

PRESS RELEASE

IPA Floods and Fires Program Launch event in North Macedonia 2021, March 3

On March 3, the first national launch event of the IPA Floods and Fires (IPA FF) program - a newly EU-funded 3-year initiative for floods and forest fires risk management in the Western Balkans and Turkey - took place with the institutions of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The event gathered representatives from the national authority of civil protection of North Macedonia – the Protection and Rescue Directorate – and other national institutions involved in the action, jointly with representatives from the European Commission Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), the EU Delegation to North Macedonia, 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 North Macedonia. *“we will continue in that direction, to align our national legislation with the EU and to adopt EU standards and practices ... this one is different in sense of involvement of several relevant institutions, not only the civil protection authorities, that also have competencies in the prevention, preparedness and response to floods and fires”* said Mr Bekim Maksuti, Director General of the Protection and Rescue Directorate of North Macedonia. The program is also a further step towards fostering regional cooperation, sharing of best practices, and further aligning Partners’ systems with EU legislation in civil protection. *“the project cannot eliminate wildfires and floods, which unfortunately are expected to increase in number due to climate change, but I hope it will help develop a more proactive approach for minimising their consequences through improved risk management, prevention policies, and fostering deeper and better cross border coordination”*, said Mr. Steffen Hudolin, Head of Operations Section at EU Delegation to North Macedonia in his opening remarks.

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 Center 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 program, has been re-shaped 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

Contacts:

Agostino Goretti

IPA Floods and Fires Program Director

agostino.goretti@protezionecivile.it

For press and media enquiries:

Silvia Parisi

IPA Floods and Fires Communication & Visibility

silvia.parsi@ipaff.eu