

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Pursuant to Article 13 paragraph 2 of the Harbour Master's Offices Act (Official Gazette, No. 124/97), the Government of the Republic of Croatia, at the session held on 18 December 1998, passed the following

NATIONAL PLAN

FOR THE SEARCH AND RESCUE OF HUMAN LIVES AT SEA

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 This Plan determines the organisation and operation principles, authorities and duties, measures and operational procedures of officials, as well as the method of using resources during standby or maritime search and rescue operations within the jurisdiction of the Republic of Croatia.

1.2 This Plan fulfils the obligation of the Republic of Croatia regarding the establishment of a national maritime search and rescue service, established by the Act on the Ratification of the International Convention on Maritime Search and Rescue of 1978 (Official Gazette - International Agreements, No.1/14/96).

1.3 Within the meaning of this Plan:

- **Ministry** denotes the ministry competent for maritime affairs (hereinafter: "the Ministry");

- **search and rescue service** denotes the service established within the Ministry and responsible for the setting up and conduct of search and rescue;

- **search and rescue region (SRR)** denotes a maritime area which includes the inland seawaters and territorial sea of the Republic of Croatia, as well as the open sea area between the territorial sea and the line determined by interstate agreements between the Republic of Croatia and the neighbouring states, as notified to the International Maritime Organisation;

- **Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)** denotes a body responsible for the successful organisation of the search and rescue service and coordinated management of search and rescue operations within the search and rescue region;

- **maritime rescue sub-centre (RSC)** denotes a subordinate unit of the **Rescue Coordination Centre** established for the purpose of providing support to it in a specific part of the search and rescue region;

- **coastal watch unit (CWU)** denotes a mobile or immobile land unit assigned to the performance of ship safety control in the coastal area;

- **search and rescue unit (SRU)** denotes a maritime, airborne or land unit with trained staff and equipment suitable for speedy conduct of search and rescue operations;
- **search area (SA)** denotes a part of the search and rescue region in which search and rescue activities are carried out in case of the existence of danger to human lives;
- **mission coordinator (MC)** denotes the responsible person of the Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent rescue sub-centre in charge of the coordination of search and rescue or the implementation of the search and rescue plan;
- **on-scene co-ordinator (OSC)** denotes the commander of a maritime search and rescue unit accountable to the mission coordinator, with the task of coordinating search and rescue activities within the identified search area;
- **surface search coordinator** denotes the ship master, other than the commander of a search and rescue unit, with the task of coordinating the search and rescue activities within the identified search area.

2. ORGANISATION OF THE SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICE

2.1 The search and rescue service (Annex 1) shall consist of the following:

- the search and rescue service headquarters;
- the Rescue Coordination Centre;
- the maritime rescue sub-centres;
- coastal watch units and
- search and rescue units.

2.2 The work of the search and rescue service employees shall:

- comply with the provisions of this Plan and
- comply with the instructions in the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service.

3. SEARCH AND RESCUE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS

3.1 The search and rescue service headquarters shall consist of the chief of staff, deputy chief of staff and five members.

3.2 The chief of staff shall be the director of the Maritime Administration.

3.3 The deputy chief of staff shall be an employee of the Ministry appointed by the Minister at the proposal of the director of the Maritime Administration.

3.4 One member of the headquarters shall be appointed by the Minister of Defence. The member of headquarters appointed by the Minister of Defence shall be responsible, by virtue

of his office, for coordinating the operation of the search and rescue service and the civil services within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence.

3.5 One member of the headquarters shall be appointed by the Minister of the Interior. The member of headquarters appointed by the Minister of the Interior shall be responsible, by virtue of his office, for within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior.

3.6 The remaining three members of the headquarters shall be appointed by the minister competent for maritime affairs at the proposal of the director of the Maritime Administration. These members of headquarters may be employees of the Ministry, employees of other ministries or public institutions whose employees participate or are able to participate in search and rescue operations, as well as prominent national experts in the field of navigation safety.

3.7 The headquarters' duties shall be the following:

- monitoring the implementation, improvement and proposing of amendments to the National Plan for the Search and Rescue of Human Lives at Sea;
- monitoring and improvement of the work of search and rescue service employees;
- adoption of the financial plan for the regular operation of the search and rescue service;
- submitting reports on the search and rescue service to the International Maritime Organisation;
- proposing and monitoring the implementation of agreements on cooperation with other countries regarding search and rescue;
- conclusion of contracts on cooperation with the owners of vehicles and equipment periodically or regularly engaged in search and rescue operations coordinated by the search and rescue service;
- reporting to the public in case of incidents with catastrophic effects;
- implementation of additional training programmes for search and rescue service employees.

