

On November **13, 14 and 15, 2019**, the National Association of the Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB) has held in Sofia the XI National conference of the Programmes and Projects Experts in the Municipalities, attended by over 150 representatives of the newly elected municipal authorities in the country. Official guests at the opening session were Mrs. Jo Govaerts - representative of the European Commission’s Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO), Mrs. Denitsa Nikolova - Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Public Works and Mr. Ivan Ivanov - Director of the "Central Coordination Unit" Directorate at the Council of Ministers and Head of the National Focal Point for EEA & Norway grants.

The agenda of the conference included a special thematic session on the use of the European Economic Area Financial Mechanism in Bulgaria. The general information on this topic was presented by Mrs. Dobrinka Krasteva - Head of Department of the National Focal Point and was followed by more detailed presentations on some of the programme operators. Mrs. Tzvetana Guerdjikova - Head of the Programme Operator of the Programme „Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups ", introduced the audience to the large opportunities provided by this particular Programme for the financial support of municipal projects.

The impact of the programme „Local Development, Poverty Reduction and Enhanced Inclusion of Vulnerable Groups "was also underlined in the report of Mrs. Silvia Georgieva - Executive Director of the NAMRB. When presenting the projects currently administrated by the NAMRB, she specifically emphasized the importance of the Project „Grow through Activating Local Potential - GALOP" financed by the Programme and implemented by the NAMRB in partnership with the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS).