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# How to increase Poland's resilience?

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted critical weaknesses in the approach to overcoming the multifaceted, complex<sup>1</sup> emergencies it has caused. Poland must be prepared for the occurrence of similar phenomena, as well as for serious natural disasters or various types of hybrid, non-military, military and terrorist threats, including those carried out using the latest technologies. Therefore, it is essential to approach the problem in such a way as to prevent threats and overcome them quickly, efficiently, and effectively on the largest possible scale. One of the most important aspects of such an approach should be improved cooperation between government entities (inter-institutional) and non-governmental, including – what is particularly important – local government entities. It would serve to consistently eliminate all vulnerabilities to threats of various types and, at the same time, to systematically strengthen immunity.

A phenomenon that has recently raised the issue of immunity as a kind of antidote are hybrid or subliminal threats. According to all forecasts, they will accompany

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<sup>1</sup> Complex emergencies can be defined as “situations of disrupted livelihoods and threats to life produced by warfare, civil disturbance and large-scale movements of people, in which any emergency response has to be conducted in a difficult political and security environment”, *Environmental Health in Emergencies and Natural Disasters: A Practical Guide*, eds. B. Wisner, J. Adams, Geneva: WHO, 2002, p. 12.

us permanently, taking on new forms – hence the constant strengthening of resilience becomes an inseparable imperative of state and society activities. The current situation on the eastern border of the Republic of Poland and the war in Ukraine prove this all too clearly.

This challenge should lead to synergy of activities of various governmental and non-governmental actors, to an improvement of mechanisms, procedures, and tools to prevent and counteract both traditional and unconventional threats: cyber or hybrid, as well as to deter hostile interference and intervention. The most important task should be to increase resilience in various areas of public, economic, and social life.

The overarching goal should be to create a comprehensive concept of strengthening resilience in Poland. In this context, “comprehensiveness” should be understood as decentralised action, yet managed from above. “Comprehensiveness” signals the desire for enhanced resilience by public administrations, various institutions, services, local governments, businesses, environments, and social groups to contribute to greater security for the state and its citizens and residents.

The resilience of the state is measured not only by the level of institutions’ and services’ readiness for crisis situations, but also by preparedness of society. State resilience is not only a set of procedures, but also actions to develop appropriate values and attitudes in response to crisis situations. The concept of resilience as such has become widespread “thanks” to the coronavirus pandemic, which does not mean that the need to build or strengthen resilience is obvious to the entire public administration sector and society in its basic aspect, i.e., ensuring national security – both of the state and individuals. Therefore, there is a need to “awaken” such awareness and provide knowledge about the essence of the problem and about specific aspects of strengthening the resilience of Poland and its citizens to current and projected security threats.

Strengthening resilience as a necessity is a relatively new issue dominating the security debate in both the Transatlantic and European area. The matter is about strengthening resilience to threats of any type in a given country, both in the civilian and military dimension. This issue has also become the subject of the Government Centre for Security’s (GCS; Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa) work, although it goes beyond crisis management (CM) in Poland in the statutory sense of CM, but these aspiration fits into the context of striving to improve the national security system, defined in the National Security Strategy of 12 May 2020.<sup>2</sup> In this legal situation, as well as in the face of other circumstances, such as actions of the Government of the Republic of Poland aimed at rebuilding economic and social life after the coronavirus pandemic, it is advisable that the issue of strengthening the resilience of Poland be emphasized more

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<sup>2</sup> *The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland*, Warsaw: National Security Bureau, 2020, [https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dokumenty/National\\_Security\\_Strategy\\_of\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Poland\\_2020.pdf](https://www.bbn.gov.pl/ftp/dokumenty/National_Security_Strategy_of_the_Republic_of_Poland_2020.pdf) [accessed: 19 May 2022].

clearly than before in government documents relating to development issues, in practical activities of ministries (including state-owned companies subordinate to them), as well as in speeches of political decision-makers, in order to make the public aware of the importance of the issue.

## Analysis of current solutions strengthening the resilience of Poland

Adequate preparedness for current and foreseeable security threats requires a coordinated and even integrated approach to resilience within the government (including lower levels), civil-military cooperation, and the involvement of the private sector, NGOs, educational institutions, and society as a whole. The issue of strengthening or building national and collective resilience is currently the goal of many states and international organisations established to ensure the security of their members. Therefore, when developing a national system, it is worth considering the efforts of NATO, the EU, the UN, the OECD, etc., in the context of strengthening the resilience of each member state and its society and the organisations themselves, made with a view to overcoming potential crises of various nature. It may also be helpful to draw attention to countries which gained experience in building resilience much earlier than Poland, i.e., Sweden, Finland, and Estonia.

