



August 2002

# SILVA News

Issued by the SILVA Network ICA Standing Committee for Forestry

## SILVA Network

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The SILVA Network is a non-profit academic organisation concerned with Forestry higher education in Europe. The Network has already 36 active member institutions in 22 European countries and new members are joining the Network annually.

#### The Objectives

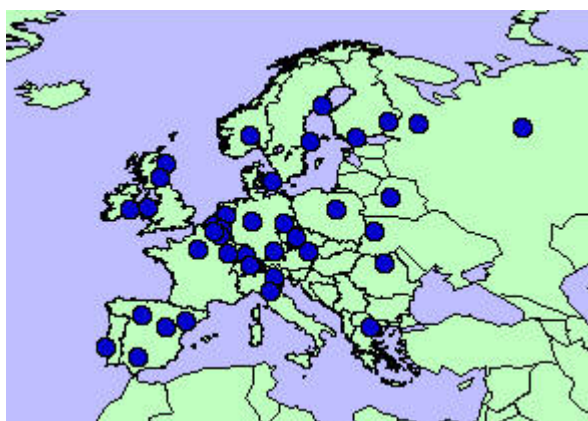
The primary objective of the SILVA Network is to stimulate and facilitate educational co-operation between the member universities. Its activities include student and teacher mobility, as well as the development of joint courses and degree programs. Special emphasis is given to the development and use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) to enhance the development of pan-European Forestry education.

The SILVA Network is also involved in international exchange programmes extending beyond Europe, including Canada and Asia.

#### Standing Committee of ICA

Since 1997 the SILVA Network has been one of the four standing committees of ICA (Interuniversity Consortium of Agricultural and Related Sciences in Europe) which aims at the development of concerted actions in the field of Higher Education and Research in Agricultural and related sciences in the geographic region of Europe. The membership of ICA has given SILVA Network a permanent status.

*The University of Joensuu currently holds the Presidency of the SILVA Network. The President of the Network is Prof. Dr. Paavo Pelkonen and Ms Liisa Tahvanainen is the Secretary General of the SILVA Network.*



The SILVA Network members

## TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION IN FORESTRY EDUCATION

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Following the signing of the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) Declarations and the subsequent meeting in Prague in 2001, the European Ministers responsible for Higher Education have affirmed their intention to develop high education in order to increase efficiency and improve the quality of academic institutions. Even as the Ministers have recognised the national needs and challenges they have, at the same time, shown strong commitment to the joint efforts in the development of educational area in Europe.

During the process the following 6 core areas of development have been defined:

### ***1. Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees***

The aim is to introduce a comprehensive and fair academic and professional recognition of course units, degrees and other awards. Students should be able to use their qualifications, competencies and skills throughout the European University sector.

### ***2. Adoption of a system essentially based on two main cycles***

The aim is to introduce a degree structure based on two cycles (undergraduate/graduate) in the European academic institutions. The programmes leading to a degree may have different orientations and profiles in order to meet the diversity in the needs of students and labour market.

### ***3. Establishment of a system of credits***

The aim is to develop a common credit transfer system such as the ECTS.

### ***4. Promotion of mobility***

The process of European integration is based on people-to-people exchange and on the mobility of students, teachers and researchers. Strong cross-cultural links will be key elements in order to strengthen co-operation between the regions in Europe

### ***5. Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance***

A comprehensive quality assurance system is needed to fulfil the challenges of the four targets above. Universities will be encouraged to assess and disseminate best practices in teaching and research.

### ***6. Promotion of the European dimensions in higher education***

In order to further strengthen the European dimension of higher education the aim is to increase the development of modules, courses and curricula at all levels with “European” content and orientation.

The SILVA-Network as a standing committee of ICA has a great challenge to promote development in the area of academic forestry education in Europe. We have to put strong emphasis on balanced progress in different regions in Europe. Especially to day, every partnership and co-operation between the EU countries and the countries in eastern-central and central Europe is utmost importance.

There is a great difference of forest utilisation from preservation to oversized timber production along the east-west line in Europe. The diversity in values has to be decreased through real discussion about the codes of ethical conduct of sustainable forestry. It is the basic element of the European dimension in forestry for the coming decades.

The annual conference of the SILVA-Network will be held in Warsaw in the beginning of September. The number of participating universities from Eastern Europe will be higher than ever before. The topic of the conference is distance learning. New opportunities for information and communication technology in the context of forestry education will provide greater perspectives for promotion of the European dimension in the academic forestry education in the spirit of the Sorbonne - Bologna - Prague declarations.

