

SILVA Network Annual Conference and General Assembly

**2 - 5 July 1998
Joensuu, Finland**

The SILVA Network Annual Conference was held at the University of Joensuu, 2-5 July 1998. 34 representatives from 24 institutions in 17 countries (AT, BE, CH, CZ, DK, DE, ES, FIN, FR, NL, NO, PL, RU, RO, SE, SK and UK) participated in the Conference. The SILVA Network General Assembly was held on 2 July, parallel to the Annual Conference.

Activities of the academic year 1997-98: The teaching module, the Masters Degree programme in European Forestry and the proposal for the EU-Canada cooperation are presented in more detail elsewhere in this newsletter.

The financial situation of the SILVA Network was presented during the Assembly. The DEMETER funds are declining and it is no more possible to cover all the expenses of the meetings with these funds. The member universities must prepare themselves to cover at least part of the expenses of their representatives participating in the SILVA Network activities.

Procedural rules: A proposal for the procedural rules was prepared at the University of Joensuu. The proposal was thoroughly considered at the Assembly. Several comments were made and recommendations given. The revised proposal has been sent to the SILVA Network representatives at member institutions for further comments. The discussion will then be continued at the General Assembly next year.

Future activities: Since the three- year period of the DEMETER Thematic Network is coming to an end, new ideas for future activities are needed. The following themes were proposed at the Assembly:

- the new role of forestry sciences
- the development of European model forests
- the role of practical period in curricula
- the educational systems etc. in the countries joining the EU
- joint research programmes
- continuing education programmes
- looking into an anglo-american way of teaching forestry (includes more social components than traditionally in Europe)
- success control of the teaching module
- the quality of higher forestry education

Proposals for future activities are most welcome.

Teaching module "Forestry in Changing Societies in Europe"

During the first year of the project following activities have been realized:

- Setting up a coordinating committee, consisting of representatives of five European universities from five countries (DE, ES, FIN, IT, NL)
- 3 meetings of the committee (Leuven, Barcelona, Joensuu)
- Organisation of a European workshop on 2-5 July 1998 in Joensuu (FIN) with 34 participants from 17 countries
- Identifying contributors in European universities and other institutions

The workshop was organised in order to discuss the European dimension in Higher Forestry Education. The two aspects of the teaching module, study material and teaching forms, were carefully examined.

In thorough discussions at the workshop the need for this kind of teaching module became evident. Global changes in the social and natural environment of forests and forestry together with changes within forestry require new types of foresters that understand the complex relationships between forestry and society and are both intercultural and highly communicative.

During the first day of the workshop, the focus was on the study material, whereas the second day was dedicated to the teaching forms. As decided earlier, part of the study material will consist of national forestry information that will be provided by European universities giving higher Forestry Education. Two precursory country reports were reviewed and discussed at the workshop in order to define the final form of the country report.

In addition to the national forestry information, the study material will offer students a global overview of European Forests, information on the EU and the forests and an insight into the main issues of forestry on continental scale. A chapter on theories of societal change will be included. It was agreed not to restrict the national forestry information to the EU and ETA countries only. The invitation to write the country report has been sent to 21 universities in Europe. All the reports should be available for the reviewers by the end of September 1998.

On the second day of the workshop, the teaching approaches were considered. Two educational specialists from the University of Joensuu took part in the discussion. Four examples of teaching forms were introduced and

options discussed.

The diversity among European Universities makes it impossible to determine only one way to offer the course. However, approaches such as problem oriented course (POC) will be highly recommended in order to support a European dimension to forestry education. A book of teaching approaches will be published in order to give recommendations to teachers. The book will be written with the help of educational specialists. All the material will be ready to be published in the DEMETER series in June 1999. It will be available to all contributors.

The structure of implementation of the teaching module still needs careful planning. Universities are traditionally inflexible organisations and in most cases teaching forms and curricula are not decided by faculties or by smaller units individually. However, an effort to organise a new course including new teaching methods will be valuable in improving the quality of higher Forestry education in Europe.

Proposal for the EU-Canada cooperation

In May 1998 The SILVA Network took the initiative to prepare a proposal for the DG XXII (Education, Training and Youth) for the EU-Canada cooperation in order 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. The goal is to improve the professional education of forest resource managers and to increase the international mobility of forestry graduates. Building on existing links already established by many of the partners, the focus will be on integrating human dimensions and interactions into forestry education programmes of the future.

The proposal has been designed to benefit students and faculties by providing a forum for joint development of innovative courses and practical training programmes that incorporate new approaches to forestry education in a cooperative international environment.

The first objective of the proposal is to restore the balance of student mobility and transfer between institutions easterly rather than westerly across the Atlantic, as was prevalent in the past. The other objective is to develop a series of intensive, specialised courses dealing with international forestry issues that are open to students from the participating institutions.

The joint selection process of projects should be completed in October 1998.

Masters Degree Programme in European Forestry

- A joint proposal of six European Universities

"Masters degree in European Forestry" is a new programme prepared jointly by the University of Joensuu, the University of Aberdeen, the University of Edinburgh, The Technical University of Lisbon, The BOKU Vienna and the Wageningen Agricultural University. In its first phase the program will be run at three European universities with students moving from one institution to another within the program. The first students should start in the programme in autumn 1999.