3.8 In particular, the headquarters shall coordinate joint search and rescue operations and cooperation with other ministries and civil services, for the purpose of the efficient use of manpower and resources at the disposal of particular ministries and civil services. To that end, the headquarters shall particularly take care to ensure the overall effectiveness of search and rescue and limit the total costs of search and rescue covered by the state budget, inasmuch as this is appropriate and justified.

3.9 The headquarters shall hold meetings at least once a year.

3.10 By 01 March of the current year, the headquarters shall submit a report to the competent minister on the operation of the search and rescue service in the previous year.

4. MARITIME RESCUE COORDINATION CENTRE

4.1 The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall be established for the purpose of coordinated management of search and rescue operations.

4.2 The operation of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall be managed by the harbour master of the Harbour Master's Office Rijeka and coordinated by the head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (Annex 2).

4.3 Based on the opinions and proposals of the harbour masters, the head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall prepare and improve the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service.

4.4 The Official Manual shall be kept and improved according to the method of keeping and control of particular acts prescribed in the Official Manual.

4.5 The Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service is a group of written and approved instructions regulating the method of operation and procedures of the search and rescue service and shall contain at least the following:

- basic operational procedures of the search and rescue service employees;
- communication procedures with regard to boats, ships and/or aircraft in distress;
- communication procedures with regard to search and rescue units and other boats, ships and/or aircraft participating in search and rescue;
- communication procedures with regard to other organisational units of the search and rescue service;
- a list of responsible persons and the method of contacting other ministries or civil services which may in any way participate in search and rescue;
- a list of search and rescue units;
- a list of other units which may participate in search and rescue pursuant to a contract and the method of their invitation;
- a list of authorised holders of the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service;
- the method and forms of reporting.

4.6 The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall deliver the Official Manual, along with its amendments, to the following:

- the headquarters of the search and rescue service (the director of the Maritime Administration);
- the maritime rescue sub-centres (the harbour masters);
- selected coastal watch units (captains of the branch offices);

- the Ministry of Defence (a member of headquarters or a person appointed by him or her);
- the Ministry of the Interior (a member of headquarters or a person appointed by him or her);
- the State Bureau of Hydrography (the director or a person appointed by him or her);
- Plovput d.o.o., Split (directors of coastal radio stations);
- the airborne unit headquarters of the search and rescue service (the director).

4.7 The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall keep a 24-hour watch service.

4.8 The head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall appoint the head of the watch service from amongst duty officers. The head of the watch service shall be accountable to the head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre for his work and the operation of the service, while the head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall be accountable to the harbourmaster of the Harbour Master's Office Rijeka.

4.9 The duties of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall be the following:

- coordination of search and rescue operations within the search and rescue region of the search and rescue service of the Republic of Croatia, outside of the inland seawaters and territorial sea of the Republic of Croatia;
- direct coordination of search and rescue operations with the rescue coordination centres in other countries;
- requesting assistance from the search and rescue units of other countries;
- permitting the entry of search and rescue units of other countries in the territorial sea and internal waters of the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of rescue, after obtaining approval for such a procedure from the responsible person of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia;
- permitting (at the request of the rescue coordination centre of another country and after obtaining approval for such a procedure from the responsible person of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia) the departure of the search and rescue service units of the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of assisting another country's units;
- reporting to other ministries and civil services and requesting the assistance of search and rescue units and other services within their jurisdiction;
- requesting the assistance of privately-owned units with whose owners appropriate contracts have been concluded;
- cooperation with and assistance to the airborne rescue coordination centre and other civil services;
- preparation and conduct of search and rescue training and drills, independently, in cooperation with sub-centres and the rescue coordination centres of other countries;

- managing the Ship Reporting System;
- sending reports and warnings to the ships at sea according to internationally accepted principles and instructions;
- reporting to the public on details related to a particular operation, unless this duty is taken over by the headquarters of search and rescue service;
- providing professional assistance to other services and operations whose work directly influences the navigation safety level, provided that this does not in any way obstruct the performance of other duties of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre.

