

## PRESS RELEASE

### **IPA Floods and Fires Program Launch event in Montenegro 5 March 2021**

On 5 March, the second national launch event of the IPA Floods and Fires (IPA FF) programme took place, this time in Montenegro. IPA FF is a new EU-funded 3-year initiative for floods and forest fires risk management in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The launch event gathered representatives from the national authorities in charge of civil protection in Montenegro, representatives from the European Commission Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), the EU Delegation to Montenegro, the IPA FF Consortium partners and the embassies of the IPA FF consortium partners in the country.

The IPA FF program represents an important follow-up to previous EU-funded initiatives aimed at strengthening capacities for disaster risk prevention and preparedness in the region and in Montenegro. *“Floods and forest fires call for a systemic and integrated risk reduction approach, and this program truly represents an excellent opportunity to learn from each other.”* said Ms. Zorica Marković, from the Rescue and Protection Directorate of Montenegro and National Coordinator for the programme.

The programme represents also another step towards fostering regional cooperation, the sharing of best practices, and further alignment of partner countries’ systems with the EU legislation in civil protection. Mr. Hermann Spitz, Head of Cooperation Section at EU Delegation to Montenegro emphasised the importance of sustainable planning, use and management of water resource and reminded of several EU funded projects aiming at improvement of emergency response and flood protection. *“EU will continue to support implementation of its water related directives through actions funded in newly adopted Green Deal package”* said Spitz.

The IPA FF Consortium is established by the Italian Civil Protection Department as coordinator jointly with the civil protection agencies of Sweden, Slovenia, Romania, the Fire and Rescue Brigade of the Moravian-Silesian Region of the Czech Republic, the Romanian National Centre for Disaster Management Foundation and the Italian CIMA Foundation.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, this event, as well as the first phase of the programme, was organised in a virtual mode turning emergency into opportunity and guaranteeing the implementation of activities for a better risk prevention and response in the region.

Annex: IPA-FF fact sheet

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