**Professor Paavo Pelkonen**  
President of the SILVA Network





## SILVA Network

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University of Joensuu  
Finland

### Secretary General:

Ms Liisa Tahvanainen

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## Membership

Applications for membership should be addressed to *the President of the SILVA Network*. The President or Secretary General will introduce the new membership application *at the Annual Conference*, where they will be approved. *Applicants must invite a SILVA Network representative to visit the applying institution in order to become acquainted with the institution before membership can be approved.* The membership application formula can be found from:

[http://gis.joensuu.fi/silva/int\\_scr.htm](http://gis.joensuu.fi/silva/int_scr.htm)

## SILVA Network General Assembly 2001

The SILVA Network General Assembly 2001 was held in Munich, Germany on 5<sup>th</sup> April, together with the fourth SILVA Network/AFANET workshop on “Workshop on Virtual Forestry Education in Europe”. Eighteen participants representing eleven different universities or organisations attended the Assembly.

As a standing committee of ICA, the SILVA Network has found its niche in the European Academic world. The Network has admitted new members almost every year and has become very active in numerous projects, as well as in associations with ICA, ASEF and AFANET. The ongoing projects of SILVA Network became the leading topics of the General Assembly of 2001, chaired by the SILVA President Prof. Dr. Paavo Pelkonen from the University of Joensuu, Finland.

### Activities

Prof. Dr. Pelkonen presented the main topics of the activities during the academic-year 2000-2001. Secretary General Mr Pekka Äänismaa highlighted briefly the Asia-Europe Forestry Exchange Programme (ASEFOREP) which is funded by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), the MSc European Forestry Programme. The EU-Canada project for co-ordination in higher education and training, the Teaching Module “Forestry in Changing Societies in Europe”, Socrates Intensive Programme on Mountain Forestry and “Virtual European Forestry Faculty VIEFOR” project under AFANet. For more information, please see the special articles in this newsletter.

### Presidency and secretariat

The procedural rules of SILVA Network were approved in General Assembly of 1999. At the same time, the General Assembly gave a four-year mandate for Prof. Paavo Pelkonen to act as a President of SILVA Network. The General Assembly agreed that the secretariat will be located in Joensuu at least until September 2003 and that the current President will continue in his position until that date.

### The Next General Assembly

The next SILVA Network General Assembly will be held at Warsaw Agriculture University, Poland.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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### **SILVA Network General Assembly 2002**

**5<sup>th</sup> of September 2002 in Warsaw Poland**

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The statutory General Assembly of SILVA Network will be held on September 5<sup>th</sup> at Warsaw Agricultural University, Warsaw Poland from 16.00 – 18.00. All SILVA members are warmly welcome to the meeting.

Summons to the meeting and the agenda are sent also via e-mail to all the member institutions. Together with minutes the members were also informed of a suggestion for amendment to the rules. Two membership applications have been received; one from The Institute of Forestry and Landscape Architecture of National Agriculture University, Kyiv, Ukraine and a further application from the Forestry Faculty of the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia - Herzegovina. The Applications will be submitted for approval in the meeting.

### **Schedule of SILVA General Assembly 4th - 7th September 2002**

4th - 5th	Arrival and registration
5th	SILVA Network General Assembly and presentations
6th	Workshop on ICT in Forestry Education
7th	Excursion to experimental forestry station and research centre.
8th	Departure

### **The Fifth SILVA Network European Workshop**

### **VIRTUAL EUROPEAN FORESTRY FACULTY**

### **Information and Communication Technologies in Forestry Education in Europe**

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Under the AFANet Thematic Network Project for Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and the Environment

We have the pleasure of inviting you to *the fifth SILVA Network European workshop*, that will be held on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The venue of the workshop will be Warsaw Agricultural University, Poland. The SILVA Network General Assembly will be held prior to the workshop, on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup>, September.

*The purpose of the workshop is to continue the discussion on Forestry Education in Europe, which was started at the Munich workshop in Spring 2001. The objective of the Warsaw workshop will be to investigate and discuss the perspectives to promote European dimensions in forestry education and furthermore to present successful ICT experiences and systems and to share ideas for concrete co-operation and development actions of VIEFOR.*

*The proceedings of the workshop will be published in December 2002, and will be open for articles of all the attending participants. Participants wishing to submit articles for the proceeding should deliver complete manuscripts preferably in rich text format (.rtf) in electronic form (through mail or disc) and also paper copies by 20<sup>th</sup> of October.*

The participation fee is 400 PLN (115•). Travel expenses, and accommodation are to be paid by the participants.

