debates, discussions or comments;
3. opinion-forming - it is partly related to the information function, because more and more often the information is coupled with their commenting, and thus influencing public opinion. By using various types of programs and broadcasts, articles containing comments or

⁵ M. Filipiak, *Homo Communicans*, Publisher of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin 2004, p. 20.

⁶ K. Kulasza, P. Gromek, *Media in crisis management - opportunities and threats*, [in:] *Media in education. Globe spaces - local areas*, UPH Publishing House, Siedlce 2012, p. 201.

⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 220.

opinions - especially if they contain the opinion of persons who are authorities for recipients (eg public figures, experts in a given field, actors, well-known publicists, artists), the media influence the way of interpreting specific social events and phenomena;

4. educational and culture-generating - in the case of this function we are dealing with the desire to provide recipients with specific knowledge, educate viewers and create a certain media culture or propagate events from cultural life. The media most often do this through educational productions related to culture, such as the Television Theater, descriptions, advertisements and broadcasts of important cultural events, such as concerts or performances, broadcasts on broadly understood art, educational programs for children, publishing reviews;

5. controlling - the media, having a large influence on public opinion, reveal facts related to the reprehensible behaviors and actions of public employees, point out issues disregarded in the discourse of government officials, reveal various kinds of scandals, assess decisions of the government or other state officials. It can be said that the media in this case guard and control the social order, they are someone in the style of an investigative journalist⁸.

The functions of the media, as participants in public life, may be expressed by engaging in communication processes by acting as intermediaries and initiators of communication between institutions and citizens, provoking interest in current, political and social issues, thereby strengthening or destroying the democratization process and creating or participation in creating public opinion about important social problems⁹.

From the point of view of the deliberations under consideration, information and education should be indicated as the main source of media, while establishing appropriate relations between the entities competent in the field of crisis management and society should be preceded by establishing and maintaining good relations with journalists who convey messages and shape the attitudes of recipients.

2. CRISIS SITUATION AND CRISIS

The Act of 26 April 2007 on crisis management¹⁰ determines the authorities competent in matters of crisis management in Poland, as well as their tasks, principles of operation and financing¹¹. It also defines a crisis situation as a situation that negatively affects the level of security of people, property in considerable sizes or the environment, causing significant restrictions in the operation of competent public administration bodies due to the inadequacy

⁸ <http://eszkola.pl/wos/funkcje-mediow-4497.html?strona=2>, December 8, 2017.

⁹ Ibidem, p. 390.

¹⁰ Journal of Laws 2013, item 1166.

¹¹ Art. 1.

of the forces and resources they possess¹². Crisis management, according to the act, is the activity of public administration bodies, which is an element of national security management, which consists in preventing crisis situations, preparing to take control over them through planned actions, reacting in case of crisis situations, removing their consequences and restoring resources and critical infrastructure¹³.

Crisis, on the other hand, is referred to as a breakthrough, a turning and decisive point, usually manifested by a strong deterioration of the situation in a given field. It is the culmination of conflicts in various areas of social life. Conflicts are ubiquitous and inevitable, because they are in the structure of society. Crisis means the development of internal or external events that directly threaten the vital interests of society (state) and the following so quickly that they force the political authorities to immediately take extraordinary actions¹⁴.

There are many criteria for dividing crises. However, the most practical and widespread one is the division because of the reasons for their emergence. Due to such a division, following crises are distinguished:

- caused by internal economic problems (bad pricing policy, bad debts, lack of financial liquidity);
 - resulting from bad external economic situation (stock market crash, inflation);
 - unfortunate events (accidents, catastrophes, fires, robberies) and crises as consequences of force majeure (flood, snowstorm);
 - ecological (water pollution, radioactive leakage, contamination, noise, exhaust emissions);
 - conflict with the law (proven violation of the law, pending court cases, accusations, suspicions, announcements of bringing a case to court);
 - employee (resulting, for example, from reorganization, problems in internal communication, inadequate wage policy, etc.);
 - information (rumors, distortions of information, unfavorable press releases, dissemination of information taken out of context);
 - resulting from the actions of hostile people and groups of people (terrorism, sabotage, intentional poisoning of products);
 - scandals (resulting from inadequate behavior of a lie, revealing dark secrets);

¹² Art. 3.1).

¹³ Art. 2.

¹⁴ J. Ziarko, J. Walas-Trębacz, *Fundamentals of crisis management*, Kraków 2010, p. 74.

- other crises, such as an advertising campaign that violates the limits of good taste (someone may get offended, but this is not always a sufficient reason to refer a case to the court, for example)¹⁵.

The effectiveness of crisis management, according to B. Rozwadowska, depends to a large extent on the proper diagnosis of the problem. The starting point is the determination of the essence of the crisis (what it is about), a thorough analysis of the reasons for its creation and the assessment of its nature (what extent it has, how long it lasts, how it runs).

Although it is true to say that each crisis is different and two similar situations may have completely different effects, it is possible to find certain elements common to certain events¹⁶. All crises, although they have different causes, run according to a fixed pattern. The beginning of the crisis always heralds specific warning signals. Detecting them is one of the conditions for quickly taking the appropriate action for the circumstances. Crises may appear suddenly (eg catastrophes), but sometimes their arrival is heralded by small, seemingly insignificant signals. The next element is preparation and preventive actions. Recognizing the signals does not yet guarantee quick resolution of the crisis - it is necessary to take appropriate actions. It is worth remembering that not every event requires immediate reaction. There are situations in which it is enough to only increase vigilance and wait for the further development of events, because too violent response would only lead to unnecessary publicity of a problem that nobody would notice under normal circumstances. At this stage of the crisis, it is therefore necessary to make the first in-depth analyzes and carry out regular inspections of those areas in which a threat has been identified (eg maintenance of equipment). The next step is to stop the effects of the crisis. The basic action in this area is to secure those areas that have not yet been covered by the crisis.

This is one of the most important stages of the crisis, because it is a turning point for further development of the situation. If the adverse tendency can be stopped in time, there is a good chance that the damage caused by the crisis will not be great. Normalization is a stage based on the so-called implementing of a comprehensive recovery program. The aim of these activities is to return to normal state as quickly as possible. The most important task should be to compensate for losses and to provide protection for the most deprived persons. Mastering the crisis should not be treated as the ultimate goal of action. It is very important that this event becomes the basis for constructive conclusions and learning for the future. To this end, it is necessary to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the crisis and to generalize the acquired

¹⁵ I. Mitroff, C. Pearson, *Crisis management*, Bussines Press, Warsaw 1998, p. 171.

¹⁶ B. Rozwadowska, *Public relations. Theory, Practice, Perspective*. Studio Emka Publishing House, Warsaw 2006, p.

knowledge. An evaluation of what was good and identification of the mistakes made is needed. Properly drawn conclusions from the previous crisis protect against similar events in the future¹⁷.

3. CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND MEDIA

As noted earlier, the modern world lives by media and information. The media are also one of the most important tools that modern countries have at their disposal to provide their citizens with individual protection against threats.

Taking into account the role of the media in crisis management, various functions can be distinguished. The first of these is an informational function, consisting in the transmission of information about threats, their sources, causes and consequences, as well as methods of protection and measures taken to fight the threat. The media also interprets the reality that surrounds us, thus shaping the common awareness of the existing threat. The function of shaping social approval for combating threats is used by the media for persuasive communication, the purpose of which is to create new, and to change or consolidate existing social attitudes. One can also point to the role of the media in shaping trust in the authorities and their actions to fight the threat. This function manifests itself in informing about the tasks and powers of individual services and other entities in the field of counteracting and combating threats, controlling state or local authorities (in a well-defined social interest) informing the public about the degree of fulfilling the obligation to ensure security for citizens¹⁸.

According to *the National Crisis Management Plan* in Poland, three main areas of public information are assumed: contact with the media, direct contact with the public and indirect contact with the public¹⁹.

