



THE EUROPEAN UNION'S CROSS BORDER
COOPERATION PROGRAM

**Project:
CROSS BORDER FIRESHIELD**

Visit of the Minister of Local Self-Government in North Macedonia to the Fire Station being built in Gradec, Vrapcisht Municipality.

In the framework of the Cross-Border Cooperation of the European Union, North Macedonia - Albania (IPA 2) for the CROSS BORDER "FIRESHIELD" project, with a focus on improving fire protection and response systems in cooperation with neighboring municipalities from North Macedonia and Albania as a project that must be implemented until August 2024, on March 8, 2023, the Minister of Local Self-Government in North Macedonia, Mr. Risto Penov, inspected the progress of the works at the station being built.

This project includes the joint efforts of three municipalities - Vrapčisht and Bogovina in North Macedonia and Çerrik Municipality and the non-governmental organization Caritas in Albania, to contribute to the protection of the environment in the cross-border area by improving the public infrastructure for risk management.

The Minister of Local Self-Government emphasizes that the project will contribute to the protection of the environment and the prevention of forest fires in the cross-border area, which is of crucial importance for preserving our natural resources and guaranteeing the safety of our citizens. This project shows the commitment of North Macedonia and Albania to work together towards common goals and to strengthen our ties as neighboring countries.

The Ministry of Local Self-Government will cover the expenses from the Macedonian side in the amount of 15 percent, said Minister Penov.

I call on all parties involved to closely cooperate and actively engage in the project to ensure that it achieves its goals and brings lasting benefits to the cross-border region. It's time to work together to protect our environment and protect our communities from the devastating effects of wildfires," he added.

This project is an excellent example of the commitment of the European Union to promote regional integration, development and cohesion. This project is helping to strengthen relations and promote cooperation and solidarity between neighboring countries, simultaneously improving fire protection and response systems for the benefit of communities and the environment," concluded the minister.

He added that special anti-disaster equipment has been purchased for the Cerrik Municipality fire department and a 20-person volunteer disaster response system will also be created and equipped, which will include retired military personnel and local residents from rural areas. . in the cross-border region.

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Furthermore, 8,200 primary school students will raise awareness of forest fire prevention and the consequences of forest fires on the environment, as well as fire alarms will be installed in 3 primary schools. More than 25,000 rural households and over 110,000 people from the rural areas of the cross-border area will also raise awareness about fire and forest fire prevention.

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