



## DATGANIAD I'R GWASG/PRESS RELEASE

# Welsh forestry team leads the way on making the most of woodlands across Europe

A ground-breaking 'first' project for Wales is playing a lead role in showing how best forestry practices can help provide jobs and new income across rural Europe, leading Welsh landowners and forestry specialists have been told.

The Woodland Strategy Advisory Panel , which advises Ministers and Forestry Commissioners on the Woodlands for Wales, heard how links across Europe were already paying dividend through shared knowledge and new initiatives.

Forestry Commission Wales is helping point the way to a sustainable future through trees and timber across Italy, Germany, Spain, Poland Slovakia and Wales in the £4 million Robinwood project.

The task for FC Wales, which manages the Welsh Assembly forest, is to bring together woodland management skills and knowledge to help make the most of woodlands in preventing natural disasters, as well as providing new income and business opportunities and protecting the environment.

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Región de Murcia  
Consejería de Medio Ambiente y  
Ordenación del Territorio  
Dirección General del Medio Natural



## 2/ Welsh forestry 'first' leads the way

“It is the first time Wales has been a partner in one of the European Interreg 111c RFO (Regional Framework Operation) projects aimed at bringing partner countries together, fostering cross border work between academics, private business and the public sector,” Robinwood, Wales manager Kim Burnham will tell the committee meeting in Wrexham early in July.

“Sharing information, best practice and new ideas across six member states is already helping ensure a dynamic future for an industry which can provide so many diverse opportunities for job and wealth creation,” he said.

“Timber production, and adding value to that timber within rural communities is of vital importance, but energy from wood fuel, protection of the environment and the increasing use of woodlands for recreation are already giving us new ways of providing rural areas with valuable new income.

“And Wales is proud to be playing a lead role, sharing the skills and knowledge that have been built up by Welsh foresters over the years with our partners in Europe,” he added.

The Welsh strand of the work is pulling together information on how forests in at least three of the countries are looked after now, and how best methods can be used and developed across all six regions.

“We are very pleased to have been given a leading role in this exciting project which will offer real benefits to rural areas across Europe,” said Kim. “The quality of forest management in Wales is internationally recognised, the whole of the Welsh Assembly forest has won certification for its high standard of management.”

Brandenburg, Germany; Liguria, northern Italy; Murcia, southern Spain; Pomorskie, Poland, Wales and Eastern Slovakia have worked in close collaboration on the project

and will continue their co-operation by exchanging details of their own experiences and by working together to define new initiatives.

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### **3/ Welsh forestry 'first' leads the way**

Each of the partners brings specific fields of expertise, current relations and the presence of similar problems. Liguria and Murcia have similar hydrogeological risk factors and are already taking part in a European Union project; Liguria and Brandenburg are well acquainted as members of the same European network (FEDARENE); Brandenburg and Pomoroskie have close contacts; Wales has specialised knowledge in the use of wood for social objectives; eastern Slovakia is characterised by complex hydrological conditions and large areas of woodland.

### **ENDS**

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**Editor's note:** Robinwood is a cross-border European project aimed at identifying how forests, trees and timber across Europe can play a vital role in the revitalisation of rural communities through new business opportunities, flood prevention and wood fuel energy. It is hoped that it will also change political perception of the role woodlands can play in the social and economic future of rural communities and build new links between the partner countries involved.

Robinwood will promote the sustainable development of rural areas and overcome obstacles to progress by creating: a woodland chain process - territorial promotion, marketing - new techniques in forestry development - certification, policy changes, silviculture - hydrogeological improvements - models to prevent instability and reduce risks promotion of wood as a fuel source for energy - new management/technologies.

Analyses, sharing of experiences, the creation of new approaches, pilot projects, the preparation of operational and promotional plans and promotions will be used to achieve these. Direct results will be: workshops, meetings, studies, reports, master plans, promotion campaigns, events, maps, networks, partnerships, surveys and directives. Certain activities will be carried out by means of sub-projects assigned by means of open invitations to tender.