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## LESY SR: Foresters Launch Cross-Border Project to Mitigate Climate Change in the Gemer Region

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### Press Release by LESY SR, State Enterprise

LESY SR, State Enterprise, plans to restore old and create new water biotopes to retain water in forests. The plan also includes revitalizing forest meadows and implementing erosion control measures along forest roads. The project aims to showcase effective methods for sustainable land management to mitigate the effects of climate change, with a focus on increasing biodiversity and maintaining forest roads in better condition, reducing water runoff from forests.

In collaboration with Hungarian state foresters from **EGERERDŐ Forestry Zrt. (EGERSKÉ LESY Forestry Co.)**, LESY SR, State Enterprise, has launched the project “*Foresters for Nature and Regions*” (*#foresters4nature*) in the cross-border Gemer region, under the **Interreg Hungary-Slovakia** Programme. As the largest managers of forest biotopes in the region, both entities have committed to being examples of excellence in protecting and maintaining natural values. Through this project (*HUSK/2302/1.2/007*), the foresters aim to enhance environmental protection and demonstrate that forest conservation and enhancement are core priorities of forestry activities.

The planned project budget is €1,182,246.66, of which LESY SR, State Enterprise, is allocated €571,100.04. A total of 80% of the budget (€945,797.32) will be funded by the European Union.

“The main goal of the project is to protect and restore natural forest and meadow biotopes, retain water in the forests of the cross-border region, and implement corrective measures to mitigate the impacts of climate change,” explained Tibor Menyhart, General Director of LESY SR, State Enterprise.

“The Slovak side’s activities will result in the cleaning and revitalization of 1.38 hectares of water areas and the creation of 0.38 hectares of new natural small water biotopes. Additional outcomes will include the revitalization of 79.63 hectares of meadows, which will continue to be sustainably managed, and 12.89 hectares of newly revitalized meadows, an increase compared to the current state. The project will also support the establishment of fruit tree orchards, with 0.40 hectares of old orchards revitalized through supplementary planting and 1.85 hectares of new, mostly linear plantings of native, fruit-bearing trees to enhance biodiversity and enrich meadow ecosystems,” added Vladimír Hlinka, the project’s expert activity leader, organization unit OZ Gemer.



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A major ambition of the project is to promote positive examples of forestry practices through public events, fostering long-term changes in thinking and procedures in forestry and landscape protection. Cross-border collaboration enables an exchange of experiences, showcasing different approaches by partners in Slovakia and Hungary. The results of these efforts will be presented to a professional audience at final public events.

The partners aim to demonstrate ecological and sustainable land management practices that increase biodiversity, protect genetic resources, and ensure water retention through the restoration and creation of water biotopes. By implementing anti-erosion, water retention, and landscape measures, the project contributes to the protection of forest environments for both life and recreation.

The total project budget is €1,182,246.66, with €945,797.32 coming from the ERDF. The budget for lead partner EGERERDŐ Zrt. is €611,146.62, supported by €488,917.29 from the ERDF. LESY SR, State Enterprise, has a budget of €571,100.04, with €456,880.03 from the ERDF, €68,532 from national sources, and €45,688.03 from the enterprise's own resources.

LESY SR, State Enterprise, established by the Slovak Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is the largest forestry entity and forest manager in Slovakia. Its primary goal is to fulfill societal interests, manage forest and other assets owned by the Slovak Republic. In addition to traditional forestry activities, LESY SR, State Enterprise, oversees the Forestry Open-Air Museum in Vydrovo, manages 40 educational trails, and has trained over 400 forest educators to lead environmental education programs focused on building and strengthening connections to nature and forestry work.

[www.interreghusk.eu](http://www.interreghusk.eu)