**The State enterprise Forests of the Slovak republic has opened a unique forest school in Levice**

*In Levice on 1 June 2021*

* **Forest school will serve for the children and general public as well guiding by expert staff**
* **School offers learning through experience, forest recognizing, creative work with the natural materials**

The international children day was a symbolic day, when State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak republic has opened a forest school (FS), which is a unique in our territory. Unique project supported by European resources from the Cooperation Program Interreg V – A Slovak republic – Hungary offers learning through experience about forest and forestry. The main though of the project was to increase attraction and thereby increase of the visit rate boundary region with the aim to improve environmental awareness and natural sciences to young generation through learning by professionals – forest educators.

The general director of the State Enterprise Forests of the Slovak republic, Mr. Tomáš Čuka emphasizes: **“The foresters take care of the green wealth. About forestry importance we need to communicate with the public, but no less significant is to show the forester activities to children using understandable way of communication. Just about this we will try to pay attention in the forest school.”**

State enterprise Forests of the Slovak republic thereby wants to develop a services and support ecological tourism as a new, progressive environmental way oftourist industry.The forest school program will be tailored to age categories of children and provided without charge. The mentioned program will be provided for nursery schools, elementary schools and public as well. The forest school premises may be using by schools for educational purposes of nature sciences, workshops and artworks.

Project manager Frantisek Král: **“Just in this we can see a fantastic importance of the Program based on Cooperation Interreg V – A Slovak republic – Hungary, where is supported a renewable of the natural and cultural values thereby exchange of experiences leading to build a friendships and partnerships, what is the motto of the Program.”**

On the Slovakian side was built a unique forest school in Levice, in Somoskő on the Slovakian – Hungarian boundaries was built a visitors centrum and forest school.

A total budget for the project realization was 1 438 788, 96€ (State enterprise forests of the Slovak republic – 723 011, 04€), and from this budget was used total 1 391 541, 19€ (96, 72 %) by both project partners. A project support from European foundation of regional development was 1 182 810, 01 €. On the Slovakian side was refinanced 701 495, 52 € and of this totally 595 000, 00 € for FS building. Besides of that, was financed the other project activities as exchange stay for children, the new forest educators learning, Hungarian forest school excursions, or didactical aids. The project sustainability is 5 years.

The forest school in Levice has its own website (<https://forestschools.eu/>), which provides more information and details. On the website will be available reservation system with the program offer. The programs will be realized with the trained forest educator twice for a week as yet.

For adults will be planed a conversations with professional on forest and environmental sciences. To the future we may consider using the FS premises for other purposes like educational trainings, conferences, and other added activities also for other organizations.

The Forest School in Levice will work based on demonstration activities, practical workshops, tactile and visual examples of surfaces or forest elements samples. The head of the FS Slávka Pavlová updating: **“The children can touch a natural material a work with it. A drawing room is adapted for using of laser shooting range. In the conference room is also possible to learn a natural sciences. Within cognitive room is a forest in the differently forms: the tracks of the forest animals, leafs, collection of beetles and butterflies, cones and plants.”**

The FS premises with its interior useable area more than 1000 m2 creating ideal premises for dioramas, workshops, drawing room, hall of the trees, cognitive and educational room with terrace.

In the exterior is the FS surrounded by the forest garden (mini arboretum), where you can find the main tree species from Slovakian forests, the summer house was built and the area is renewal by informational panels.

In the front of FS you can find a green trail leading visitors to the FS with wooden features for games and relaxing not only for children but also adult visitors. “Forest School OZ Levice” will attract you with its innovative thinking, placed right in the town, in addition the FS will bring the elements of visual observation, cognition and development of practical skills.

