

Written by Yonko

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A final conference under project "For everyone saved a tree (FOREST)" took place on 19 March 2021 in Sofia. Its motto was 'Engagement of young people in environmental protection actions - local examples and lessons learned'. The conference aimed at popularizing the idea of FOREST project and its results among young people and citizens, organizations and institutions interested in problems of nature conservation.

More than 150 people from Bulgaria and Serbia participated in the conference - representatives of environmental and youth NGOs, scientific and research institutes, public authorities responsible for nature management, forestry states, schools, universities, and other stakeholders. Due to the coronavirus epidemic, the conference was held in a hybrid way - offline at the Best Western Premier Hotel Sofia Airport and online for the participants from Serbia and Botevgrad. The conference hall was decorated with herbariums of forest plants made by youngsters during the project.

Dr. Yonko Dodev (project manager) reported the implemented project activities and outputs achieved. Also, he highlighted the special place that the forest takes in the national identity and culture of Bulgarians. After that, Bulgarian and Serbian experts presented in detail some of the

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main project results:

- Online Joint Database on forest species and ecosystems in the cross-border area between both countries;
- Long-term Strategy for involvement of young people into activities for nature protection;
- Herbariums of forest plants created by Serbian and Bulgarian project participants;
- Assessment of the health condition of representative forest stands on the basis of classical entomological and phytopathological studies;
- Implementation of remote sensing methods for monitoring and analysis of the condition of forest ecosystems using images from satellites and unmanned aerial systems.

Other topics discussed were continuation of the project, future opportunities for inclusion of young people in such initiatives and partnerships. It was underlined that the project helps to build an active civic position among young people and their further involvement in the field of nature protection.

The Conference is implemented under project "For everyone saved a tree (FOREST)". The project is co-funded by EU through the Interreg-IPA CBC Bulgaria–Serbia Programme.

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