



FORESTERRA Dissemination Workshop Sofia, Bulgaria, 27-28 May 2014

The FORESTERRA Dissemination Workshop was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, on 27-28 May 2014. It was attended by 32 people from 7 different countries from the Balkan Peninsula and Middle East (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FRY Macedonia, Serbia and Jordan). Representatives of the Lead Partner MINECO, European Forest Institute, ISA / CEABN Portugal and the European Commission also took part in the workshop. The workshop was organized in order to strengthen the dissemination among EU Member States, MPCs, and the new EU Member and Candidate States. The main goals were to identify national inputs and specific national channels for better dissemination in single countries, which will contribute to maintaining the Communication Plan up to date and to explore the possibilities for participation of partners from new countries in the joint activities

The workshop was opened by David González as FORESTERRA Coordinator who thanked the participants for attending the meeting. Welcome speech was presented by Dipl. Eng. Grigor Gogov, Executive Director who stressed on the importance of more close cooperation among the countries on the Balkan Peninsula and Middle East regarding protection of forests and development of forest science and research. The participants were welcomed also by Prof. Hristo Tsakov, Director of the Forest Research Institute and Assoc. Prof. Petar Zhelev, Vice rector of the University of Forestry. Both expressed the interest of their organizations to participate more actively in joint activities with other Mediterranean scientific organizations.

During the first session Mr. David González presented the reasons for the establishment of FORESTERRA project and gave information about its general and specific goals, structure, achieved and expected results and participating partners. He also informed of the results and the selected proposals in the FORESTERRA Call for Proposals, after the final decision on networking activities and the first stage of assessment of collaborative projects. The presentation was followed by discussions on possibilities for new countries to join the project and the opportunities for future collaboration. The second presentation made by Dr. Francisco Rego, who informed about the proposal prepared by a team from the "Instituto Superior de Agronomia" for FORESTERRA Networking Action: "Global Change Impacts on Wildland Fire Behaviour and Uses in Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems, towards a « wall less » Mediterranean Wildland Fire Laboratory – **MedWildFireLab**". Dr. Gabina and Dr. Denitsa Pandeva presented WP7 "Spreading excellence", its objectives, target groups, and activities for dissemination and knowledge transfer performed up to now. In implementation Task 7.2 "Strengthening the dissemination among EU Member States, MPCs, and the new EU Member and Candidate States" the current international workshop was organized.

The second session was devoted to presentations by the invited countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FRY Macedonia, Serbia and Jordan) that gave information on the existing

scientific and research potential and on the financial possibilities with regard to investigations in the field of forests in their counties. The presentations were prepared according to a template sent previously in which information was requested on basic forest data, structure of forest administration and other potential financing organizations, legal framework and existing forest scientific and educational institutions.

In the course of the discussions on the materials presented, the following main problems were pointed out:

- In most of the Balkan countries forests and the forest sector are not a priority in the national policies. This leads to forestry being neglected in comparison with other economic sectors.
- It is very difficult to find funding for forest scientific and research activities at national level.
- Some of the Balkan countries already experience lack of human resources and potential in forest science and research.
- Most of the participants expressed their opinion that one way to address the above problems would be to establish better cooperation at regional and international level and to be more competitive in searching for appropriate EU funding programmes.

At the third session Mr. Doru Irimie presented the opportunities for the countries from the Balkan Peninsula to participate in projects under Horizon 2020 and other funding EU programmes. He pointed out that forestry had cross-points with many EU policies and was an important part of the EU countries' economies and gave detailed information on the on-going research projects. He emphasized international Cooperation under Horizon 2020 open to participation from across the world. Funding could be received by:

- Member States (including overseas departments and overseas territories)
- Associated Countries (e.g. Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Israel, Serbia, Turkey,
- Exhaustive list of countries in annex to work programme (BRIC no longer in this list, but Mediterranean countries e.g. Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and Mediterranean climate-like countries, e.g. Chile - yes)

The session was closed with discussion on common points of interest and possibilities for joint projects and synergies between FORESTERRA and the guest countries/institutions at the workshop, etc facilitated by, Inazio Martínez, EFIMED. Inazio started his presentation doing a brainstorming focused on the European Forests keywords for each one of the invited countries. Then, he connected the discussion to his preliminary presentation showing the paradoxes and challenges which faced the Mediterranean forests. He emphasized the link between forestry research and management of resources.

A technical visit near Sofia, to the nature and historic site “Tsari Mali grad” was organised in the afternoon of the 28th.





