

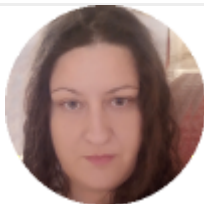


## IPAFF - NEWSLETTER No. 2 - FEBRUARY 2024

As the implementation of IPA Floods and Fires activities is drawing to a close, we resume publication of our newsletter by presenting interviews with national coordinators. In this issue: Interviews with Zorica Markovic (Montenegro) and Kljadi Nikolla (Albania).

Enjoy the reading!

IPA Floods and Fires



### Interview with **Zorica Markovic**

Rescue and Protection Directorate, Ministry of  
Interior, Montenegro  
IPA FF National Coordinator

*IPA floods and fires is a complex program that collaborates with the local authorities of civil protection and other relevant local agencies and institutions and has required a strong commitment to all stakeholders throughout its implementation. Should you compare IPA floods and fires standards with the flood-related work carried out regularly in Montenegro institutions, which aspect of the program do you consider the most relevant or deserving of further study to consolidate the results?*

IPA floods and fires programme is in line with work of Montenegrin respective institutions which is responsible for flood and fires forest prevention, preparedness and response as well as with several projects that is implemented in Montenegro related to implementation of EUFD and flood and forest fires risk reduction. We would like to point out relevance of WP 1.3. Develop procedures and agreements for including early warnings related to floods into the local /central emergency response plans for our

in case of flood emergency and familiarize with existing SOPs while the Training of Trainers project for strengthening the Early Warning – Early Action link trained and exercised participants at local and national level when to comes improving links between early warning and early action. This tailored-made ToT enabled the participants from different Montenegrin institutions (Ministry of the Interior – Rescue and Protection Directorate, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Water Administration, Institute of Hydrometeorology and Seismology and local stakeholders) to improve knowledge and enhance skills to transfer gained knowledge about the EW-EA link related to flood risk in the context of the civil protection / emergency management sector (preparedness and response phases) to other relevant stakeholders especially at local level. In next period, in accordance with received guidelines we will conduct training to other relevant stakeholders, at national and local level.

Procurement of equipment for the development of the EU civil protection module of the type Ground Forest Fires-fighting (GFFF) in Montenegro will improve our capacities for responding to forest fires. Also, trainings regarding the forest fire hazard and risks maps improved GIS skills of employees in relevant national institutions and enabled networking during working on selected pilot area (working on mapping the protecting area of national park Lovcen).

We would like to note that activities related to implementation of EUFD have to be more tailor made for water management agencies and in accordance with national needs and level of realization at the moment of support. It is important that national relevant authorities be include in programme design from beginning. This enable those national priorities to be supported at more appropriate way with high success of implementation (priorities are different among countries). Also, in communication with institutions they asked for concrete assistance, such us support in drafting strategic documents, dedicated study visit, tailor-made training for local and national stakeholders, procurement of equipment (not only for civil protection) and etc.

**Among additional activities, the IPA FF partner from Montenegro requested a national workshop on host nation support. According to your experience, what was the added value of regional activities vs national ones? Which could be the added value of having national stakeholders more aware and ready to receive and deploy cross-border firefighting units, and to cooperate in joint management of flood crises?**

In order to improve knowledge of our national and local stakeholders and share knowledge to important HNS actors, we requested organisation of Host Nation Support training in Montenegro. This training conducted in April 2023 in Podgorica, was very well organized and enabled that approximately 20 participants from relevant institutions (customs, border police, foreign affairs, civil protection/rescue and protection, local decision makers...) have been informed about EU HNS guidelines and their role in

local level, who also can to share information, knowledge and experience to their colleagues in Montenegro and region. This enables that we have relevant stakeholders more aware and ready to implement HNS concept in case of large-scale of emergencies when it is important that teams, equipment, goods and in-kind assistance be deployed and delivered in the short notice. In future we will continue with organisation of our national HNS training in order to establish pool of HNS experts who also will collaborate with colleagues from region. When it comes to HNS, conducting of regional trainings are very important for networking and sharing knowledge and experience.



