



Paving the way to European Competence Certification

Working in forests and natural environments requires more and more skills and competences to work safely and productive and to meet increasing environmental requirements. This is the common understanding of a group of about 20 organisations from training centres and industry which met in March 2010 in Solsona, Spain, to establish the organisational framework for certification of competences for forestry and environmental work. ENFE supports this initiative which is an important element of the ENFE enterprise development strategy because competence certification needs to be acknowledged on a European level. Forest entrepreneurs are more and more engaged in cross border operations all over Europe. This becomes particularly evident when storm damage in forest requires labour force, and it will increase when the European labour market will open further in 2011.

Certification requires reliable and credible organisational structures. To this end the attendants decided to found the **European Forestry and Environmental Skills Council - EFESC**. EFESC shall become the membership organisation which will develop, maintain and issue skills and competence certificates for a wide range of tasks in forestry and environmental work. The formal founding of the EFESC is planned for autumn 2010. All organisations involved in training and industry representatives will be invited to support the EFESC with their membership.

The first certificate which soon will be issued by the EFESC is based on the **European Chainsaw Standards**, which define the required skills and assessment procedures for chainsaw operators. Supported by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo da Vinci, these standards have already been defined and will be further developed into a real Europe-wide acknowledged certificate.

The second product under the umbrella of EFESC will be the **European Certificate of Competence for Forestry Contractors - ConCert**. Also funded as a Leonardo da Vinci project, ConCert will develop practically tested curricula for entrepreneurial skills in forest operations, and the goal is to certify these with a European standard. Today, training opportunities for entrepreneurs are limited in number and rarely aim at mobility. ConCert will close this gap by introducing new and certified training opportunities in the forest operations sector. Further, this will influence national forestry education systems.

The next steps in the progress of the EFESC are the forming of a legal entity to become operational and getting the support of a broad membership. More information will be available soon on the internet at www.efesc.eu.

For more information please contact
ENFE - European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs
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