

Bulgaria will co-operate with Macedonia and Serbia in environmental protection, the government's press service stated. The Council of Ministers approved the drafts of two documents, which regulate the cooperation of our country with our neighboring countries. The Cabinet approved at yesterday's meeting a draft Agreement between the Ministry of Environment and Waters of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning of the Republic of Macedonia for cooperation in the field of environmental and water protection.

The document identifies the following areas of cooperation: supporting the process of European integration, incl. harmonizing environmental and climate legislation with the *aquis communautaire*, protecting air cleanliness and pollution prevention, water management and conservation, waste management, transboundary transport and soil protection, conservation of natural resources, protected territories, development of management plans, ecological education, overall control activity, incl. and dangerous chemical substances, actions in case of emergency cross-border pollution of the environment, cooperation in the implementation of the rights and obligations arising from the conventions signed by both parties.

The Government has also approved a draft Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation between the Ministry of Environment and Water and the Ministry of Environmental Protection of the Republic of Serbia in the field of environmental protection.

This document also describes the areas of cooperation between the Ministries of the two countries. These include: supporting the process of European integration of the Republic of Serbia; protection of air cleanliness and prevention of pollution; providing expert assistance in the development of strategic regulations for water and wastewater management; cooperation within TWINNING projects in the field of waste water and sludge management; waste management, transboundary transport and soil protection; conservation of natural resources and biodiversity, especially endangered animal and plant species and their habitats; protected areas and Natura 2000 areas; climate change; developing management plans; environmental education; comprehensive control activity, incl. and dangerous chemical substances; actions in case of emergency cross-border pollution of the environment on all components; cooperation in implementing the rights and obligations arising from the conventions signed by both parties; environmental legislation.

Bulgaria's co-operation with Serbia and Macedonia will be carried out by organizing meetings at the level of experts and officials, organizing symposia, conferences, seminars, consultations and trainings on topics of mutual interest, developing and implementing joint projects, exchanging information, adopting agreements and declarations of cooperation in a



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specific areas.

Both documents provide for the development and adoption of a two-year program that includes specific developments in cooperative activities.

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