4.10 The head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the head of the watch service shall personally supervise the coordination of search and rescue operations:

- taking place in the search and rescue region of the Republic of Croatia, with the participation of the search and rescue units of other countries;
- taking place outside of the search and rescue region of the Republic of Croatia, with the participation of the search and rescue units of the Republic of Croatia.

4.11 The head of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the head of the watch service shall be authorised to:

- permit the state border crossing to search and rescue units of another country, for search and rescue purposes, after obtaining approval for such a procedure from the responsible person of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia;
- request the assistance of the search and rescue units of other countries in operations coordinated by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the maritime rescue sub-centre;
- approve the sending of search and rescue units of the Republic of Croatia to assist in the operations coordinated by the rescue coordination centre of another country, after obtaining approval for such a procedure from the responsible person of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia.

5. MARITIME RESCUE SUB-CENTRE

5.1 The maritime rescue sub-centre shall be established within all harbour master's offices. (Annex 3).

5.2 The operation of the maritime rescue sub-centre shall be managed by the harbour master of each particular harbour master's office.

5.3 The harbour master of the harbour master's office in which the maritime rescue sub-centre is established shall follow the provisions of this Plan and the instructions established by the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service.

5.4 The harbour master of the maritime rescue sub-centre shall keep a correct copy of the Official Manual.

5.5. The duties of the maritime rescue sub-centre shall be the following:

- carrying out the tasks established by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre within the scope of search and rescue activities;
- coordinating search and rescue operations within its search and rescue sub-region;
- reporting to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre on the activities undertaken, according to the instructions in the Official Manual;
- reporting to other ministries and civil services and requesting assistance from search and rescue units and other services within their jurisdiction, according to the instructions in the Official Manual;
- requesting the assistance of privately-owned units located within their search and rescue sub-region, with whose owners appropriate contracts have been concluded;
- cooperating with and providing assistance to the airborne rescue coordination centre and other civil services at their request;
- carrying out search and rescue education and training, independently and in cooperation with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre;
- providing professional assistance to other services and operations whose work directly influences the navigation safety level, provided that it does not in any way obstruct the performance of other duties of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre;
- reporting to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre on the state, capacities and limitations or standby times of all operational search and rescue units located within its search and rescue region.

5.6 The harbour master shall be personally in charge of search and rescue operations coordinated by the maritime rescue sub-centre under his command.

5.7 In long search and rescue operations, if the harbour master has been prevented from performing his duty or for any other justified reason, search and rescue operations may also be coordinated by the head of the vessel traffic management and information department or the search and rescue activities department, or any other person explicitly appointed by the harbour master.

6. COASTAL WATCH UNITS

6.1 All harbour master's branch offices shall be coastal watch units.

6.2 With respect to the collection of data on persons in danger at sea, guarded lighthouses and coastal watch stations of the Croatian War Navy shall also be considered coastal watch units.

6.3. The captain of the branch office shall personally participate in and/or supervise search and rescue in which the personnel or the unit of the branch office which he is in charge of participate. In exceptional cases, the operation of the harbour master's branch office with

respect to search and rescue may be managed by another person whom the captain has explicitly appointed, provided that he possesses adequate education or training.

6.4. The captain of the branch office shall adhere to the provisions of this Plan and the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service, provided these have been officially delivered to him or her. In that case, he shall keep the correct copy of the Official Manual.

6.5. The duties of the harbour master's branch office regarding search and rescue shall be the following:

- participating in search and rescue operations by order of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent maritime rescue sub-centre;
- coordinating particular search and rescue operations, provided it has been authorised for this purpose by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the competent sub-centres;
- comply with the instructions of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the competent sub-centres during search and rescue operations;
- report all events which are or may be important for search and rescue to the competent maritime rescue sub-centre.

7. SEARCH AND RESCUE UNITS

7.1 Search and rescue units may be maritime, airborne or land.

7.2 Maritime units shall be units under responsibility of ministries, which have the following:

- a trained crew headed by the master;
- an adequate fixed or mobile communication link with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre;
- other necessary search and rescue equipment.

7.3 Maritime units shall also include watercraft which meet the following requirements from the previous paragraph:

- units under responsibility of another ministry or civil service, provided they have been made available to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre, according to the procedure established in the Official Manual;
- units owned by a citizens' association or private owner, provided a contract has been concluded on the method of engagement and use of such vessels between the ministry responsible for maritime affairs and the vessel's owner and that, according to its terms, the vessel shall be made available to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre.

7.4 Maritime units regarded as such only during a search and rescue operation and not under responsibility of the competent ministry, another ministry or civil service may not perform the duties of on-scene co-ordinator.

7.5 The master of the maritime unit shall be responsible for the operation and security of the ship or boat, the crew members and other persons on board the search and rescue maritime unit.

7.6 The master of the maritime unit shall:

- personally command the search and rescue maritime unit; in exceptional cases, command over the maritime unit may be assumed by the deputy master in extraordinary circumstances;
- perform the duty of on-scene co-ordinator, provided he has been assigned to it by the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a maritime rescue sub-centre;
- operate in a manner which will not endanger the security of the ship or boat, the crew members, rescued or other persons, nor cause danger of pollution of the marine environment;
- report on the state and progress of search and/or rescue in which he participates;
- care for and maintain the proper functioning and availability of the maritime unit;
- report to the harbour master of the competent harbour master's office on the state, capacity, limitations and standby time of the maritime unit.

7.7 An airborne unit shall be an aircraft owned by the ministry responsible for maritime affairs, another ministry, a civil service, a citizens' association or a private owner, provided it has a trained crew and a fixed or mobile communication link with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre, and that it operates in cooperation with and under the management of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre.

7.8 The commander of the airborne unit shall be responsible for the operation and safety of the airborne unit during search and rescue.

7.9 The commander of the airborne unit shall:

- personally command the airborne search and rescue unit;
- operate in a manner which will not endanger the security of the aircraft or other persons;
- report on the state and progress of search and/or rescue in which he participates;
- report to the responsible person of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre on the state, capacity, limitations and standby time of the aircraft.

7.10 If the airborne unit is not under on-site supervision of the Ministry, that is, if its crew does not include a member trained for the performance of maritime search and rescue operations, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre shall ensure,

depending on the circumstances and urgency of a particular case, that at least one of the aircraft crew members is a trained employee of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre.

7.11 A land unit shall be every vehicle with an adequate communication link with the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre, operated by an employee of the Ministry, in cooperation with and under the management of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre.

7.12 A land unit may also refer to a group of people which carry out search and rescue, provided they are headed by an employee of the Ministry or operate according to his instructions, dispose of an adequate communication link and operate in cooperation with and under the management of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre.

7.13 The duties of the responsible person of the land unit shall be the following:

- managing maritime rescue carried out from the land in a manner which does not endanger the safety of the land unit crew and the rescued and other persons;
- reporting to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre;
- taking care of rescued persons until they are provided for.

7.14 Members of volunteer units may also participate in search and rescue as independent search and rescue units or the personnel of particular search and rescue units. Such units may participate in search and rescue only under the responsibility and management of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or a competent sub-centre and provided they are properly equipped and instructed or trained. The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall keep a list of such volunteer units which must contain at least information on their headquarters, operation area, level of equipment, name of the responsible person and method of their participation in search and rescue.

8. PROCEDURE IN CASE OF AN INCIDENT AT SEA

8.1 The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the maritime rescue sub-centres shall begin a search and rescue operation without delay, that is:

- immediately after the receipt of a reports on the presence of danger for men at sea;
- immediately after the receipt of a report or notice based on which the likelihood of danger for men at sea is evident;
- after a certain period from the receipt of the last report on the state and position of men at sea.

8.2 The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the maritime rescue sub-centres shall coordinate search and rescue operations, whereas the search and rescue units shall carry them out in the following manner:

- so as not to endanger the safety of men in danger, the search and rescue service personnel and all other persons participating in the search and rescue operation;
- so as to achieve maximum success of search and rescue in the given circumstances and with the available resources;
- according to the instructions in the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service: responsible persons shall depart from the instructions in the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service if there is reasonable likelihood that such conduct would result in the greater success of search and rescue.

8.3 If there simultaneously exist the danger for the safety of persons or their health and the danger of pollution during search and rescue, competent persons shall primarily focus their efforts on rescuing people, while endeavouring to reduce the harmful impact of such operations on the marine environment.

8.4 The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the maritime rescue sub-centres shall engage without delay all available resources and personnel in the search and rescue operations, provided this increases the likelihood of survival of people at sea.

8.5 If it engages persons who are not employees of the Ministry in search and rescue operations, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the competent sub-centre shall take into consideration their expertise and qualifications, as well as the level of equipment of the units on which they may be engaged. The Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the competent sub-centre may not approve the participation of these persons if it might put at risk their health or life or the health or life of survivors or other persons.