**For more information contact the SILVA Network Office:  
silva.network@joensuu.fi**



## NEW

### Memorandum of Understanding with IFSA



SILVA Network has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the IFSA, The International Forestry Students Association, aiming to bring students and university teachers more closely together at a pan-European level

## EU-Canada co-operation

The EU-Canada project for co-operation in higher education and training, **Human Dimensions in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Forestry**, was launched in December 1998. The project aims at building functioning network between European and Canadian educational institutions providing forestry education and to establish a balanced exchange of students and staff members. The European consortium consists of 10 Universities. In Canada, the Project has 4 member universities and a partner non-government organisation, Haliburton Forest.

### Aim

The goal is to improve the professional education of forest resource managers and increase the international mobility of forestry graduates. Making students aware of challenges facing forestry in Europe and Canada is one of the common objectives.

### Administration

The University of Joensuu is responsible for the overall administration of the Project in Europe. Every institution recruits students and establishes their own contacts with other institutions.

### Transatlantic Student Mobility

During the fourth (extension) year of the project, which ends in October 2002, 19 student exchanges will have taken place from Europe to Canada. The University of Freiburg will organise an intensive field course in Canada in September 2002 jointly with the University of Toronto in Haliburton Forest, Ontario.

### Project meetings

Prof. Paavo Pelkonen and Mr. Eero Forss from the University of Joensuu participated in the annual EC/Canada/US Consortia Meeting that was held in Münster, Germany, in December 2001. The annual joint consortia meeting of the project was held in Fredericton, New Brunswick, Canada, in June 2002. From Europe, the Universities of Joensuu, Helsinki and Freiburg, and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences participated the meeting. All Canadian partner universities were present. The highlight of the meeting was a one day presentation of the Fundy Model Forest in New Brunswick. Also, a virtual forestry education project VIEFOR (Virtual European Forestry Faculty) and a computer based examination platform (Exam AQUARIUM) were presented.

### Future of the co-operation

The project was originally scheduled to end in October 2001. However, an extension year was granted for both consortia. For the European consortium, the European Commission made available the funds that had been left unused during the original project period. It has been decided that a new cooperation will be developed with a new partner structure, which will include institutions from the US. As the new coordinators in Canada and Europe will act the Universities of New Brunswick and Freiburg. The application is due in the spring 2003.

For more information, please contact the SILVA Network Office or see the project homepage at [http://gis.joensuu.fi/eu\\_canada](http://gis.joensuu.fi/eu_canada).

# ASEFOREP

## The Asia-Europe Forestry Exchange Programme

**The Asia-Europe Forestry Exchange Programme (ASEFOREP) is a collaborative exchange programme between Asian and European educational institutions that are committed to international people-to-people exchange. The programme is funded by the Asian-Europe Foundation.**

### Student and teacher Exchange

The programme started in September 2000. By now 18 European students and 9 Asian students have participated in the program. Besides student exchange the first teachers from Europe to Asia (3) and also from Asia to Europe (1) travelled to give lectures during the academic year 2001-2002.

### The Annual Meeting 2002

The last Annual Meeting of ASEFOREP was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on 22-23 March 2002. The main issue of the meeting was quality assurance of exchanges. From Europe, the Universities of Joensuu and Florence, Technical University Munich and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences participated the meeting. The next meetings will be held in Umeå, Sweden, in March 2003 and in Bogor, Indonesia, in 2004.



### The Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding has been circulated among the original partners for signing, which will be completed in the near future. For the new partners “an appendix MoU” will be soon sent for signing together with the original MoU as a reference. University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), The Philippines, has decided not to sign the Memorandum of Understanding, and is thus currently not an active member and can not participate the exchanges.

## The Members

The ASEFOREP program already has 13 active members:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Asia:</b>   | <b>Europe:</b>   |
| * Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Faculty of Forestry, Malaysia                   | * University of Agricultural Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria                                      |
| * Asia Pacific Association of Forest Research Institutes (APAFRI), Malaysia        | * University of Florence, Institute for Forest Management and Technology (DISTAF), Florence, Italy |
| * Hokkaido University Forests (HUF), Japan   | * University of Joensuu, Finland   |
| * The Northwest Sci-Tech University of Agriculture and Forestry (NWSUAF), PR China | * <i>University of Lleida (ETSEA), Spain</i>   |
| * The Northeast forestry University (NEFU), PR China                               | * <i>Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Sweden</i>                                 |
| * Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia   | * <i>Technical University Munich (TUM)</i>   |
| * Kasetsart University, Thailand   |  |

In Addition, Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) is participating the activities of ASEFOREP.



## AFANET INFO

The EU Socrates Thematic Network for Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and the Environment (AFANet), aims to develop a European dimension to education and co-operation at universities and colleges in Europe which offer degree programmes in agriculture, forestry, aquaculture and environmental fields.