## Interview with Klajdi Nikolla

Rescue and Protection Directorate, Ministry of Defence –  
National Civil Protection Agency, Albania  
IPA FF National Coordinator

**In November 2022, Albania officially became a participating state in the [EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#) – the EU's disaster risk management system, paving the way to a stronger and better coordinated crisis response in Europe and in the rest of the world.**

**In this framework, how important you deem the improvement of cross-border cooperation with neighbouring countries?**

*The improvement of cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries within the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism holds significant importance for enhancing disaster risk management and crisis response. This collaboration facilitates a more effective and coordinated approach to addressing emergencies, crises, and natural disasters. Here's why cross-border cooperation is crucial:*

### *1. Shared Resources and Expertise:*

*Neighboring countries often face similar geographical, climatic, and environmental challenges. Collaborating allows them to pool resources, share expertise, and exchange best practices. This collective knowledge helps in devising comprehensive strategies for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery.*

### *2. Rapid Response:*

*Disasters, whether natural or man-made, often transcend national boundaries. Quick and coordinated responses are essential to prevent the escalation of a crisis. Cross-border cooperation enables countries to share early warnings, mobilize resources, and deploy assistance swiftly to affected areas, reducing the impact of disasters.*

### *3. Efficient Resource Allocation:*

*By working together, countries can allocate resources more efficiently and avoid duplication of efforts. This ensures that assistance reaches those in need promptly, without wastage of valuable resources.*

### *4. Capacity Building:*

*Collaborating on disaster management encourages the exchange of skills,*

#### 5. Mutual Support:

*During a crisis, neighboring countries can provide mutual support in terms of personnel, equipment, and logistics. This interconnectedness strengthens solidarity and fosters a sense of regional resilience.*

#### 6. Transboundary Hazards:

*Certain hazards, such as transboundary pollution, disease outbreaks, or shared water resources, can affect multiple countries. Effective cooperation is essential to address these challenges collectively and prevent the spread of negative impacts.*

#### 7. Political and Diplomatic Relations:

*Collaborative disaster response can improve diplomatic relations among neighboring countries. Joint efforts showcase unity and a commitment to common goals, fostering goodwill and trust.*

#### 8. Preventing Escalation:

*A disaster in one country can potentially lead to a chain reaction affecting neighboring nations. By working together, countries can mitigate the likelihood of cascading crises and their consequences.*

*In the context of Albania's participation in the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, strengthening cross-border cooperation with neighboring countries amplifies the mechanism's impact. It enhances the sharing of information, resources, and expertise, ultimately contributing to a more resilient and coordinated crisis response not only in Europe but also across the world.*

**The summer of 2023 has unfortunately broken all records in terms of temperatures reached. Weather events have caused fires in Greece and heat waves in Italy. Albania is right in the middle of this picture. Considering that similar extreme situations are likely to become more frequent in next years, what is the relevance at national and local level of the March 2024 IPA FF exercise?**

*The summer of 2023 has brought an alarming trend of record-breaking temperatures, leading to severe weather events like the wildfires in Greece and heatwaves in Italy. Amid these challenging circumstances, Albania has also been affected. As experts predict an increase in the frequency of such extreme situations in the coming years, the significance of the November 2023 IPA FF exercise becomes crucial.*

*This type of exercise holds several key implications:*

*Enhancing National Resilience: The IPA FF exercise provides Albania with a unique opportunity to bolster its overall resilience against the growing threats of wildfires and heatwaves. Through realistic simulations and practice, authorities can better equip themselves to handle the complexities of future crises.*

*Coordination: This exercise promotes collaboration and allows for the fine-tuning of coordination mechanisms among structures of civil protection system. Effective teamwork is essential for ensuring a well-coordinated crisis response, optimizing the distribution of resources, and maximizing the impact of collective efforts.*

*Policy Adaptation: By highlighting gaps in existing policies and procedures, the exercise prompts policymakers to adapt and enhance disaster management*

*Capacity Building: National response teams can refine their skills and gain practical experience during the exercise, thereby strengthening their ability to manage diverse and challenging emergency scenarios effectively.*

*Engagement: Involving all the structures in the IPA FF exercise raises awareness about the importance of preparedness and cultivates a sense of responsibility among everyone. Recognizing that everyone play a pivotal role in effective disaster response and recovery.*

*Resource Allocation: The exercise conducted level helps identify resource gaps and strengths, enabling authorities to distribute resources more effectively during real emergencies.*

*Evacuation and Shelter Plans: Municipalities can assess and refine their evacuation and shelter plans based on the exercise, ensuring that these plans are practical and effective in mitigating the impact of extreme weather events.*

*Rapid Response: Responders can practice and refine swift response techniques, including communication strategies, evacuation procedures, and coordination with neighboring areas. Such training enhances response times and overall effectiveness.*

*Data Collection: By participating in the exercise, authorities gather valuable data that sheds light on vulnerabilities and strengths. This data can contribute to the development of more robust, long-term disaster risk reduction strategies. Given the predicted increase in the frequency of extreme weather events, the November 2023 IPA FF exercise holds immense importance for Albania. It serves as a proactive means for the nation to address the multifaceted challenges posed by wildfires and heatwaves. The exercise's impact spans from the national level, where policies and capacities can be refined, to the local level, where communities and authorities collaboratively build resilience and minimize the impact of forthcoming crises.*

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