



EUROPEAN UNION

Delegation of the European Union

Skopje, 29 October 2012

**Closing event of the EU-funded twinning project:
Strengthening the central and local level capacities for
environmental management in the area of air quality
(EU InfoCentre)**

**Speech by
H.E. Mr. Aivo Orav
Head of EU Delegation**

Dear Minister Ademi,

Your Excellency Ambassador Ottman,

Dear Ms. Gjorgeva, Mr. Pietarila,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you today at the closing event of the EU-funded twinning project: Strengthening the capacities for environmental management in the area of air quality.

This twinning project has been a truly successful example of what a twinning project should be:

- It proved that a twinning project is a close partnership between Macedonian and EU-Member States public institutions, in which the commitment of the beneficiary, who is also the driving force of the changes, is vital for its success.
- It attempts to help introduce EU wide best practices in connection with Community legislation and adapt it whenever necessary to the specific national context. It demonstrated that it is not just about replicating a particular Member State's administrative system.
- Sustainability is a fundamental aspect of EU assistance: EU financed projects need to have a lasting effect. This twinning

project has worked hard to ensure sustainability. However, it will now require continuous further efforts on the side of the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to assure that the recommendations of the project will be fully implemented in order to achieve long-term positive results.

It is needless to stress how important the subject of this project is as air pollution affects each and every one of us. Clean air is essential to the health of each individual as well as to the overall environment of the country. What I would like to emphasise is that it requires joint efforts on all levels - national, regional and local - in order to be able to achieve clean air for us and our next generations.

In the latest EU Progress Report it is noted that "... *Preparations in the field of air quality are well underway...*". Hence, we confirmed that the country is continuously making progress in this field. In this context, I would like to strongly encourage you to keep determined to undertake the remaining reforms that are needed. The EU on its side will continue to support the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning to meet the challenges ahead on the country's path towards EU integration.

At the end, let me conclude by thanking all the twinning partners: the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning,

the Finnish Meteorological Institute, the Austrian Environment Agency and the Italian Ministry of Environment, Land and Sea for their commitment, their enthusiasm and the results achieved under this twinning project.

Thank you for your attention!