

PRESS RELEASE
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Great acceptance of the first training course of the Erasmus+ FOREST-IN project

Participants value basic technical training as a tool to ensure generational succession in small private forests properties

More than 30 people participated last week in the first training course of the FOREST-IN project, which was carried out in the Portuguese town of Albergaria-a-Velha in the facilities of UNIMADEIRAS (entity member of this Erasmus+ project) and in several places of the forest region in which it is located.

Throughout the week the participants, mostly small forest owners, had the opportunity to train in sustainable forest management, conservation and biodiversity, monitoring and evaluation of maintenance work and management of their holdings, as well as good practices and safety at work.

Some other aspects with which the participants also had the opportunity to familiarize themselves were forestry and spatial planning (to be integrated into their routines and management habits). All this, not only through the theoretical sessions, but also with numerous field activities and discussion and work sessions that resulted in a "very enriching" exchange of experiences, in the words of the participants themselves.

The programming of a large part of the course was supervised by the project partners most linked to GFS: FSC International (through its Portuguese delegation) and PEFC Spain. The Universidade de Aveiro and UNIMADEIRAS, as host, also contributed to the programming of the more technical part of the contents. After the evaluation sessions of this first course, the organisers noted that, despite being a very heterogeneous group (with a wide range of ages and training), the participants particularly valued not only the theoretical and practical training received, but also the generation of a wide space for the exchange of "very enriching" experiences.

"The organisers point out that in this type of activity it was not only a question of providing training, but also of teaching how to think and plan" and they have highlighted as particularly relevant the meeting point between technicians and owners, "in order to understand each other's role and functions". It has also served to confirm how in many cases the older forest owners need to hire technical staff not specially qualified and

have encountered certain difficulties in finding professionals with minimal training. In addition, "in many cases, generational change in small private properties falls into the hands of untrained young people, which in some cases ends up leading to the abandonment of the activity and the management of those lands. Precisely this opportunity to train in a few minimums and awaken the interest of the youngest was another of the most valued aspects of the course taught.

From 19 to 23 November, the FOREST-IN project plans to organise another course of similar characteristics and content at the Centre for Forest Operations and Techniques (COTF) in Lousã (Portugal) and in the spring it will be the Galician Forestry Association that organises the third of these activities.

About FOREST-IN project

The FOREST-IN project aims to promote good practices and forestry education through workshops and international technical visits, tutorials and the creation of a mobile application aimed at helping in the decision-making process for sustainable forest management. All this integrated in a concerted strategy that involves the forest community and the general public. The pedagogical techniques will be innovative and personalized for the recipients of the project, and will be based on a model of horizontal and participatory learning.

FOREST-IN has been established as an international strategic alliance for forestry education and is funded by the Erasmus + Program, the main financial mechanism of the European Commission in the field of Education. The coordinator of this project is the University of Aveiro (Portugal), with these partners: Cesefor Foundation (Spain), PEFC Spain, FSC International, Unimadeiras (Portugal), the Forest Association of Galicia (Spain) and the Forest Model Association of the Provence (France).