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OPERATION PLANS FOR PROTECTION OF MUSEUM GOODS IN THE EVENT OF EMERGENCY

Abstract: The plans for protection and rescue are developed according to the Assessment of vulnerability to natural disasters and other accidents. The Assessment of vulnerability in the national institutions i.e. the museums, is adopted by the governing body. All museums have an obligation to organize the protection and rescue of employees, property and museum goods, to get prepared and to undertake preventive and operational measures for protection and rescue.

Key words: museums, event of emergency, plans, protection, culture.

According to the legislation related to the protection and crisis management (Law for defense, Official gazette of RM No. 185/2011; Law for protection and rescue, Official gazette of RM No. 93/2012; Law on fire protection, Official gazette of RM No. 67/2004, and other regulative) there is a need for timely development of operation plans for defense, protection and rescue of people/employees, visitors/audience, environment, material and other museum or cultural property in the cultural institutions of special interest for the state i.e. in the museums, in the event of natural disasters and other accidents during peace time, emergency and wartime.

The plans for protection and rescue are developed according to the Assessment of vulnerability to natural disasters and other accidents. The Assessment of vulnerability in the national institutions i.e. the museums, is adopted by the governing body. All museums have an obligation to organize the protection and rescue of employees, property and museum goods, to get prepared and to undertake preventive and operational measures for protection and rescue.

Organization of measures for protection and rescue covers planning and preparation of activities for implementation of measures to protect and rescue.

Measures for protection and rescue involve: urban-technical and humanitarian and other measures for protection and rescue that would occur during and after natural disasters and other accidents.

Each cultural institution i.e. each museum, according to its scope of work and its needs, develops the following measures for protection and rescue:

Urban-technical measures:

- Sheltering
- Protection and rescue from flood
- Protection and rescue from fires, explosions and hazardous materials
- Protection and rescue from ruins

Humanitarian action:

- Evacuation
- Radiological, chemical and biological protection
- First (medical) aid

All these measures for protection and rescue of cultural goods in Macedonia need accompanying plans, guidelines, terms of reference, and other information related to each particular measure. The evacuation of museum goods is one of the priority measures in the event of natural disasters and other accidents, emergency and war. The evacuation means planned, organized and controlled removal of material goods and cultural heritage from the affected areas or objects to another, safer place or location, sufficiently distant from the existing and threatened location. The preparation of activities to conduct the evacuation covers organizational and operational measures and procedures to ensure necessary prerequisites for implementation of the evacuation, as follows:

- How to implement evacuation (gathering places, routes of movement, number and type of vehicles, number and type of teams of experts for logistical support, necessary resources etc.);
- Number and type of facilities anticipated for accommodation of cultural goods;
- Overview of individuals to conduct the evacuation (list of the responsible personnel to prepare the evacuation and prepare the exhibits and the other items to be transferred to the new location and a list of the responsible personnel to receive them in the new location);
- Deadlines for making the necessary arrangements;

- Deadlines for recruitment of personnel and material resources for protection and rescue during the evacuation;
- Education, training and exercises of the personnel intended to carry out the evacuation.

Operation plans for protection in museums

Legal obligation of all cultural institutions, designated as institutions of special interest for the state, is to get prepared, to develop plans and to update the documents, as integral elements of the plans for defense, protection and rescue.

The above mentioned institutions are also responsible for qualification, training and education of all employees who are engaged in the care for cultural goods in their closer and wider community, so they could cope with the tasks in an easier manner and timely react in unexpected and difficult situations. Unfortunately, due to objective or subjective reasons, the controls and inspections conducted by the relevant authorities reveal that most of the museums in Macedonia do not have appropriate plans for defense, protection and rescue of cultural goods and employees, i.e. do not have operation plans for reaction in the event of emergency or crisis situation. In certain cases some documents and plans are in place, but they are either outdated or obsolete and are inconsistent with the applicable legislation, suggesting that they should be updated and reviewed.

Management of the operation plans for protection and rescue

The management of the documents which are part of the plan for protection and rescue in the museums demands sharing of responsibilities among the staff, which is necessary for development, update and use of the plan for protection and rescue.

Without adequate and professional staff, which will continuously upgrade its knowledge and experience, and without continuous follow up of the legislation and its application, no adequate and applicable plans and documents will be in place.

In the museums there are few such professionals, who are adequately qualified for performing tasks related to the defense, protection and rescue, technical support, fire protection, etc. In institutions where there is no adequate staff to perform these tasks, other employees, with inadequate training and insufficient knowledge of the area, are in charge for such duties, which usually are added to the other regular tasks they perform. In many of the museums these job posts are not envisaged, and the problems in this area are handled

spontaneously. To be in a position to manage the needs related to the defense, protection, rescue and safety, all museums should have personnel employed, who will be professionally trained and certified, and who have enough experience to work in this area.

Plans, projects and programs for procurement of technical assets and equipment for the museums

The Law on fire protection (Official gazette of RM. No. 67/04), art. 46, envisages timely service and repair of the assets for fire protection, according to the technical specifications, standards and guidelines from the manufacturer, at least once a year, or twice a year for the equipment exposed to atmospheric conditions.

All museums and other buildings where museum goods are stored, should be equipped with special systems, devices and equipment for protection against fire, technical equipment and systems for protection against burglary, system of video surveillance and monitoring, as well as many other devices, depending on the needs and specificities of the building. All these should be regularly controlled, maintained and cleaned.

The legislation also regulates the need for all facilities that are under protection and for other cultural objects, including the museums, to install lightning protection systems, which are not radioactive, or lightning protection system called Faraday cage.

The functionality of the lightning protection system should be checked regularly, at least once in every three years.

Apart from all these facilities and equipment, it is mandatory that the museums have panic lights and signs installed, which will enable timely and safely evacuation of the employees and visitors in case of emergency.

Although the need for technical support and protection equipment and its maintenance is regulated in the legislation, many of the museums, especially the older facilities, do not possess such systems. In case they still exist, they are partial, outdated and not regularly and professionally maintained.

There are different reasons and explanations of this situation in most of the museums:

- Most of the museums do not have experts who are engaged in this issue and therefore annual projects to the Ministry of Culture for this kind of protection are not submitted;
- There are cases where certain museums do have adequate staff and regularly submit to the Ministry of Culture projects and requests for

budget for implementation of projects covering the needs for this particular type of care that is required by law, but several years in a row they haven't received any funds for the submitted projects;

- Many of the museums have received written reports by the competent authorities (the Directorate for Protection and Rescue, Ministry for Interior, etc.), including the shortcomings and the need to address them. Despite this, some museums do not receive funding for this purpose or receive only small amounts for partial solutions, and do not have their own funds to purchase the necessary assets and equipment in accordance with the law and the needs.

Plans for education and training of professionals and employees in museums

There is a legal obligation, mandatory for all museums, to conduct regular training of professionals, employees of specific jobs or to all employees regarding the defense, protection and rescue, fire protection, safety and occupational health, etc. The situation in this field is similar to the problem with the supply and provision of technical means and equipment. These types of training and education of employees are not conducted, or are conducted irregularly. The reasons for this lie in the lack of funds for this purpose or lack of trainers and educators with adequate capacities.

Conclusion and recommendation for further action

To improve the state of the museums with regards to the plans for protection of cultural goods and employees in case of emergencies, attention should be paid to the following:

- All major museums in Macedonia that are of special interest, should employ/engage adequate professionals, qualified and trained to develop and update operation plans and documents for defense, protection and rescue, crisis management in case of emergency, fire protection and technical support of the facilities;
- According to the existing legislation museums are mandatory to develop their own operation plans for protection of cultural property from natural disasters and other accidents, emergencies and war;
- All museum facilities, where museums goods are kept and exposed, to be equipped with all the necessary technical assets, equipment and protection system;

- To enhance the cooperation with relevant ministries and other authorities that perform inspections on this issue and to seek professional help from these, in order to overcome the problems and obstacles;
- The Ministry of Culture should provide more funds for realisation of annual projects related to this issue, to purchase and equip museums with all the necessary technical systems for protection of cultural property, as well as funds for training and education of employees;
- Special attention should be paid to the education of staff in museums for protection and rescue of cultural property in the event of natural disasters and emergencies, providing training and practical exercises regarding all types of protection measures. It is also advisable to periodically organize and conduct joint training and exercises for several museums in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Directorate for Cultural Heritage Protection, the Fire Brigade Skopje and other authorities, ministries, departments, agencies etc;
- To improve the cooperation horizontally and vertically in all segments of protection i.e. the cooperation between the Ministry of Culture, the Directorate for Protection of Cultural Heritage and all museums in Republic of Macedonia. All museums that do not have operation plans for protection of the cultural heritage in emergency, to be helped by offering professional assistance, funding and staff, so they could develop such plans for protection and promptly react to the need to protect cultural goods at their disposal.

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