### The Program continues

At the end of August 1999 the first three-year phase of the AFANet Programme was successfully concluded. In March 2000 AFANet applied for and received outline acceptance of funding for a three year programme (2000 - 03) under SOCRATES II. AFANet has recently been informed that it will receive funding for the third and final year (2002-03) of this programme. Mr. Simon Heath, University of Aberdeen, has been responsible for the co-ordination of the Network. However, as a consequence of the University of Aberdeen giving up the contract after the second project year, a new co-ordinating institution is being negotiated. Four institutions have expressed an initial interest in becoming the Lead Institution for AFANet.

### The funding of the project

The funding from DG Education and Culture for AFANet beyond the contract 2002-03 is not guaranteed. It would be appropriate for AFANet to apply for a *Dissemination of Results contract* for the year 2003-04 and there is the expectation that AFANet could apply for a further three year programme starting in 2004-05. **The application for the Dissemination of Results will have to be made by 1 November 2002.**

See the AFANet Web site at <http://www.afanet.info/> for further information.

## ICA Update

On 12 and 13 September 2002 ICA (Interuniversity Consortium for Higher Agricultural Education and Related Sciences) will organise its Annual Conference with the theme "*Harmonization in European Higher Agricultural Education: Dream or nightmare?*". The Conference will be jointly organised with ECHAE (European Conference on Higher Agricultural Education). At the conference the consequences of the trend towards harmonisation for the area of agricultural and related sciences will be analyzed and discussed. We will critically consider whether harmonisation is indeed the dream for all of us because it opens up major opportunities to modernise our programmes, to increase the attractiveness of our institutions and to stimulate inter-European co-operation, or that these new developments, and in particular the quality assurance systems, may form a new extra burden in the life of our lecturers and therefore threaten to become a nightmare. The target audience for the conference are administrators of Higher Education institutes, policy makers and educational specialists.

On the day after the Conference, ICA will have its General Assembly. The Conference and General Assembly will be held in Heraklion, Crete, Greece where the Technological Education Institute (TEI) of Crete will be the host organisation.

### ICA General Assembly 2002

Information about the programme and registration can be obtained through the website <http://echae6.steg.teiher.gr>

# The MSc European Forestry started in January 2002

Eleven students from 6 different countries started in the MSc EF Programme in January 2002. After the first six months of the Programme the students give it a resounding seal of approval.

## Mission and Background

The MSc EF was first conceived of seven years ago by the University for Agricultural Sciences (BOKU), Vienna. Though due to significant bureaucratic barriers the programme did not start until January of this year.

The idea of the Programme is to respond to the increasing number of issues in forest and environmental management that are formulated, implemented, and coordinated above the level of the classical nation state. These issues provide a whole range of new challenges and demands for policy and management at the European level. The focus of the Programme will be on trade and policy issues, supported by a sound understanding of the variety of European ecological conditions and their dynamics. The curriculum of the Programme is designed to take into account the needs of potential employers.

The programme language is English. Participation in the programme is open to all universities in Europe that offer a regular MSc in forestry and nature management. In addition to the official MSc degree certificate the Programme Committee will award a Programme Certificate describing the contents of the programme.

## Structure

The MSc EF degree totals 60 ECTS credits. It is divided into four parts:

- The Introductory Course (IC), provides the students with an intensive introduction to forestry from a European perspective. (4 weeks)
- The Applied Period (AP) is a work assignment where the students apply their knowledge and skills in a job with a European Forestry orientation. (10 weeks)
- The Problem Oriented Course (POC) has a twofold target: firstly that the students utilise the skills and experience that they gained during their applied period and secondly prepare the students for the thesis stage of the Programme. (2 weeks)
- The final part of the Programme is the 30 week thesis period. The thesis will have an explicit European dimension.

## Current Member Universities:

University of Agricultural Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria

University of Joensuu, Finland

University of Wageningen, The Netherlands

University of Lleida (UdL), Spain

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU), Sweden

The MSc EF is open to all students with the relevant experience, though they will have to register with one of the participating Universities upon commencement of the course. An application can be downloaded from <http://gis.joensuu.fi/mscef/subscribe>, the deadline for applications is the 28<sup>th</sup> February.



For more information about the MSc European Forestry, please contact the SILVA Network office or visit the web pages: <http://gis.joensuu.fi/mscef>.