Resolving a crisis requires a quick response, media pressure can make decision making difficult. Therefore, it is important to take appropriate action before the crisis situation. Pre-emptive actions may reduce the scale of the crisis. They must be taken by all authorities in the scope of their competences and considered in following aspects:

- preparing for contacts with the media - preparing communication strategies and algorithms for specific situations, selecting a group of people to cooperate with the media,

¹⁷ I. Mitroff, C. Pearson, *Crisis management*, op. cit., Bussines Press, Warsaw 1998, p.28-30.

¹⁸ W. Macierzyński, *The role of media in crisis communication*, [in:] M. Jabłonowski, L. Smolak, (ed.), *Crisis management in Poland*, Academy of Humanities in Pułtusk, Pułtusk 2007, p. 388-389.

¹⁹ P. Gromek, K. Kulasza, *Selected elements of cooperation with the media in crisis situations - introduction to the project approach*, [in:] G. Sobolewski, D. Majchrzak, *Crisis management*, National Defense Academy, Warsaw 2013, p. 189.

establishing the tools and frequency of contacts, establishing alternative communication channels between the spokespersons of the bodies involved, preparing a database of internal and external experts, organizing training and communication exercises, updating the database of contact details of the media and cooperating bodies;

- activities addressed to the public - educational and informational undertakings, educational programs, information on how to deal with emergency situations, organization of training and exercises, and information campaigns;
- direct communication with the public - selecting people who are prepared and able to talk to the families of the aggrieved parties, preparing for information activities, verifying and updating contact lists of emergency services and information points²⁰.

In the case of cooperation with the media, based on mutual respect and understanding of real needs, public administration and formations and institutions of public security and order gain a powerful ally, thanks to which they can both establish cooperation with the society and educate it in areas related to the crisis. Thanks to the media, one can convey knowledge about the symptoms of the threat, the ways of the desired behavior in the event of its occurrence, or evacuation procedures and the activities of emergency and police services.

In addition to creating the right communication channels, it is also necessary to train people who will be responsible for communication with the media. These people should not only understand the specifics and goals of the organization for which they work, but also the specificity and way of functioning of the media. When dealing with the media, one should remember about the skills that instills the so-called *media training*. They concern the control of behavior in direct contact with journalists. For people involved in the conversation with the media (especially in an interview), it is recommended to conduct a conversation quickly to reduce periods of silence and looking nervously from side to side. This will limit the perception of the interviewee as unreliable, unprepared or trying to hide something. It happens that a journalist asks several questions simultaneously. In this case, it is best to answer the question that the interviewee is best prepared for. The utterance can be started with the statement *You asked a number of very important questions, let me start from ...* If the question is uncomfortable for the responder, he may try to reformulate it in his favor. All questions beginning with *Apparently .., It is said ... Will you agree that, I heard that ...* can be asked in order to draw the interlocutor into the sphere of conjectures and guesses that are particularly dangerous in interviews in crisis situations. One must always remain calm during the

²⁰ *National crisis management plan*, Governmental Safety Center 2013, p. 398.

conversation. Do not hang around in a chair (especially on TV). A well-mannered and calm person inspires confidence, and thus the information provided by him is reliable, all kinds of noises that may be taken under certain conditions as confirmation or disapproval of the opinion expressed should be limited²¹. At the same time, when communicating directly with the media, one should avoid such behaviors as mystery, or lack of seriousness, peace, patience. It is a serious mistake to provide contradictory information, as well as looking for a scapegoat or promoting panic²². At the same time, it should be remembered that once expressed, a negative opinion begins to live its own life²³.

A frequent phenomenon accompanying crisis situations is the information deficit. That is why cooperation with the media is crucial in a crisis situation. Sharing information should be carried out systematically, but with observance of the rules set by persons selected for contacts with journalists. When preparing the messages, it should be remembered that the families of the victims receive the information first. To ensure efficient communication with the public through the media one should:

- implement a previously prepared communication strategy;
- establish an internal crisis communication team;
- issue regular messages containing the latest information;
- designate a place for media representatives on the scene of the event;
- select people to contact with the media;
- invite representatives of involved bodies and experts to take part in press conferences;
- in the event of a prolonged crisis, appoint replacement persons;
- provide 24/7 telephone contact with the spokesperson (or the deputy)²⁴.