Background: Developments in the management and conservation of, as well as the industrial and social pressures on, the forest resources in Europe are making increasing demands for knowledge of both the political and technical structure of forests. In addition these forests, and the decisions made about them, have to be understood within the social context in which they occur at a community, national and international level. This understanding is required not only by people in the forestry profession itself but by those concerned with conservation and biodiversity as well as those involved in policy making, strategic planning and administration.

This MSc Programme addresses these issues by bringing together a number of leading European forestry universities to offer an integrated collaborative degree which enables students to gain a proper European perspective

This proposal originated a few years ago in the ERASMUS-SILVA-Network. Although the programme will start with three universities as a course integrated in the regular curriculum of each participating institute, the intention is that it will be reformulated as soon as possible as an integrated course standing on its own and that other European forestry universities will be involved in the programme.

Objectives: The course aims to provide the knowledge required to undertake the management and strategic planning of the European forest resource. Specifically it will provide students with: an understanding of the nature, extent and variation of the European forest resource and the appropriate techniques to evaluate and utilise that resource for multiple uses, an understanding of the

constraints and opportunities acting on forestry policy and planning at national and international level, recognition of the importance of a managed forestry estate and a sustained flow of goods and services from the forest, an appreciation of the need for forest conservation, recreation, the management of wildlife and watersheds and their relationships with each other as well as the other demands made on the forest.

Potential Students: The course will be particularly attractive to:

- forestry graduates from European countries who wish to specialise in national and international management and policy
- students from other related disciplines such as ecology, botany, agriculture or resource management who wish to have an understanding of forestry in Europe and
- those interested in the administration and planning of forest resources

Language of Instruction It is expected that students will be able to receive instruction in both English and at least one other language of a participating university. The common language of the programme and that in which the POCourse will be conducted will be English.

Structure The MSc in European Forestry will have a similar structure as existing MSc programmes at the participating universities, combining taught and research components. It will be of twelve months duration.

The taught component will consist of two elements - the common core and the coursework:

- Common Core: - Introductory course (home university)
- Introduction to Forestry in Europe (one of the participating universities; in rotation)
 - Problem oriented course (one of the participating universities; in rotation)

Coursework: This component will be taken at the Home University. It consists of courses provided by the Home University (a university where the student enrolls in).

The Research component will consist of an individual study project on subject approved by the Steering Committee and the organising University. The work will be carried out at a foreign university.

DEMETER info

The DEMETER co-ordinating meeting was held in Leuven, Belgium on 21 August 1998. It is again time to report on activities of the academic year 1997-98 as well as to provide the financial report of the year. The main activity of the SILVA Network was to prepare the teaching module, which is described earlier in this newsletter. The proceedings of the Wageningen workshop in 1997 were published in the DEMETER series and came out from publisher only couple of weeks ago. It has been widely distributed across Europe; universities, libraries, forestry related organisations etc. have received their copies.

The activities of the coming academic year were discussed and it was agreed to proceed according to the previous plan. All the ongoing activities will be continued and no new activities will be launched. The financial situation of the coming year remains unclear. We will be provided with further information later on this autumn.

The continuation of the DEMETER Thematic Network was discussed. DEMETER is coming to an end in September 1999 and a new SOCRATES Programme will be launched in January 2000. This means at least a 4 month gap in funding of the Thematic Networks. Also the organisation of the Thematic Networks may change. However, these matters remain unclear and more information will be given later this academic year.

BOOK FOR SALE

New Requirements for University Education in Forestry

The proceedings of the Wageningen workshop 1997 have been published in the DEMETER series.

The book consists of two parts:

The *future requirements* with respect to forestry curricula at European universities

Current *Forestry curricula* of 29 European universities

The book has been delivered to the libraries of all ICA, Natura and SILVA Network member universities. Additionally, it has been sent to the SILVA Network representatives at forestry faculties and departments, to all authors and to several

Forestry related organisations.

The book is now for sale for 50 ECU (universities: 30 ECU).

For further information please contact the ICA office
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ICA Annual Conference and General Assembly

**4 - 6 September
1998
Bled, Slovenia**

The ICA Annual Conference and General Assembly were held in September in Bled, Slovenia. The venue of the meeting was Hotel Golf in beautiful Bled. The meeting was hosted by the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana.

Annual Conference 4 September: "Role of Universities in the Agricultural Policy Development"

Several interesting presentations on the EU agricultural policy development, including rural development, were made. It was argued in several speeches that in the future the agricultural sector in Europe will transform from pure food production to more diverse set of income generating activities (including forestry). The role of universities in such development should be mainly advisory.

To develop such a role for the university one must keep in mind the following:

- 1 Automatic absorption of research output will never work, so the universities must be open and communicative in their relation to the society and
- 2 Successful policy advising requires taking into account full range of needs of both decision makers and target groups.

ICA General Assembly 5 September

At the General Assembly the ICA activity report of the Academic year 1997-98 was presented. The two Standing Committees (SILVA Network and IROICA) both reviewed their activities of the year. The financial situation of ICA was considered, two new member institutions were accepted and a new appointment to the Executive Committee was made.

A new Standing Committee was designated. Prof. Brian Dennis, KVL (DK) introduced the EUCROP, a European Network for Crop Science. Like the SILVA Network, it originates from the ERASMUS ICP and is now looking for continuity through ICA.

Next Annual Conference

The next ICA Annual Conference and General Assembly will be held at the Humboldt-University in Berlin 6 - 8 May 1999.

Information regarding ICA can be obtained from the ICA secretariat, ica@agr.kuleuven.ac.be.