The definition of resilience and building resilience are a national task and depend on the sovereign decisions of a given country, but it is also worth being inspired by the recommendations of NATO,<sup>3</sup> the EU,<sup>4</sup> and other entities. Point 2.7 of the National Security Strategy contains the following task: to “increase resilience to threats, predominantly in scope of: the continuity of government and the functioning of the state, resilient energy supplies, uncontrolled movement of people and relocation of the population, collection, protection and management of food

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<sup>3</sup> In NATO, resilience is defined generally based on documents from the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, but it must contain three key elements: continuity of government administration, continuity of provision of basic services, and support for military operations. In addition to these criteria, there are 7 guidelines for resilience and work is underway on the resilience of society. “Resilience and Article 3”, NATO, updated 11 June 2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics\\_132722.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm) [accessed: 19 May 2022].

<sup>4</sup> In the EU, the starting point is the 2016 Foreign and Security Policy Strategy, which states: resilience is the ability of the state and society to transform themselves so that they can resist and rebuild internal and external crises. The “Strategic Foresight – Charting the course towards a more resilient Europe” points to 4 dimensions: socio-economic, geopolitical, green, and cyber. The EU is working on resilience indicators. European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council 2020 Strategic Foresight Report Strategic Foresight – Charting the Course Towards a More Resilient Europe*, COM(2020) 493 final, Brussels, 9 September 2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0493&from=EN> [accessed: 30 May 2022].

and water resources, ability to deal with mass casualties, resilient telecommunications networks and Information and Communications Technology systems, population information and alert systems and resilient transport system.”<sup>5</sup>

In task-based terms, strengthening resilience is the ability to reduce the risk of a threat and to prepare the conditions for the functioning of institutions (state, community) in the event of a threat (regardless of its type). An important component of this process is risk management, which should be understood as: (a) risk assessment activities, including hazard identification, risk analysis, and risk estimation; (b) planning risk mitigation actions; (c) implementing risk mitigation actions; (d) achieving preparedness to respond in the event of a crisis; and (e) periodically assessing the results achieved.

According to the above philosophy, the concept of resilience is the quintessence of crisis management defined in the Crisis Management Act (*ustawa o zarządzaniu kryzysowym*).<sup>6</sup> Both issues (CM and resilience) generally concern the same thing: defining threats, preparing structures, tasks and reaction mechanisms that will make an institution resistant to external and internal shocks (threats). For this reason, resilience should not be considered in isolation from the crisis management mechanism already in place. On the other hand, it would be reasonable to extend the current solutions in the field of CM by new activities.

Currently, in Poland there are several documents which concern crisis management and national security covering activities which contribute to strengthening resilience. They can become the basis for the creation of a uniform and coherent system.

The most important documents in the field of crisis management include:

1. Threat Identification: Report on Threats to National Security

The basis for the functioning of an efficient system of strengthening resilience is the analysis / identification of potential threats to state security and the assessment of the risk of their occurrence. In Poland, the document fulfilling this task is the Report on Threats to National Security (*Raport o zagrożeniach bezpieczeństwa narodowego*)<sup>7</sup> (classified). The report comprehensively describes threats grouped into five main categories: (1) natural threats, (2) civilization threats and those caused by intentional human activity, (3) military threats, (4) terrorist threats which may lead to a crisis, and (5) threats in cyberspace which may lead to a crisis.

2. Preparation of procedures: National Crisis Management Plan

The next step, based on the identification of threats, is to develop the tasks and responsibilities of crisis management participants in order to prevent and prepare for the occurrence of diagnosed threats, as well as implement procedures for responding

<sup>5</sup> *The National Security Strategy...*, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>6</sup> *Ustawa z dnia 26 kwietnia 2007 r. o zarządzaniu kryzysowym*, Dz.U. [Journal of Laws of the Republic of Poland], 2020, item 1856.

