Cross-Border Cooperation in Forest Fire Fighting

Paint the world green, not grey!

From the recent past we are witnessing a series of destructive changes that have affected our area, but also the world in general. Natural disasters have contributed to the loss of human life, economic losses, and most of all environmental changes. The area of our region, according to statistics, is significantly more exposed to the threat of open fires and forest fires, as a consequence of high summer temperatures, minimal rainfall throughout the year - especially in summer, as well as human carelessness i.e. human factor.

Fires also have a serious impact on flora and fauna. Both border regions abound in rich forests, pastures and green areas that are vital to both countries.

As a result of past fires, large areas of the planet Earth have remained in grey. The activities of the project will primarily be aimed at raising awareness among the local population in the two border regions. The increased occurrence of fires in the past period, as well as the scarce equipment with which firefighters enter the field, has led to the idea of procuring equipment that will enable firefighters from our region to stand side by side with European firefighters.

This project is funded through the Interreg-IPA CBC program, between the Republic of Bulgaria and Republic of North Macedonia, and National Funds of the participating countries.
Main activities of the project:

- Press conferences in order to get acquainted with the public, i.e. the citizens of both regions;
- Creating a cross-border network for prevention and response to natural and environmental hazards;
- Conducting an information campaign to promote volunteering, as well as a campaign to prevent forest fires;
- Conducting specialized physical training and education for firefighting units and volunteer associations;
- Procurement of personal protective equipment, protective clothing and other firefighting equipment;
- Final project conference.

Main objective of the project:
Prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural disasters, as well as disasters caused by human factor

Duration of the project:
24 months

Total value of the project:
395,361,14 euro

Budget of the Centre of development of SEPR: 197,602,00 euro

Results of the project:

- Established cross-border partner network of permanent character for prevention and response to natural and environmental hazards;
- Increased public awareness of the benefits of volunteering;
- Increased public awareness for prevention of forest fires;
- Increased capacity and procured equipment of firefighting units and volunteer associations from the entire cross-border area;
- Improved qualification of the representatives of the fire protection units and the volunteer associations.

Contact:
Mima Stanoevska
Bld. Marshal Tito no.1-1
2400 Strumica
tel. 070/ 238 - 959
E-mail: mima.stanoevska@rdc.mk

An interesting fact: Reconstruction of the burned forest is on average 40 – 50 years!