Interview of the Head of the International Activities Department EMERCOM of Russia Yuriy Brazhnikov

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| The Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters |
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| *The specialists EMERCOM of Russia conducted rescue operation at the Tu-153M plane crash site near Smolensk in the shortest possible time. This is not the only example of cooperation of the EMERCOM of Russia with their colleagues from other countries. The Head of the International Activities Department EMERCOM of Russia Yuriy Brazhnikov told the interviewers of RIA Novosti about the top-priorities of the international activities EMERCOM of Russia this year, about the forthcoming joint humanitarian operations, mine neutralization in Serbia, the forthcoming forest fire distinguishing operations in the South of Europe and other things.*    **What top-priorities of the international activities were chosen by EMERCOM of Russia this year?**    For the nearest two-three years the top-priority is the high-technology cooperation with the closest neighbours—the CIS states. We are chairing these years in this organization and everything is not that easy here.    **Natural disasters similar to the latest earthquake in Haiti require fast and coordinated activities of the whole global community. EMERCOM of Russia suggested the development of the UNO structure which would provide adequate response to such cases. What stage is this project at?**    The Haiti catastrophe aroused a very serious attention to the projects aimed at the development of international response systems. The consequences of that catastrophe will be examined from the management and response point of view, conclusions will be made. Anyway, Russian suggestions that were made earlier accumulate both Russian and International experience.    **Has Russia got any suggestions on the development of the existing mechanisms of international aid?**    Yes, it does. This is, for example, transfer to the Emergency Centers. The regional aspect of these centers is very important, as it is easier to find common grounds in the regions than at the International level.    **What joint projects are scheduled this year with International Humanitarian Organizations, including the World Food Program UNO (WFP UNO) and the World Health Organization (WHO)?**    EMERCOM of Russia and the Ministry of Health and Social Development signed agreements with the WHO. If, for example, the WHO is interested in Russian tents, these tents are provided to them and the organization can use them.    **What about the Russian initiative in creating the European Emergency Elimination Center** **and the European emergency response air squadron?**    De facto the air squadron already exists, and it has already operated, especially in 2007, when there were fires in Europe. At that time we understood, it would be difficult to cope with emergencies without aviation. After that, there were All-European trainings, where the agreements were signed. Today, we are discussing joint deployment, joint aviation actions as part of the European Union.    **How do you evaluate the activity of the International Civil Defence Organization and its perspective cooperation with Russia in the emergency field?**    This is the only specialized organization which provides training to different people on how to render assistance. This is our number one partner. We already have joint programs, we are implementing a number of hi-tech projects, for example humanitarian mine neutralization, food supplies.    **EMERCOM of Russia is planning to help extinguish fires in South European countries. What equipment will be used there?**    We can provide up to five amphibious aircrafts Be-200, tanker-planes Il-76 and dozens of different helicopters—from Mi-26 to Ka-32, which can operate all around Europe.    **A very important issue is the humanitarian activity at the Balkans. What EMERCOM of Russia projects are being implemented there at present, including the humanitarian mine-neutralization in Serbia?**    This project works till 2012. Our units and Russian-Serbian units are engaged in it. All the works are supervised by the International Organization, we work openly. Our program is scheduled for four years, we will provide the highway for the gas-pipeline “Southern Flow” during this time. During the first year of work we returned the airdrome near Nish city to the Serbians. We will complete the assigned tasks.    **When will the Regional Emergency Center start operating at the Balkans, what will it be equipped with and how will it operate?**    Regional Emergency Center has already started operating at the Balkans. Humanitarian mine neutralization is the first step of this center. This will be one of the most serious tasks necessary in this region. We start the development this year, and the center will gradually expand. There will be forces and facilities necessary for the work in the nearest regions. The center will be located at the airdrome of the Serbian city Nish, the territory of which was cleared from mines by the sappers EMERCOM of Russia. Russian firefighting planes and helicopters are planned to be placed there.    In case of emergency the aircraft will be able to go to Greece, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Italy, Serbia, Portugal and France, which is much closer, than from Moscow Region Zhukovsky.    Training staff will be another task of the center.    Another step will be the creation of the European Emergency Elimination Center, which has been discussed by EMERCOM of Russia and the European Union for a long time.    **What do you think about your cooperation with other regional organizations, in particular with SCO and CSTO? Do you plan any specialized emergency center in South-Eastern Asia?**    All the agreement and legal basis were created, which mean joint actions in emergency elimination and relief, humanitarian aid, conducting joint operations. The SCO countries (Kazakhstan, China, Kirgizia, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) are going to discuss during the April summit in Tashkent the possibility of the Emergency Center creation. Of course, we will need aircraft, information resources—Kazakhstan China and Russia have them—as well as other things necessary for such international organizations. As for the CSTO, the cooperation is based on allied relationship, and the RF took part in the development of the emergency response forces. This is a planned process, it is necessary both on the CIS territories and the territories of the neighbouring states. We provided our best response unit and aviation.    **The beginning of the International Forces operation in Afghanistan in 2001 was memorable due to the active EMERCOM of Russia work, after that our activity was scaled down. Are there any plans about Afghanistan now?**    2009 showed the necessity of saving and developing the humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan. This country asks for help itself, and Russia is one of the leaders who can give this help. We rendered unique in scale and contents aid. There was the feeling of Russia in every Afghan province: 25 thousand tons of flour were spread around the provinces, 50 KamAZ vehicles for agriculture were given, as well as two firefighting vehicles. Construction works in Afghanistan are going very quickly, therefore our firefighting service is very acute there. Two Mi-8 helicopters in complete medical-clearing set were delivered by Germany and Russia.    **Ministry specialists are rendering assistance in Africa. What is Russia’s place there among other countries? Are any humanitarian projects planned in that region?**    That is a very complex continent. Not so many projects are implemented there, as we would have wanted. However, our experience in Afghanistan shows we can do a lot to help African states. At present we are working on the long-term project in Ethiopia, based on the Russian hospital; it is necessary along the whole eastern territory of Africa. Oil and gas recycling and production are developing in the western coast of Africa, which means industrial threats, so the training of the population is necessary, as well as the creation of modern firefighting services. We are sure the states will like such cooperation.    **Are there any plans for the work in Arctic? What projects EMERCOM of Russia can be implemented there?**    We have what to prevent there, in order not to let the changes of the permafrost area decrease the resistance of the facilities. The implementation of mass navigation and fishery, their development also need the existence of search-and-rescue forces. Arctic is a huge area, however, it is very ecologically sensitive. At present, the Arctic Council is operating, a big International Forum will be held this month where all these problems will be discussed.    **Does EMERCOM of Russia have any “secrets” of cooperation with governmental structures and the population of the countries where they have to work? You have to help people of different traditions, with various legislative systems.**    One of the secrets is traditional Russian sympathy and international experience, which allows being quite flexible. However, this does not mean we can work in any situation. Another secret is taking into account national peculiarities. For example when we arrived in India, we discovered different attitude to such tragedies. Still, Russia and Britain came there, and there was no one, except us. This combination brings the results. We are welcome in practically any part of the world. Last year and the beginning of this year proved that. Were we without the help of the locals in Haiti? No, we were not. Even there we found the way to provide joint assistance. Our top aims are to save, help, support and rescue people’s lives and after that valuables and nature.    http://www.rian.ru/interview/20100419/224193134.html |
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