

SILVA Network General Assembly 1999

The SILVA Network General Assembly 1999 will be held as a part of an international conference on "Forestry education and research in the context of environmental and development problems: strategies for XXI century", in Lviv, Ukraine.

The Conference will take place September 12 - 19, 1999 and the SILVA Network General Assembly is scheduled for Tuesday 14 September, 1999.

In addition to the General Assembly, the SILVA Network will organise a session on Forestry curriculum development during the Conference. It will take place on Monday, 13 September.

This year the most important issues for the General Assembly will be the approval of procedural rules that have been discussed during this academic year and the acceptance of new members. The SILVA Network annual report will be reviewed and approved. Current progress of various projects and the financial situation of the SILVA Network will be introduced. An agenda will be sent later.

The plenary sessions of the Conference will take place in University buildings downtown. Accommodations for participants will be at hotels near the conference venue. Participants should pay the hotel directly for their accommodation.

Ukraine requires visas from citizens of certain countries. The organising committee will send a letter invitation to participants after the receipt of the registration form. Visas will be granted by Ukrainian embassies in respective countries.

The Conference participants should pay a registration fee of 350 USD before June 1 (400 USD after June 1). The payment will include the opening reception and the keynote address, the publication of the Conference materials, proceedings, conference sessions, meals, transportation and excursion service. SILVA Network members, however, are given an opportunity to pay a fee of 200 USD, entitling them to participation for two days only.

For further information please do not hesitate to contact Anne Pitkänen at the SILVA Network office (silva.network@joensuu.fi) or the Conference Organising Committee in Lviv (edufor21@forest.lviv.ua).

The town of Lviv is located in the western part of Ukraine, near the Polish border.

Teaching module "Forestry in Changing Societies in Europe"

Since the last SILVA News in September 1998, the teaching module preparation has advanced considerably. We have now received altogether 25 country reports (AT, AZ, BE, CH, DE, DK, FI, FR, GE, GR, HU, IE, IT, LV, NL, NO, PO, PL, RO, SE, SI, SK, SP, UA and UK) and 5 other papers, which have been reviewed by the coordinating committee members. We are very happy about this success and thank all of the authors for their contributions.

The coordinating committee for the activity has met twice during the academic year. The first meeting took place in November 1998 in Freiburg (DE) and the second one in March 1999 in Florence (IT).

The reports and the reviewing process were discussed in general terms at the first meeting in Freiburg. Problems were identified and some harmonisation of the reports were suggested. After the meeting, a letter was sent to the authors asking them to use commonly accepted classifications for different items of the report (e.g. soil, climate, silvicultural terminology...).

Due to the large number of country reports the study book will consist of nearly 650 pages. This is why the coordinating committee ended up deciding to publish the study book in two parts. Part one will consist of introductory chapters while part two will consist of country reports only. The part two will be published both as a book and as a CD-ROM.

As mentioned before, the teacher's manual will be written with the help of educational specialists. The manual will consist of a chapter on teaching forms and pedagogical models, recommendations for using the material in class as well as recommendations for evaluating the module. A checklist for evaluation and instructions for how to get together with teachers involved in the module will be given at the end of the manual.

All of the material will be published in summer 1999.

The implementation of the teaching module was extensively discussed at the Florence meeting. All the institutions that are represented in the co-ordinating committee are prepared to offer the course on "Forestry in Changing Societies in Europe" to their students beginning with academic year 1999-2000. We hope that more universities will offer the course since it would be very important for all European forestry students to acquire appropriate information on the forestry situation around

Europe.

Call for participation

We are hereby inviting all of the SILVA Network member universities to offer the course on "Forestry in Changing Societies in Europe" to their students individually or within a consortium of universities. At this stage we would like to bring together all of the university teachers who are interested in the module and who would like to offer the course during the academic year 1999-2000. In case you are interested in participating in the module implementation, please send your contact information to the SILVA Network office by 1 May 1999.

We consider this an important opportunity for European forestry students to learn about forestry outside their own environment and we would be very happy to see institutions participating in the project.

EU-Canada cooperation

In May 1998 the SILVA Network took the initiative to prepare a proposal "Human dimensions in 21st century forestry" for the DG XXII (Education, Training and Youth) for the EU-Canada cooperation programme. The purpose of the proposal is to develop a network of Canadian and European institutions involved in Forestry education, requiring student exchange, internships, reciprocal work training and joint international Forestry courses.

A proposal was successful and an official recognition was received at the end of 1998. The European Agreement has been signed by the European Commission (DG22) and by the University of Joensuu in December, 1998.