8.6 The search and rescue operation shall be terminated after it is established that there are no reasonable prospects that the persons in danger are alive.

8.7 During the search and rescue operation and after its termination, except in the case of incidents with a catastrophic outcome or which may have a catastrophic outcome, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the maritime rescue sub-centre which has carried out coordination by order of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall, in an appropriate manner and with the agreement of other competent ministries or civil services which have participated in the operation in any way, notify the media on the undertaken activities and their effects.

8.8 After each incident in which persons were injured or killed or which resulted in significant material damage, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre shall prepare an analysis and submit it to the search and rescue service headquarters within 30 days. The analysis shall contain at least the following:

- the time, location and description of the incident;
- its effects;
- an appraisal of the causes of the incident and sequence of events;

- the proposed measures for the improvement of the service's operation, for the purpose of mitigation of the effects of the incident and the prevention of its reoccurrence.

9. SYSTEM OF CONNECTIONS

9.1 The following systems shall be used in search and rescue:

- the public communications system and
- the maritime communications system.

9.2 The public communications system shall be used for the realisation of communication links between the following:

- the service headquarters, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre and the competent sub-centres;
- the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the rescue sub-centre and the official representatives of other ministries and civil services;
- the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the rescue sub-centre and other persons which in any way cooperate with the search and rescue service.

9.3 As a rule, written (fax) messages shall be used within the public communications system. In case of oral delivery of messages (by phone), such messages shall, as a rule, be confirmed in writing.

9.4 The maritime communications system shall be used for the realisation of communication links between the following:

- the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or competent sub-centre and the search and rescue units;
- individual search and rescue units.

9.5 The maritime communications system shall be used in the following manner:

- by using own communications tools or
- by using the services of coastal radio stations.

9.6 If the use of the services of coastal radio stations is necessary, the duty officer of the search and rescue service competent for the coordination of the search and rescue concerned shall choose the most suitable radio station.

9.7 In cases when services of coastal radio stations are being used, both the employees of search and rescue service and the employees of coastal radio stations shall strictly follow the provisions of the Radio Regulations issued by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

9.8 In cases when services of coastal radio stations are being used, mutual communication link between radio stations and the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre or the competent rescue sub-centre shall, in general, be established by means of public communications.

9.9 Only in exceptional cases may the maritime communication system be used to establish communication links between the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, the rescue sub-centres and other persons, namely when such communication method significantly contributes to the efficiency and successful performance of search and rescue or reduces danger to lives of persons in distress or persons carrying out search and rescue operations.

10. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

10.1 All employees of the Ministry who, by nature of their work, participate in search and rescue operations shall acquire the required professional education.

10.2 At least once a year, the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre in cooperation with particular sub-centres shall perform a readiness and communications assessment exercise, as well as the test of coordination with other affiliated services regarding the search and rescue operations.

10.3 Readiness assessment exercises shall involve, as appropriate, the personnel and equipment of other ministries and civil services or persons participating in the activities of the search and rescue service on the basis of a contractual relationship with the competent ministry.

ANNEX 1

Organisation of the maritime search and rescue service of the Republic of Croatia

ANNEX 2

Organisation of the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre

ANNEX 3

**Organisation of the maritime search and rescue service
of the Republic of Croatia**

11. FINANCING

11.1 The financial resources used to ensure the implementation of the National Plan for the Search and Rescue of Human Lives at Sea shall be provided from the state budget of the Republic of Croatia.

11.2 The financial resources used for regular operation of search and rescue service shall be planned by the ministry responsible for maritime affairs.

11.3 The financial resources at the disposal of other ministries and civil services participating in search and rescue operations shall be planned by the competent ministries.

11.4 The financial resources required for the establishment and maintenance of contractual relationships with private owners or citizens' associations shall be planned by the ministry responsible for maritime affairs.

12. TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

12.1 Annexes 1, 2 and 3 are printed in addition to this Plan and constitute its integral part.

12.2 Parts of the Plan not meant to be published, the official map of demarcation with neighbouring states, the original copy of the map of demarcation of search and rescue sub-

regions and the original copy of the Official Manual of the Search and Rescue Service shall be kept in the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre.

12.3 This Plan shall be published in the Official Gazette.

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Zagreb, 18 December 1998

Prime Minister
M.Sc. Zlatko Mateša, m. p.