



## **New solar lighting replaced the old lamps in Vaptsarov Park**

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New solar lighting was installed in N.Y. Vaptsarov Park under the project "Increasing the ability of the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Lyubimets and Zlatograd to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate". 60 items energy-saving ecological lamps replaced the old conventional lighting in the park as a result of the activities that Dimitrovgrad Municipality implemented under the project, the financing of which is provided by the Financial Mechanism of the



European Economic Area 2014-2021, Program "Environmental Protection and Climate Change". This was reported at a closing press conference today by the mayor of the Dimitrovgrad municipality, Mr Ivo Dimov, and Mr Konstantin Konstantinov, a representative of the "Factory for Environmental Initiatives" Association, one of the partners from the non-governmental organizations, part of the project. Konstantinov reported at the press conference the successful implementation of the various activities of the project, realized on the territory of three municipalities.

The total value of the project is BGN 1,025,612.75 (BGN 190,992.92 for the municipality of Dimitrovgrad), the amount of the grant is BGN 968,273.60. The Bulgarian partners of Dimitrovgrad are the municipalities of Zlatograd and Lyubimets, as well as "Factory for Environmental Initiatives" Association and "Economy 2000" Club. On the Norwegian side, the partner is IOWA AS, Oslo.

"The main goal of the project was to increase the ability of the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Lyubimets and Zlatograd to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the changing climate. In this sense, various activities were successfully implemented in several aspects. On the one hand, increasing the capacity of municipal officials to plan and implement actions in the field of mitigation and adaptation to climate change, as well as improving the knowledge and expertise of local communities on climate-related issues. Project management activities have been successfully completed. Local public climate councils were established under activity 2 of the project, which represent a mechanism for the active involvement of civil associations and the private sector in the process of evaluating actions already taken and planning future measures in the field of climate. An innovative practice was introduced in the three municipalities of an institutionalized form of dialogue between municipalities and local communities in the field of local policies and measures for mitigation and adaptation to climate change; improved knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders on climate-related issues; improved capacity of municipal officials to engage and work in partnership with local communities to transition to carbon-neutral and climate-resilient municipalities. As a result of the activity, four training courses in the field of climate were developed and municipal employees and municipal councilors were trained , as well as representatives of local stakeholders on the topics: "Mitigation and adaptation to climate change, incl. European and national policies, program and methodological documents - introductory training", "Integrated municipal planning and preparation of planning documents in the field of climate", "Financing of projects/measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to adapt to climate change" , "Specialized training to acquire technical knowledge and skills for mitigation and adaptation with a special focus on applied good practices from Norway and other countries". A study visit was conducted to Norway to learn about the good practices in climate change mitigation and adaptation implemented by them. A report with good practices was prepared and forums were held to inform about the useful experience. Plans for sustainable energy, climate and adaptation of the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Zlatograd and Lyubimets have been prepared. Climate change mitigation measures have been



developed and implemented in the three municipalities. In the municipality of Dimitrovgrad, this is the replacement of the conventional lighting in "N. Y. Vaptsarov" park with new solar equipment. In the municipality of Zlatograd, 360 composters were purchased to prevent the formation of biodegradable waste, which were provided to individual households, as well as equipment for heating water using renewable energy sources was installed in five kindergartens and one nursery school. In the municipality of Lyubimets, equipment was installed in two kindergartens for heating water using renewable energy sources, and electric bicycles were purchased for the needs of the control activities of the municipal inspectors. Local Climate Awareness Plans have been developed. The result of the implementation of the project activities is an increased capacity of the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Zlatograd and Lyubimets: evaluation of the adopted planning documents and implemented measures aimed at mitigation and adaptation to climate change, planning future actions, taking into account: synergy of measures related with the climate, in all general and sectoral municipal policies; the latest documents at national and European level; good practices from Norway and other countries; to implement concrete climate change mitigation measures in practice; to increase the capacity of local communities and work in partnership with them to transition to carbon-neutral and climate-resilient municipalities. Public awareness plans for mitigation and adaptation to climate change have been developed for the municipalities of Dimitrovgrad, Zlatograd and Lyubimets. A practical tool developed for each municipal administration, allowing in a structured and consistent way to raise public awareness of the challenges and risks posed by climate change and the actions that local communities must take, incl. on an individual level, for mitigation and adaptation to climate change," Konstantin Konstantinov said in his report.

On the spot in the park, the mayor Ivo Dimov showed the new solar lamps and said that the municipality of Dimitrovgrad has started activities on the construction of a new children's playground with ecological materials, financed with its own funds, and in addition to this, two more projects are coming up, as a result of which they will complete renovation of "N.Y. Vaptsarov" park and the existing zoo attached to it. A donation of new stone benches was made by Yazaki Company, as an addition to the renovation of one of Dimitrovgrad's favorite parks. "Thank you for the long-standing good joint partnership with Dimitrovgrad municipality. I hope that the citizens will enjoy using these new benches in the beautiful recreation area," said Mrs Antoaneta Garkova, a representative of the company.