<sup>7</sup> *Raport o zagrożeniach bezpieczeństwa narodowego przyjęty przez Radę Ministrów uchwałą nr 34/2021 z 11 marca 2021 r.*

in the event of their occurrence, as well as post-crisis reconstruction activities. In Poland, a tool used for this purpose is, among others, the National Crisis Management Plan<sup>8</sup> (NCMP; Krajowy plan zarządzania kryzysowego). The Plan lists over 190 modules which cover the spectrum of activities carried out by the Prime Minister, each minister in charge of a government administration department, the heads of the Internal Security Agency (Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego) and Foreign Intelligence Agency (Agencja Wywiadu), voivodes, and the director of the GCS. In the NCMP, in 'the safety matrix' understood as a combination of potential threats and the designation of the leading entity in their removal, 19 threats have been identified. NCMP, considering its functionality, has been divided into two parts – A and B. Part A focuses on activities implemented to minimise the risk of a crisis and includes tasks carried out by public administration bodies in the first two phases of crisis management: the prevention and preparation phase. Part B, on the other hand, describes the actions of the administration after the crisis and contains solutions used during the subsequent phases: response and reconstruction.

### 3. Preparation of procedures: List of Projects and Procedures in the Crisis Management System

Another document, based on the identification of threats and the crisis response actions assigned to them, this time developed by NATO, is the List of Projects and Procedures of the Crisis Management System<sup>9</sup> (Wykaz przedsięwzięć i procedur systemu zarządzania kryzysowego) approved by the Prime Minister. It assumes that, depending on the development of the crisis, the emergence of threats to the security of the state, including the conduct of hybrid operations against Poland, selected measures may be implemented as part of the NATO Crisis Response System (NCRS).

### 4. Preparation and protection of resources: National Critical Infrastructure Protection Programme

A very important element of strengthening the country's resilience is an appropriate system of protecting key elements affecting the stability of the functioning of the state and society in peacetime. The Polish document that contributes to the fulfilment of such a task is the National Programme for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure<sup>10</sup> (NCIPP; Narodowy program ochrony infrastruktury krytycznej).

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<sup>8</sup> Krajowy Plan Zarządzania Kryzysowego. Aktualizacja 2021/2022, przyjęty przez Radę Ministrów 3 marca 2022 r.

<sup>9</sup> Currently in force Order of the Prime Minister no. 5 of 11 February 2019 on the list of measures and procedures of the crisis management system, as amended by the PM Order no. 152 of 6 October 2020. See: Zarządzenie nr 5 Prezesa Rady Ministrów z dnia 11 lutego 2019 r. w sprawie wykazu przedsięwzięć i procedur systemu zarządzania kryzysowego.

<sup>10</sup> Uchwała nr 210/2015 Rady Ministrów z dnia 2 listopada 2015 r. w sprawie przyjęcia Narodowego Programu Ochrony Infrastruktury Krytycznej z uwzględnieniem Uchwały nr 116/2020 Rady Ministrów z dnia 13 sierpnia 2020 r. zmieniającej uchwałę w sprawie przyjęcia Narodowego Programu Ochrony Infrastruktury Krytycznej.

In Poland, just like in other countries, efficient and undisrupted operating of critical infrastructure (CI) has a great impact on citizens, administrative structures, and the economy (the SARS-CoV-2 virus epidemic has revealed a large network of interdependence in key services). Thus, a common infrastructure is created to carry out processes for the benefit of all parties. Unfortunately, this leads to dependence to such an extent that any dysfunction in this infrastructure can bring about effects extending beyond the organisation governing it. Therefore, it became necessary to recognize CI type protection as a process aimed at ensuring the continuity of providing specific service and restoring it if necessary.

Not only is the programme addressed to government administration and CI operators, but also to the whole society because every citizen depends on services provided by CI. Knowledge of the actions taken by the administration to increase the level of CI security (and thus of us all) needs to be disseminated. The programme presents solutions and good practices in the field of protection and enables their application in everyday life, which can be useful in increasing individual resistance to threats.

The rules and procedures of CI system, after proper replenishment and adaptation to needs, can successfully be used as a basis for creating a national system for strengthening Poland's resilience.

## Rescue System: Procedures of the National Firefighting and Rescue System

Taking into account the purpose of National Firefighting and Rescue System (NFRS; Krajowy system ratowniczo-gaśniczy), its role in building resilience is significant. Due to its links with the State Emergency Medical System, it is one of the most important pillars of the state's resilience to crisis threats related to the protection of health and life of citizens, and thus occupies an important place in the national security system. This system covers the entire country with a division into national, provincial and district levels. The tasks of the NFRS include the fight against fires and natural disasters, technical, chemical, ecological rescue, and medical rescue. The scope of the NFRS's functionality includes the management of rescue operations and cooperation with authorities and other relevant entities in the event of extraordinary events, including those of a terrorist character.

