



Vértési Erdő Zrt.
2800 Tatabánya, Dózsakert u. 63.



Interreg
Slovakia-Hungary



European Regional Development Fund
Building Partnership

PRESS RELEASE

Vértési Erdő Zrt and LESY SR state enterprise have implemented a joint project, within which foresters have restored the original beekeeping traditions

The tradition of beekeeping is an inseparable part of the forestry and the work of foresters.

Tatabánya, 29th of June 2020

"Bees are children of the forest" is the motto of a cross-border project, which is the result of the joint work of Vértési Erdő Zrt. and LESY SR, š. p. OZ Topoľčianky. Project "The Hungarian and Slovak foresters bee project" (SKHU/1601/1.1/002) was implemented within the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Program.

At present, more and more information about bees is now available, but at the same time, these hard-working little insects have never been more endangered than they are today, mainly due to the increased use of chemicals in agriculture. As with all crafts, where demanding, careful and thorough human attention is required, in this sector we are seeing a decline in production worldwide. Honey production is also declining in the EU, but domestic honey is of high quality in both Hungary and Slovakia. In the past, beekeeping was carried out to a significant extent in the forests of forestry institutions on both sides of the border. At OZ Topoľčianky bees were kept until 1991. The culture of beekeeping and the tradition of beekeeping have now shifted to the background in forestry, but the development of this sector is justified in both countries and the cooperation of both companies wanted to support it.

The main goal of the project is the preservation, protection and development of natural and cultural heritage through the joint restoration of beekeeping traditions between OZ Topoľčianky and Vértési Erdő Zrt. The specific objectives of the partners were: raising young people's awareness, providing knowledge about beekeeping and increasing biodiversity. To renew the tradition of beekeeping and processing of beekeeping products in forestry. Make better use of the regions' natural and cultural potential by processing beekeeping products, thus supporting the sustainable development of local economies. Increase the biodiversity of border areas through the development of natural bee pastures. Strengthen the fertility of agricultural crops and fruit trees through the active work of bee families - pollination. To support the educational activities of children's and youth target groups by promoting environmental awareness. The implementation of specific objectives will increase the attractiveness of the border region.

On the Slovak and Hungarian side, model field apiaries have been built, where those interested can observe the life of bees and the work of professional beekeepers. In Topoľčianky and

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Vértestolna, model processing plants for bee products (honey and wax) and eco-processing rooms were built, which will serve to present the processing of beekeeping products. An interesting part of the project is the construction of a unique beekeeping open-air museum in Topolčianky. Both partners established bee pastures on 98 ha of forest-surrounded meadows, on which they planted honey plants suitable for local climatic conditions, which provide bees with natural pasture. The partners also organized a joint successful Hungarian-Slovak study tour. Vértesi Erdő Zrt. organized two beekeeping thematic events, which were attended by more than 250 Slovak and Hungarian children and adults (Beekeeping Day in Császáz and Beekeeping Products Day in Aggostyán). Unfortunately, several similar events in Slovakia have been postponed due to the COVID-19 epidemic. The partners also created 6 new jobs.

Foresters completed the project within 31 months with a total budget of € 1,093,136.37, of which € 929,165.91 was supported by the European Regional Development Fund. In the case of Vértesi Erdő Zrt., the Hungarian State provided 15% of the budget, the forestry joint-stock company did not have to participate in the financing from its own resources. The own contribution of LESY SR was 10% and the contribution of the Slovak Republic was 5%.

Vértesi Erdő Zrt. manages mainly state forests in the Vértes and Gerecse mountains, as well as in Császári-dombság and in the Bakonyalja region, covering an area of about 46,000 hectares. Their forests show a very diverse picture, from the karst shrub forests in southern Vértes through the northern beech sides to the cerines of plains and hills. From the population of wildlife we can find all 5 hoofed game species here. The diverse flora provides very favorable conditions for beekeeping. It is for this reason that in 2013 the forestry company established a beekeeping in Csákvár. Thanks to this experience and suitable natural conditions, they like to pass on their knowledge so that those who are interested can get to know the world of beekeeping as soon as possible.

LESY Slovenskej republiky is a state enterprise and was established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic. It is a state-owned enterprise founded to satisfy public interests. Its main task is the management of forest property as well as other property owned by the Slovak Republic. Within the framework of publicly beneficial activities, besides traditional forestry activities, it manages the unique Open-air Museum of Forestry in Vydrovo, more than 35 forest educational trails, unique parks in Topolčianky and Palárikovo. It is one of the organizations that have successfully participated in the rescue of the European bison and it has been breeding this animal in Topolčianky for almost 60 years. It provides forestry education, by which it endeavours to educate children about the environment and to inform them about the forest, the work of foresters as well as other natural values.

The project is co-funded by the European Union from the European Regional Development Fund.

"The content of this report does not represent the official position of the European Union".

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