

Building Partnership

European Regional Development Fund

PRESS RELEASE

The joint project of the Vértesi Erdő Zrt. and LESY SR, state enterprise, has begun, which aim to renew the beekeeping tradition.

The beekeeping tradition is closely linked to forestry and forestry works.

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„Bees are the children of the forest“ is the motto of cross-border project, which is the result of the joint work of Vértesi Erdő Zrt. and LESY SR, state enterprise - Topolčianky Forestry Branch. “The Hungarian and Slovak foresters for the bees“(SKHU/1601/1.1/002) called project is implemented under the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Program.

Europe is struggling with the loss of beekeeping. Only 60% of the honey consumption is ensured. Local honey is of excellent quality in both Hungary and Slovakia. Previously, forestry had a significant beekeeping activities in both countries LESY SR, s. e. in Topolčianky Forestry held bees until 1991. Nowadays the beekeeping culture and the beekeeping tradition is reduced

The main aim of the project is to preserve, protect and develop the natural and cultural heritage of beekeeping traditions, which are jointly carried out by forest farms, the Slovak Topolčianky forestry holding and Vértesi Erdő Zrt.

The most important targets of the partners: To raise the awareness of young people, to promote apiculture and to increase biodiversity. Renew the tradition of bee-keeping and the processing of apiculture products at forestry and to make better use of the natural and cultural potential of the regions and thus to support the sustainable development of local rural economies. Increase biodiversity in border areas. Strengthen the productivity of agricultural crops and fruit trees through the active work of bee pollination. Support educative work to promote environmentally conscious thinking for youth. Increase the attractiveness of the border region with the help of the aforementioned.

Both on the Slovak and Hungarian sides, an apiary is being made, where visitors can get acquainted with the bees' life and the work of bee-keepers. In Topolčianky there will be a model

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honey processing plant, an open-air museum, a classroom of bee-keeping, while Vértestolna will have a bee products plant and a classroom besides the honey processing plant. The partners will create and maintain bee pastures, and organize study visits. Several beekeeping events are planned (eg Beekeeping day, Day of bee products, etc.).

Foresters will implement the project within 2 years, with a total budget of € 1,093,136.37, of which € 929,165.91 is funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Vértes Erdő Zrt. manages around 46,000 hectares of national forest areas in the Vértes and Gerecse mountains and in the Császár Hills and Bakonyalja regions. The stock of our forest shows a very varied picture from the sub-Mediterranean bushes growing on karstic land of South-Vértes through the beech-wood of the northern sides to the area where flat and hilly country varies giving home to Turkey oak. In the wild, all the five domestic large game species can be found. The diverse flora offers very favorable bee-feeding opportunities, so thus our Forestry Industry in Csákvár founded its own apiary in 2013. With experience and natural resources, we are happily pass on our knowledge to get more people to know the world of beekeeping as widely as possible.

The LESY Slovenskej republiky, štátny podnik (Forests of the Slovak Republic, state enterprise) was established by the decision of the Ministry of Agriculture. The main aim of the state enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic is to manage forest and other property in the ownership of the Slovak Republic. In addition to classical forestry activities, it also performs public activities such as the unique forestry open-air museum in the Vydrovo valley, and among other things, maintains more than 35 forest trails, unique parks in Topoľčianky and Palárikovo. It belongs to organizations that 60 years ago successfully participated in rescuing and breeding European bison (*Bison bonasus*) in Topoľčianky. It implements forestry pedagogy that seeks to raise children to environmental awareness and to acquaint them with the forests, the work of foresters and other natural values.

This project is implemented by the co-financing of the European Regional Development Fund.

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