One can also generate a number of rules that guarantee successful communication with the media during the crisis:

- bad news should be conveyed as the first, one should not allow other sources to overtake us in providing disturbing facts;
- the wellbeing of people should always be placed before material considerations;
- one must be absolutely sure of the facts and statements conveyed to the public – one should not provide unverified information;

²¹ K. Wójcik, *Public relations from A to Z. T.2. Analysis of the initial situation, planned activity*. AW Placet, Warsaw 2001, p. 101-103.

²² K. Wójcik, *Public Relations, Reliable dialogue with the environment*, AW Placet, Warsaw 2005, pp. 632-633.

²³ J. Olędzki, D. Tworzydło (ed.), *Public relations. Social significance and directions of development*, PWN, Warsaw 2006, p. 290-291.

²⁴ *National crisis management plan, op. cit., p. 399.*

- one should express oneself in a simple, clear, logical and consistent way;
- it is advisable to publish all information if it is not secret or does not concern security.

If information can not be disclosed, explain why. In turn, when information is not available at a given moment, a date and manner of providing information should be set;

- time limits should be set for further information;
- promises should be kept
- data should be updated regularly;
- one should not minimize the effects of the crisis or downplay the matter;
- both speculation and hypothesis as well as ambiguities should be avoided and no gossip should be provoked;
- one should respond quickly to emerging rumours;
- no media should be favored;
- one should not let oneself get upset;
- one should keep distance, showing the events from the perspective of a quick end of the crisis - it must be seen that the situation is controlled and that there is a way of solving it, one should not focus on what happened, but on what is planned to be done and in what way;
- one should remember about the basic and final transmission for the recipient in the preparation of every information;
- one should not say anything "privately" or provide information that could violate the private life of people affected by the crisis;
- the victims of the crisis should not be disclosed until their families learn about it²⁵.

Journalists are characterized by natural skepticism, bad news is more interesting to them²⁶. Negative information evokes a more positive response and is more effective. It seems that the genesis of this phenomenon is very deep. Negative information is even more important for human functioning, it signals a threat, a danger that must be avoided. At the biological level, it is much more important to avoid negative factors in the environment than to achieve positive ones²⁷.

Taking into account the technique of argumentation, which is supposed to cause an intended effect from the recipients, by *public relations* experts, it is called shaping the structure of expression, the majority of universally recognized rules of conduct work in the crisis. When

²⁵ P. Gromek, K. Kulasza, *Selected elements...*, op. cit., p. 190.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ J. Mikułowski-Pomorski, Z. Nęcki, *Effective Communication*, Kraków 1983, p. 201.

dealing with a well-informed and intelligent audience, bilateral argumentation, ie giving two sides of the issue, is more effective; with the less intellectually sophisticated audience, less oriented in the problem - one-sided; assuming that a certain part of the organization's environment, with which it communicates in the crisis, is better informed, it is prudent to use bilateral argumentation. According to the next principle, emotional argumentation, or one containing emotional components, outweighs the effectiveness of only substantive, rational, and rational arguments. In addition, the opinion about the communicating person has a huge impact on the acceptance or rejection of the presented content, so it is important not only what is said, but equally - who does it. Intentional communication tactics may be limited to answering questions, but also asking questions to the other side and its supporters, including media representatives in accordance with the principle: the best defense is the attack, and who asks - leads²⁸.

It should be remembered that the organization involved in the crisis is in a unique situation when it comes to the need of repelling the charges. Manipulating information, saying untruth is the least effective way of dealing with the allegations, because the detection of dishonesty causes the media to take up the issue of the crisis in the organization again and to transfer a very critical opinion about the organization to other aspects of its functioning. In defending the allegations, one can use the fact that each charge consists of three permanent elements. First of all, the person making the allegation considers that the person concerned acts in a certain way, i.e. he accepts the truth that he caused what he is being accused of (truth, as the basis of the accusation). Secondly, the person making the accusation indicates a norm with which this action can not be reconciled (exceeding some norm as the basis of the plea). Thirdly, the person making the allegation assumes that the person concerned did not have to take this action (responsibility for acting as the basis of the allegation)²⁹. Familiarity with such a scheme allows for proper preparation for the rejection of potential allegations by a person designated for communication. On behalf of the criticized subject, one may reject the claim that he acted as criticized (denial of criticized action), reject the norm that was to be violated by criticism (though acting as criticized, but no standards binding me have been violated; quoted norms do not apply to me), can finally abolish or limit the degree of responsibility for criticized actions, or - by stating that it was otherwise impossible to act - maintain that even if ones action caused a disputed effect, other proceedings would be contrary to its elementary interests. One may also argue that - acting in accordance with its interests, one could not suppose that it would have a

