



On March 25–26, 2026, the Poznań University of Life Sciences had the pleasure of hosting the international meeting of the Erasmus Forestry Network (ERFONET). Thirty-two participants from 16 countries took part in the meeting, representing 23 Higher Educational Institutions: Salzburg University of Applied Sciences; University of Banja Luka; Mendel University in Brno; Estonian University of Life Sciences; Häme University of Applied Sciences; Karelia University of Applied Sciences; South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Xamk); AgroParisTech; Université de Lorraine; L'Ecole Supérieure du Bois; Les Barres Forestry School; University of Applied Forest Sciences Rottenburg; University of Thessaly; Università degli Studi di Palermo; Van Hall Larenstein; University of Inland Norway; University of Agriculture in Kraków; Poznań University of Life Sciences, Transilvania University of Brasov; University of Belgrade; University of Ljubljana; Universidad Politécnica de Madrid; Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences SLU.



After an official opening with a horn signal played by the „Venator” ensemble and a welcome address by The Dean of Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology, PULS, prof. Dorota Wrońska-Pilarek, PhD, and the Chairman of the Erasmus Forestry Network, Mr. David Sis, the presentation of the host Faculty followed: Vice-Dean of the Faculty, prof. Kinga Stuper-Szablewska, PhD, presented its educational and research activities and scientific, artistic and social activities were presented by students, members of scientific clubs (Koło Leśników i Koło Technologów Drewna) and “Venator” ensemble.



A particularly important element of the program were **presentations of partner universities and new network members**. The following universities presented their activities, teaching offerings, and research areas:

- University of Banja Luka (by Vicedean for science and research, Branislav Cvjetković)
- L'École Supérieure du Bois , (by Flore Lebreton, PhD)
- University of Thessaly, Dept. of Forestry, Wood Science & Design, (by Dr. Prof. Georgios Ntalos)
- University of Ljubljana (by Assist. Prof. Dr. Jure Žigon)
- Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (by Prof.FH Guenter Berger)
- Mendel University in Brno (by Mr. David Sís, International Coordinator)
- Estonian University of Life Sciences (by Jürgen Aosaar, PhD)
- University of Applied Forest Sciences, Rottenburg (by Prof. Dr. Sebastian Hein)
- Häme University of Applied Sciences (by Mr. Antti Sipilä)
- AgroParisTech (by Dr. Paulina Pinto Gonzalez)
- University of Inland Norway (by Mr. Magnar Ole B. Hesjadalen)
- Transilvania University of Brasov (by Mihnea Cățeanu, PhD)
- Università degli Studi di Palermo (by Andrea Laschi, Associate Professor)
- ENSTIB – Université de Lorraine (by Camille Geogel, International Relations officer)
- University of Belgrade, Faculty of Forestry (by Dr. Katarina Lazic)

Presentations included information on very interesting and diversified study programs, with strong interdisciplinary aspect and visible shift towards environmental sciences and circular economy. Decreasing number of students in general is common issue for many partners, and it affects the size of international exchange as well. Internationalization is considered of great importance everywhere, and it is being promoted by many means, but – what Sebastian Hein stressed in his presentation, it demands encouraging “leaving ones comfort zone”.

Many study programs are supplemented by engaging students in various research and social-oriented projects at local level, like pro-environmental actions or supporting regional products development.

Some universities require their students to take part in exchange mobilities before graduation.

Realizing the raising living costs, many of universities provide accommodation and other facilities within their campuses; other means to attract students is rich social and cultural offer or beautiful nature surroundings.

Different academic year organization can be another issue in planning the exchange studies.

All presenters stressed increasing engagement in international research cooperation within multilateral networks, with many projects regarding climate change effects on forest ecosystems, wood resources and environment in general so as developing products and technologies in compliance with circular economy and sustainability rules, often at local level.

ERFONET issues

The meeting also provided an opportunity to discuss the further development of the ERFONET network, opportunities for expanding cooperation, and initiatives supporting student and faculty mobility.

The ERFONET chairman, David Sis from Mendel University of Brno, presented a history of the network development and its recent situation and activity, stressing increasing number of members, scope of activities and importance in broadening and tightening contacts among its members.

Due to the increasing costs of day-to-day operations (including website hosting, IT communication, web security, administrative work, etc.), the basic annual membership fee of EUR 250 was confirmed, as agreed at the previous meeting in Épinal.

It was decided to organize annual on-line fairs on 12th November, 2026 at 1 PM CET and to entrust the organization of the next meeting (17 to 18 March 2027) to the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences in Mikkeli.



The program also included a tour of the Poznań University of Life Sciences campus and a meeting with university authorities, including Vice-Rector Prof. Piotr Ślósarz. Participants had the opportunity to better understand the university's infrastructure and its research and teaching potential.



The day concluded with an official dinner in the Old Town of Poznań, which, in a friendly and informal atmosphere, fostered integration among participants and further discussions about international cooperation.

The second day of the meeting was devoted to a full-day study tour, the aim of which was to present practical aspects of forest management in Poland and meet representatives of the State Forest service and wood industry. The program included:

- a visit to the Meteorite Morasko Nature Reserve, unique site of meteorite craters preserved in soft soils, where nature conservation issues on the outskirts of a large city were discussed with representatives of State Forest service from Regional Directorate of State Forests in Poznań: Ms. Ada Woźniak from RDSF PR department, and Ms. Hanna Haładzińska-Napierała and Mr. Marcin Łąguna from State Forest District Łopuchówko



- a meeting at the Goraj-Zamek – State Forest Promotion Center, during which the principles of forest operation and management in Poland were presented, by hosts: Vice Director of Regional Directorate of State Forest in Piła, Mr. Jacek Zwierzyński, the head of Forest District Potrzebowice – Mr. Łukasz Grupiński, the head of Forest District Krucz, Mr. Jan Filoda, Mrs. Joanna Grupińska – Senior specialist for forest education so as representatives of the PR department of the RDSF in Piła: Mr. Rafał Cieślak (spokesman) and Ms. Agata Walczak



- a drive through the Noteć River Valley and a visit to the Potrzebowice Forest District, where the characteristic features and challenges of one of the largest forest complexes in the country were presented, including aerial forest monitoring presentation by Mr. Przemysław Mumot, Senior Specialist for the State Forest Information System, who also provided exceptional documentation of the visit



- a visit to the Research Station in Rzecin, run by the Poznań University of Life Sciences, where prof. Bogdan Chojnicki, PhD introduced visitors to research program in bioclimatology, regarding water balance , microecological processes and carbon sequestration matters on boggy areas.



- a tour of the STEICO wood processing plant – one of Europe's largest producers of wood fiber insulation materials, guided by Mr. Jarosław Szuta, Head of the Research, Development and Technology Department and Management Board Representative for ISO Management Systems and Ms. Dorota Fuczek, Head of the Research, Development and Technology Laboratory of the Plant.





The ERFONET meeting in Poznań was unique event that demonstrated the enormous potential of international cooperation within the academic community. The intensive program, the high-quality presentations, and the participants' engagement made this a meeting full of inspiration, new ideas, and prospects for the future. We sincerely thank all participants for their attendance, active participation, and the time spent together!

Till the next meeting in Finland!

Poznań, 16th April 2026

Magdalena Zborowska, Tomasz Najgrakowski, Poznań University of Life Sciences

Pictures: Jakub Zubowicz , Tomasz Najgrakowski(PULS)

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Dorota Fuczek, (STEICO)