

## Finnish Village to Open in Mariovo Region

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Source: Macedonian daily Dnevnik Translated by UMD Staff The local authorities will lease three abandoned buildings in the village of Manastir to a firm that will remodel them into tourist facilities for Finnish clientele.

Finnish and Macedonian businessmen and the mayor of Prilep signed a cooperation agreement on the construction of a Finnish tourist village in Mariovo. Impressed by the clean environment and unspoiled nature, the Finns want to turn the region into a popular destination for countryside tourism. The investors are putting in some 50,000 euros for the remodeling of the village, which they will then revert to its authentic architecture. There are also ideas about setting up Finnish tree houses. The firm that will undertake the reconstruction, Life Style, is already fully operational.

What we will offer to Finnish tourists is pristine nature and a picturesque landscape, say Zivko and Rubin Markoski, Prilep natives, now living in Finland. They are the instigators of this project, which they are undertaking with their partner Hari Lehvonen.

The city council started this initiative for the revitalization of the Mariovo region. The property of former inhabitants, who have given their property to the state, will be used for construction of buildings to house various firms, NGOs, and the likes.

Some of the houses will be donated to foreign embassies and representations. We have already symbolically given the keys to several of them. Consideration is primarily given to projects with sustainable economic development plans, says Risteski. Construction will include some 100 abandoned households, 7 school buildings, totaling 1,200 square meters in the villages Vitoliste, Manastir, Polciste, and Dunje, as well as other objects. The additional construction of two hydroelectric power plants on the Crna River will make Mariovo an even more lucrative investment location.

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