Regardless of the above-mentioned documents, largely aimed at building or strengthening resilience, there are many others aimed at defence, economic, civilizational, and social development, and which contain elements affecting the building and strengthening of the resilience of the Republic of Poland. These quoted documents (plans, procedures) quoted contain not only the identification of threats, but also their analysis, assessment of the risk of their occurrence, their expected

effects, entities responsible for responding to these threats and also taking preventive actions in relation to each threat. Making more detailed analysis of the planning documents and comparing them with the conclusions of the actions taken in the phase of response and reconstruction of crisis management in the threats that Poland has faced so far would allow for the initial assessment of the state's resilience, which seems to be crucial for undertaking further work. Conclusions from the exercises carried out so far, especially those of interdepartmental character, may also be helpful.

However, the documents presented above, and the related procedures certainly contribute to the achievement of Poland's resilience, but for those who deal with these issues, it is clear that they do not form a comprehensive system ensuring a quick and effective response adequate to the current and possible threats to the security of Poland.

Recent experiences show that meeting various security challenges from the moment they are identified through planning and response requires broadly understood crisis management – without an artificial division into times of crisis and war as it is difficult to decide where this border lies, for example in hybrid activities. The systemic approach should involve different ministries, as these challenges are interdisciplinary and cross-cutting. As a legacy of the communist era, the Polish administration has been plagued for years by particularisms, sometimes manifested in the reluctance of some entities to cooperate with others, which means that the activities carried out are dispersed, and thus are not as effective as they could be.

To meet contemporary requirements, a holistic, interinstitutional approach is needed, including harmonisation of defence and civil planning with interaction between the military and civilian spheres, taking into account entrepreneurs, NGOs, and the public.

## **Proposal for functional division of resilience with assigning responsibility for the execution of tasks**

Taking into account the solutions presented above as well as the Polish conditions and needs, such an approach to strengthening the resilience of the Republic of Poland, which will use the already existing regulations of the crisis management system, should be considered optimal. It seems reasonable to establish the following functional and competence division for strengthening the resilience system (table 1), noting that the following proposal contains an indication of only the leading structure in public administration, while it is possible, even desirable, to include other ministries as co-responsible bodies.

Table 1. Functional and competence division for strengthening the resilience system

Areas of resilience	Ministerial-level responsibility
Continuity of governance	the Chancellery of the Prime Minister
Energy and fuel supply	State Assets, Energy, Mineral Resources Management
Communications and ICT	Computerisation, communications
Cybersecurity	Computerisation
Financial	The budget, public finances, financial institutions
Food supply	Agriculture, Agricultural Markets
Water supply	Water management
Health	Health
Transport	Transport, Maritime Affairs
Rescue	Internal affairs
Social	the Chancellery of the Prime Minister

Source: Autor's own study.

The above division into areas of resilience is functional and refers to task areas included in the concept of process and service and is not object-oriented. It should be considered in the context of ensuring the functioning of a given “supply chain and services” as a whole. This approach means that the first step should be to identify services that are essential for ensuring security in a given area of resilience. Next, the supply chains and operators indispensable for the operation of such a service need to be identified. Following that, the assessment of the existing safety status of these operators should be carried out and, on this basis, a concept of increasing the operator's safety status should be developed. The minister indicated as the leading body in the implementation of the assigned tasks should cooperate as a coordinator with other ministers competent for a given task area and with other entities of economic and social life functioning in each field. It should be noted that this is not a closed catalogue and should be updated on a regular basis, as new security threats will arise or new solutions and methods increasing resilience in each field, as well as new stakeholders will occur.

## Society – the key to a country's resilience

An important “new” area of the competence division proposed above is social resilience (or: the resilience of society as a whole). The ability of society to resist unfriendly or even hostile actions and, in particular, disinformation, as well as to gain public support for the actions of the entire state apparatus, even when it resorts to “unpopular” emergency measures in the face of serious threats, appears to be crucial for all other areas of resilience. Resilience must begin with the protection of democratic values, institutions, lifestyles, and choices made by a given state and its society, while there are attempts to undermine the foundations of democracy from

the outside: cyber-attacks, manipulating information, foreign interference, disseminating fake news, conspiracy theories, and extremist ideologies – discriminatory and racist, conducive to division or social unrest.

The aim of actions should be to effectively counteract serious disturbances in Polish society, which may seriously threaten our democracy and institutions. The experience of Finns and Swedes<sup>11</sup> shows the great importance of building psychological resilience as an individual and social ability to withstand a crisis situation and to rebuild post-crisis life, as it translates into the readiness of citizens to defend independence and is an important element of citizens' trust in the authorities.

Citizens bring important "added value" to emergency response activities. Social organisations provide assistance and volunteers complement or sometimes even replace qualified professional services to support the response. Therefore, it is necessary to make an effort to develop new, better, and corresponding to today's challenges rules and procedures for including Polish society in the process of strengthening resilience and preparing it to actively participate in the efforts to reduce the effects of negative phenomena and in reconstruction after crisis situations.

It is advisable to develop a modern and attractive educational offer which would be implemented in the national education system and within the framework of higher education. The aim of this activity would be to raise the awareness of children, pupils and students, in the field of contemporary challenges and threats in the area of national security. It must also strengthen the populace's ability to detect and resist influence and disinformation campaigns. In addition, the issue of training the population in universal self-defence should also be taken into account. It remains to be considered whether the existing regulations and practice in this area correspond to today's challenges. In case of doubt, it would be necessary to assess and indicate the direction of the necessary changes.

The scope of the social impact on the functioning of the state is very wide and the tasks related to strengthening its resilience are multifaceted, affecting all spheres of economic and public life, which are within the competence of all ministries, central offices, voivodes, local government administration units, and NGOs. In view of the above, it must be acknowledged that it is not possible to determine unequivocally which minister is most competent to coordinate social resilience. For this reason, the designation of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister as the entity with the best competence for setting directions of activities and tasks and supervise their co-contractors seems to be justified.

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<sup>11</sup> The Swedish Psychological Defence Agency, About Us, 28 February 2022, <https://www.mpf.se/en/about-us> [accessed: 19 May 2022].

## Proposal for indicators and measures to determine the level of resilience

To ensure the effectiveness of the proposed functional division of resilience, an appropriate system for verifying its implementation should be devised and adopted. Appropriate metrics and indicators should help here, determining the level of a specific capability and an effective control and supervision system. Until the Polish measures and indicators are developed, the parameters agreed within NATO<sup>12</sup> and the regulations prepared by the EU (using and considering Polish standards and regulations in areas where they already exist) should be adopted as minimum requirements for a given area of resilience. Let us not forget that they were developed with the full participation of Poland as a member state of both these organisations. Any guidelines would be updated as the security environment changes. As a member of NATO, the EU, and other international organisations, Poland continues to influence the shaping of decisions taken in the field of adopting arrangements also in relation to measures and indicators.

As shown earlier, very important stakeholders of the resilience strengthening system are entities of socio-economic life, with non-governmental organisations and the media at the forefront. Their involvement in this process is necessary for achieving collective resilience to today's security threats to Poland. For such participants, it would be worthwhile for the ministers responsible for the area (or other indicated entities) to develop, for example, sets of good practices or recommendations and guidelines for action, in order to contribute to the success of the project, which should be as resilient as possible for the benefit of state and society.

## Conclusion

The creation of a comprehensive and possibly coherent resilience system will require adequate time and an adequate level of funding from the state budget (within the budgetary resources allocated to the contractors of the agreed tasks). Ultimately, a formal and legal basis should be established to address resilience systemically at the national level.

The coordinator of issues related to strengthening Poland's resilience should be one institution (e.g., the GCS). The Centre is an institution co-responsible for national security and crisis management, with a unique legal and structural basis thanks to its direct subordination to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland. It also has many years of experience in interdepartmental coordination of various

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<sup>12</sup> *Updated Baseline Requirements, Resilience Guidelines and Evaluation Criteria*, NATO, June 2020.

types of projects. These factors predestine the GCS to a coordinating function also in terms of strengthening resilience. At the same time, the GCS should not and does not want to control all the factors which build resilience. Not only would this be impossible, but above all, pointless and deviating from the principles on which the responsibility of individual ministries and other entities, both economic and social, are based. The GCS, on the other hand, can and should take the lead where action aimed at interinstitutional cooperation is particularly required.

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## How to increase Poland's resilience?

### Abstract

The aim of the article is to identify and analyse key formal and legal documents and applicable procedures in the field of state security, which contribute to building the resilience of society and the Polish state. The main emphasis is put on the description of current regulations and the principles of managing and responding to crisis situations. Following that, based on a brief assessment of current activities, the author will present general directional assumptions of his (unofficial) concept of comprehensive strengthening of Poland's resilience. This will include (1) a suggestion to designate national resilience areas, (2) identification of priority resilience areas, and (3) recommendation of directions for further action.

**Key words:** national security, crisis management, hybrid threats, strengthening resilience, cross-sectoral cooperation