The first programme year has started in October 1998 and will end in September 1999. The meeting for launching the programme will be held in Freiburg (DE), 22-24 April, 1999. The institutions involved in the programme are the following:

In Europe:

University of Joensuu (co-ordinator)

University of Aberdeen (UK)

Albert-Ludwig University Freiburg (DE)

Gembloux Agricultural University (BE)

University of Helsinki (FI)

University of Padova (IT)

Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences (SE)

Agricultural University of Vienna (AT)

Wageningen Agricultural University (NL)

University of Wales (UK)

In Canada:

University of Toronto (co-ordinator)

University of British Columbia

University of New Brunswick

University of Quebec

For more information, please contact the SILVA Network office (silva.network@joensuu.fi)

Master's Degree in European Forestry

- A joint proposal of six European Universities

The preparatory committee for the Masters Degree in European Forestry - Programme met once during the academic year 1998-1999. The meeting took place in Lisbon, in February 1999.

At the meeting a new scheme for the programme organisation was brought up. According to it, the degree would be awarded jointly by all six universities. It would give a student a possibility to register and carry out parts of the programme at any of the participating universities. The proposal was considered as a very interesting one and worth further consideration. For this reason the starting of the Programme was postponed to September 2000.

The next meeting of the working group will be held in June 1999 in Edinburgh.

Personnel changes

During the last year a few changes in SILVA Network representatives have occurred.

Wageningen Agricultural University

Our long term President Pieter Schmidt has left WAU and works now in Cameroon. The official SILVA Network representative of the Wageningen Agricultural University is Ir. Frits Staudt.

Technical University of Lisbon

Professor Angelo Carvalho Oliveira is back from sabbatical.

University of Louvain-la-Neuve

Professor P. André has retired and the SILVA Network representative is now Prof. Freddy Devillez.

ETH Zürich

The official SILVA Network representative is Mr. Markus Sieber.

University of Helsinki

The SILVA Network representatives are Prof. Dr. Pentti Räsänen and Mr. Martti Makkonen .

University of Göttingen

Mrs Sems Colak has taken over Mrs Jeannie Wirkner's work. The new Student Exchange Programs Coordinator is Mrs. Prof. Dr. Andrea Polle.

University of Lleida

Prof. Dr. Rosario Fanlo has been replaced by prof. Dr. Jordi Voltas and Prof. Dr. Eduardo Rojas.

SILVA Network procedural rules

A draft for SILVA Network procedural rules was circulated among the SILVA Network members in autumn 1998. Since we received very few comments on the proposal, we assume that the draft was considered acceptable.

Since the issue of a membership fee was mostly questioned in comments, we would like to make some reference to it. As everyone knows, there has been no membership fee in the SILVA Network up to now. Mentioning a membership fee in procedural rules, however, does not necessarily mean that one will be adopted, it is more like keeping open an option for the future. Please, keep in mind that the draft procedural rules state that the membership fee will be decided by the General Assembly year by year. The members themselves will clearly continue to decide regarding fees.

Please, remember that these draft rules have not been prepared in order to make the SILVA Network a legal entity but to provide us with some internal guidelines for certain procedures. The practical point of view was kept in mind during the entire planning process and the draft was worked out in cooperation with a professor of public law at the University of Joensuu.

We should be prepared to formalise these rules at the next General Assembly. For this reason we would kindly ask you to bring up the issue at your institution (if you have not yet done it).

If there are issues that your institution is not able to accept, please inform us about them as soon as possible.

DEMETER info

The DEMETER co-ordinating committee meeting took place in Leuven (BE), on 20 February, 1999. The meeting was held to discuss the future of the network. A SWOT analysis was carried out in order to map out its future. The main results of the analysis are presented in table 1.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of the DEMETER Thematic Network

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Matrix approach- Strong secretariat (ICA)- Grassroot involvement	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of visibility- Complexity of activities- Large number of activities
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Take account of changing needs in curriculum development- Linkages to outside	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Are we being too ambitious?- Funding

The DEMETER as a project is coming to an end in September, 1999. A SOCRATES II Programme will be launched in January 2000. ICA will no longer hold the contract for Socrates II, instead it will be held by a university on behalf of the Thematic Network. If we want to lead DEMETER in SOCRATES II, we must be prepared to show an expression of interest by November 15, 1999. It would again be necessary for all universities to express an interest in the network. A full proposal should then be submitted to the Commission in March-April, 2000.

The ending of DEMETER in August, 1999 and the submission of a new proposal in April, 2000 leaves us with a gap of one year. At the beginning of April this year there will probably be proposals for securing funding for this year. Dissemination and consolidation will probably characterise activities of that year. The SILVA Network has proposed to organise activities seeking to ensure the quality of higher forestry education.