

CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN FOREST FIRE FIGHTING

MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION

Regarding creation of cross-border network for prevention and response to natural and environmental hazards

Between institutions and organizations from the South-East Planning Region in the Republic of N. Macedonia and the members-municipalities of the Association of South-West Municipalities from the Republic of Bulgaria

PREAMBLE

The purpose of this memorandum is establishing a Cross-border Partnership Network for coordination and adequate response to the natural and ecological hazards, with a special accent and focus to forest fires. The network unifies a community of institutions, organizations, experts, and individuals from the Republic of N. Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria that operate in the field of prevention, preparedness, and rapid response in case of natural disasters and fires.

The institutions and organizations of the network are organized in a network in order to work jointly on the realization of the following goals:

- Receiving and sharing of information relating to natural disasters and fires;
- Exchange of experiences, good practice, and knowledge;
- Joint training of the members;
- Assistance and support in the management of natural disasters and fires;
- Support with equipment (donation and usage);
- Providing support and assistance for development of the associations of volunteers;
- Education of the youth;
- Public awareness rising among the population;
- Implementing joint campaigns and exercises;
- Support of the communication with the regional and national protection, rescue, and crisis management services;
- Joint application and implementation of projects regarding innovations, improvements, trainings and other positive effects in the common cause.

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Vision and Mission of the Cross-Border Network for Prevention and Dealing with Natural and Environmental Hazards

VISION

The Cross-Border Network for Prevention and Dealing with Natural and Environmental Hazards is a network of professionals and experts from institutions, organizations and individuals involved in coordinating and dealing with natural and environmental hazards in the territories of the two neighboring countries.

MISSION

The Cross-Border Partnership Network for Prevention and Management of Natural and Environmental Hazards seeks to improve the quality of services of local organizations related to the risks of natural disasters and climate change and promotes the diversity of knowledge and experience in dealing with risks, provides guidance for improved efficiency and pledges for the importance of timely risk information, disaster risk mitigation and climate change adaptation for improved resilience.

The Cross-Border Partnership Network for the Prevention and Management of Natural and Environmental Hazards with a Special Emphasis and Focus on Forest Fires uses the following acronym:

RESPONDER network - RESponse tO Natural and Environmental hazaRds

(responder – a person trained to respond to and deal with emergencies)

RESPONDER network - Одговор на природни и еколошки опасности

(responder – лице обучено да реагира и да се справува со итни/вонредни ситуации)

RESPONDER network - Реакция при природни и еколошични опасности

(responder – лице обучено да реагира и да се справя с извънредни ситуации)

Article 1. Underlying principles of the communication in the network

The cooperation and communication among organizations and institutions within the network shall be based on the following principles:

- **Solidarity.** Means awareness and commitment of the network members to the common goals. With this principle, the organizations and institutions facing different types of problems, shall be able to count on the joint support from all network members.



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- **Correctness and precision.** Correctness means providing truthfulness of the facts operated in the communications, and precisions means the process of providing detailed argumentation of the established facts. The correctness and precision shall be provided through surveys and collected relevant data about the events which are communicated.
- **Independence.** This principle means that the method of communication in the network shall not be determined by any political inclination and shall be protected from influences of any particular interests on the communications between the members. The communication shall be motivated only by the interest and needs of the network.
- **Timeliness.** This principle means that the network shall provide timeliness of the messages through the process of communication between the network members.
- **Interactivity and participation.** This means that the communication process shall be two-way and shall actively include the ideas and guidelines of all network members.

Article 2. Network membership

The **membership** in the network is voluntary.

Members join the network by providing a **statement (Letter of Interests)** from the organization which wants to become a member of the network and that accepts the principles prescribed in the Memorandum of Cooperation.

State institutions, citizen organizations, associations, and individuals (experts) working in the field of management, protection, and rescue in case of natural disasters and fires or in relevant areas who can help in prevention and reduction of the natural disasters and fires risks, can participate in the network.

Article 3. Network Structure

Cross-border partnership network shall have the following structure:

Members Assembly - which includes all the organizations members from the Republic of N. Macedonia and Republic of Bulgaria, held once a year.

Coordinative Body - composed of representatives at management level of 6 (six) organizations - 3 from each member state of the network: 3 / three from the Republic of Northern Macedonia and 3 / three from the Republic of Bulgaria.

The network creators - Centre for development of the South-East Planning Region in the Republic of N. Macedonia and the Association of South-West Municipalities from the Republic of Bulgaria shall provide administrative and technical support of the Coordinative Body.

Basic Group - composed of expert level representatives and organizations members that provide quality of the work and manage the network.



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Article 4. Coordination and Visibility of the Network

The **Coordinative Body** shall undertake the obligations for coordination of the network activities.

All **network members** shall jointly contribute to the promotion of the activities within the Network.

The information about the activities of the Network shall be published to each member webpage.

Article 5. Transitional and final provisions

The memorandum is concluded for an indefinite period and enters into force on the day of its signing.

This memorandum of cooperation is not based on legal and binding rules.

The content of this memorandum can be changed only with the written consent of both signatory parties.

Signatory parties to the memorandum of cooperation:

Association of Southwestern
municipalities
Executive director
Lybica Tomova



Centre for development of the
South-East planning region
Manager of sector
Zhulieta Gjurkova

