
THE REGIONAL MINISTRIES OF BULGARIA AND MACEDONIA WILL SIGN A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

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A Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works (MRDPW) of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Local Government of the Republic of Macedonia is due to be signed. It will be signed in Macedonia and the date will be further specified, the MRDPW reported.

Ministers Petya Avramova and Suheil Fazliu today attended the opening of the renovated building of Blagoevgrad district administration. It was renewed on the joint project "Green Buildings for a Common Green Future" of the district administration and the Center for Development of the Eastern Planning Region, Republic of Macedonia. The project was funded with nearly EUR 400,000 under the INTERREG Program - IPA Bulgaria - Macedonia 2014-2020, where the MRDPW is a Managing Authority and the Ministry of Local Government of the Republic of Macedonia is a partnering body.

The project aims to promote the implementation of energy efficiency as a tool for achieving sustainable development and improving the quality of life in the cross-border region. Therefore, besides the reconstruction of the buildings of Blagoevgrad District Administration and the Municipality of Kochani, Republic of Macedonia, it includes the development of a sustainable energy planning strategy in Blagoevgrad.

Border regions often experience their own difficulties and additional challenges. That is why we are making use of the program's ability to work together as good neighbors and to develop our potential not only to improve the attractiveness of the territory but also to help improve the quality of life and work of people on both sides of the border, opening time Minister Avramova. She noted that during the six months of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Bulgaria has committed itself to responding to the real needs of European citizens and to transform the challenges into opportunities through the promotion of cohesion policy.

Minister Avramova expressed his satisfaction with the great interest enjoyed by the cooperation program between Bulgaria and the Republic of Macedonia. The high number of candidates for the two calls for proposals - 375 - shows that it provides excellent opportunities for institutions and organizations in the cross-border region to cope with common challenges, the minister said.

During the first call for project proposals, 48  with a total value of just over EUR 100 million

were concluded. The second Call for Proposals has a budget of nearly 7 million. Further projects will be funded that will have a lasting impact on cross-border territory by creating robust partnerships between the two countries. Their approval is expected by the end of the year.

The Minister of Regional Development of the Republic of Macedonia, Suheil Fazliu, pointed out that the country's priorities are good neighborly relations, which is confirmed by the signing of the treaty between the two countries. Road infrastructure is a top priority in the government of Macedonia because building bridges between peoples means bringing it closer to the EU. Building good neighborly relations is the only alternative to the region, he said.

In response to a question about the construction of the railway, Minister Avramova commented that after the announcement of the refusal of a contract of the company "GP Group" the procedure for selection of contractor continues and a delay in the construction is not expected.

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