²⁸ J. Wójcik, Public relations. Reliable ... op. cit. p. 634.

²⁹ Ibidem.

negative effect. Another reaction is also possible – agreeing with the criticism in all three aspects, apologising and redressing³⁰.

4. MEDIA AND THE CRISIS

Living in the era of mass communication and constituting a society organized around the media, the recipients focus on short, shallow information that does not require thinking and intellectual reflection. For sociological and psychological reasons, the most popular is the shocking and dramatic information that depicts someone's misfortune or tragedy. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that in the media, death, wounded, catastrophe is presented in the first place, we just want to see it, we want to hear about it and read about it, it is the same commodity as any other³¹.

Contemporary media are very diverse, both in technical terms (satellite and digital TV, Internet) and in terms of level. "The level of the media accurately reflects the situation in culture with its division into high and mass culture. There are serious writings, radio stations, TV programs and in them old fashioned journalism has been preserved. But this is obviously a minority. Because most media are today part of a dynamically developing planetary world of services."³²

Information has its value. This value has a double meaning. The first is the quality of information, its usefulness and credibility. The second is the understanding of the value – its cost and price. Increasingly, information is the object of trade and financial transactions³³. Therefore, the media fiercely compete in gaining viewers and readers, are under constant pressure to be the first to convey a given message and to provide attractive information. Targeted on profit, they are looking for topics attracting the recipient, looking for sensational threads, often without verifying the information received and simplifying complicated events³⁴. As a result, they offer the most 'accessible' information to recipients, often manipulated, speculating with data or combining them in order to influence more people. We also deal with multiplication of information³⁵, hence its replication in various communication channels, repetition, supplementing its contents with new data or sources. There is a tendency to use

³⁰ Ibidem, p. 635-636.

³¹ T. Aleksandrowicz, *International Terrorism*, Warsaw 2008, p. 28.

³² R. Kapuściński, *Occupation: journalist, Requiem for a journalist*, Tygodnik Powszechny's Cultural Magazine No. 5/6 (54/55), June 3, 2001.

³³ <http://edukacjamedialna.edu.pl/lekcje/informacja-jako-dobro/>, December 8, 2017.

³⁴ J. Ołędzki, D. Tworzydło (ed.), *Public relations...*, op. cit., p. 292.

³⁵ Multiplying something, PWN School Publishing SA, <http://sjp.pwn.pl/slownik/2568587/multiplication>, 25 March 2014.

extremes in the elaboration of information and its display (a kind of extremism of opinion, messages and form of transmission, cruelty, crime, violence, horror), the use of large numbers, borderline hypotheses as well as the use of very emotionally marked terms. More and more often one can observe the crossing of the existing boundaries, determined by functioning social norms and customs. Therefore, especially in the face of the crisis, journalists, publishers, producers and broadcasters - respecting the inalienable right of man to truth - should be guided by the principle of the common good, with awareness of the role of the media in human life and civil society. A step in this direction was the adoption of the Ethical Media Charter³⁶, in Poland on March 29, 1995, according to which these environments declare that in their work they will be guided by the following principles:

- truth - which means that journalists, publishers, producers and broadcasters will make every effort to ensure that the information they provide is truthful, conscientious and will report facts without distortion in their proper context, and if misinformation is disseminated, it will be immediately corrected;
- objectivity - the author will present reality regardless of his views, reliably reporting different points of view;
- separating information from a comment - the statement is to enable the recipient to distinguish facts from opinions and views;
- honesty - acting in accordance with your conscience and the good of the recipient, not succumbing to influence, incorruptibility, refusal to act in compliance with beliefs;
- respect and tolerance - that is, respect for human dignity, privilege of personal rights, especially privacy and good name;
- the priority of the good of the recipient - which means that the basic rights of readers, viewers, listeners are superior to the interests of the editorial offices, journalists, publishers, producers and broadcasters;
- freedom and responsibility - freedom of the media imposes on the journalists, publishers, producers and broadcasters the responsibility for the content and form of the message and the resulting consequences.

In addition, the Code of Journalist Ethics of the Association of Polish Journalists³⁷, adopting the principles of Ethics Charter of Media and declarations of the International Federation of Journalists, recognizes that journalists' task is to provide reliable and impartial

³⁶ http://www.dziennikarzerp.pl/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/karta_dziennikarzy.pdf, December 8, 2017.

³⁷ <http://www.sdp.pl/s/kodeks-etyki-dziennikarskiej-sdp>, December 8, 2017.

information and diverse opinions, as well as to enable public debate. According to its provisions, freedom of speech and expression must be accompanied by responsibility for publications in the press, radio, television or the Internet, while the well-being of readers, listeners and viewers, and the public good should take precedence over the interests of the author, editor, publisher or sender. The Code also refers to crisis situations, appealing to them to preserve far-reaching consideration and to avoid descriptions that allow them to imitate antisocial activities. In relations with wars, riots and demonstrations, journalists should preserve the attitude of the uninvolved observers in order to not become subject to manipulation. It is also unacceptable to show scenes of death in the closest plan, and the bloody effects of wars and catastrophes, manifestations of cruelty and violence can only be described and shown if a balance is maintained between the closeness of relationships and the sensitivity of recipients, especially the families of victims and their relatives³⁸.

CONCLUSION

Cooperation with the media, in the face of a crisis situation, is a difficult and complex undertaking. It is supported by the multitude of factors that condition them. The necessity to work under time pressure and the dynamism of development of threats make it essential to plan such cooperation definitely before the occurrence of a crisis situation³⁹. *The national crisis management plan* assumes the preparation of algorithms for individual institutions in the context of the most frequent crisis situations and the logistic part regarding the communication policy in the event of a crisis. The information and education of the public deserve special attention. These are one of the main tasks of the media. Such activities can not take place without the participation of appropriate institutions that can inspire journalists and produce information and media materials for their needs. Journalists, during the issuing of materials regarding preparations for the crisis, may activate social acceptance to fight threats.

The media, not without reason, is referred to as the fourth power, by means of a specific selection of the presented material they can also influence the activities of the executive power and contribute to the exacerbation or extinguishing of a crisis situation. Information obtained, analyzed, processed and made available in a timely manner can be an effective tool in solving crisis situations, depending on their nature. It may be a factor supporting the actions of the state, but it must be remembered that inappropriate information management, neglecting the

³⁸ Chapter IV of the Code of Ethics of Journalism - Crimes and exceptional situations.

³⁹I. Mitroff, C. Pearson, *Crisis management*, op. cit., p. 30

mechanisms of its collection and dissemination, can become a serious loophole in the security system of the modern state.

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Santrauka

Atitinkamai parengta visuomenei skirta informacija yra viena iš pagrindinių sąlygų krizinių situacijų prevencijai ir sprendimui. Informacijos perdavimo pagrindinė priemonė – žiniasklaida, kuri padeda greičiausiai pasiekti informacijos gavėją. Yra taisyklių, kurios sąlygoja tinkamą bendravimą krizinėse situacijose, o žiniasklaidos atstovai taip pat turi specifinių būdų tai informacijai skleisti. Tinkamas bendradarbiavimas su žiniasklaida gali būti veiksnys, sustiprinantis valstybės veiklą krizinėse situacijose. Straipsnyje pateikiamas tiek bendras turinys, tiek specifiniai sprendimai, taikomi komunikuojant su žiniasklaida krizinių situacijų metu Lenkijos Respublikoje.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: krizinės situacijos, krizės, žiniasklaida, komunikacija, Lenkijos Respublika.

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