## Student's Perspectives

### The Introductory Course

The first IC in January 2002 was organised in Uppsala, Sweden. The course consists of 7 sub-divisions, each of which was the responsibility of one of the participating universities. **MSc EF student David Gritten** describes the IC: *“Eleven students from Germany, Sweden, Spain, UK, Russia and USA met to start the programme with the IC. The Course was organised by SLU. All aspects of the course provided us with an ideal opportunity to increase our knowledge and understanding of European Forestry from the location, the close proximity of various forestry industries, the diverse background of the students and of course unique opportunity to attend lectures and seminars presented by lecturers and experts who are leaders in their field. The highlights included: Prof. Dr. Spiecker from Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg, Germany who presented lectures and seminars on the Production issues affecting European Forestry today and Dr P. Mayer from the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe and Dr. Prof. K. Hogl from BOKU, who presented Policy aspects of European Forestry. The various insights that we were provided makes the course in our eyes quite unique.*

### The Applied Period

*“I spent my Applied Period with the International Section of the National Board of Forestry in Joenköping Sweden. My work there consisted primarily in preparing presentations and reports about Spanish forestry administration as well as a report about the National Forest Programmes of countries of the European Union. During my AP, I learned about the organisation of Swedish Forestry, from the decision making to the stand. I visited all Departments and Sections in the National Board and also some Regional Boards in southern Sweden. This AP has given me the opportunity of learning about International agreements in Forestry on a both Swedish and European level. Also, I have acquired an open and wide ranging view regarding Swedish Forestry Administration, providing an invaluable insight into the hierarchy, and how National Policies are co-ordinated and implemented. The Applied Period as a concept offers the students an exceptional platform to experience real European Forestry, and in my case I cannot talk highly enough of the experience and knowledge that I gained from my time spent in Sweden.”* **Blas Mola Yudego MSc EF student from the University of Lleida Spain.**

The other students have spent their Applied periods with various organisations from Consultants; FEG oy Joensuu Finland, to research at the European Forestry Institute.



MSc EF students and lecturers in cork oak plantation in Catalonia, Spain. Photo courtesy of Prof. Carlos Colinas

## The POC

The two week course was held at the Catalonian Forest Technology Research Centre in Solsona Spain. The course focussed on creating a recovery plan for the Solsones region which was devastated by forest fires in 1994 and 1998. The students could draw on knowledge of experts in varying fields from Fire Prevention to Game Management. The course was very practical as one of the groups presented a recovery plan for a 250 hectare holding which was badly damaged in the 1998 fire. The landowner was very positive of the recommendations put forward. This single presentation was a perfect example of the merits of this kind of course. This course was deemed to be a universal success in providing the students with experience in teamwork, working in a very intensive environment and dealing with forestry related issues from a completely new context.

## Thesis Period

Now is the start of the thesis period, the thesis topics range from the comparative analysis of forestry curricula for the development of ICT education to Woody biomass potential in North-West Russia for pellets production, oriented for European biofuel markets.

## The Future

The current MSc EF students want the Programme to be a success, this is not just because of self interest, but because they feel that it is “something special.” At present the next Programme is scheduled to start in September 2003. However steps need to be taken to ensure that it will continue to be a success:

- The focus at present is funding; the nature of the Programme entails a significant amount of travel for both students and lecturers. The Partner Universities are exploring possibilities of funding through the Erasmus Programme, as well as applying for sponsorship.
- The future success of the Programme also depends on more universities becoming partners in the Programme.
- It is hoped that the next Programme will see a larger intake of students, ideally 16. Awareness amongst students and lecturers needs to be dramatically increased.
- More diverse placements are needed for the Applied Period



Excursion to Solsones burn site as part of the POC. Photo courtesy of Prof. Carlos Colinas

## The design and development of A Virtual European Forestry Faculty

A project for the AFANET thematic Network for Agriculture, Forestry and Aquaculture by the SILVA Network, co-funded by the Administrative Board of The Region of Eastern Finland (MOVE - Distance Education in Forestry Sciences-project)

A major challenge of higher forestry education in Europe is to increase efficiency and improve the quality of academic institutions and to promote the balanced progress in different regions in Europe. Unifying systems for course units, degrees and other awards will provide good possibilities to introduce joint-courses and curricula and for student mobility as well. Web-based learning environments and distant learning offers one of the most promising areas for taking advantage of new Information and communication technology. ICT could also significantly increase the number of people who are able to participate in the educational exchange activities in Europe (virtual mobility)

In response to the new education and social challenges of the information society, a significant program of cooperation by several European higher forestry education institutes saw the establishment, in 2001, of the Virtual European Forestry Faculty project (VIEFOR) under AFANET.

### Aims

The aim of the project is to support the development of distance learning and establishing a virtual forestry faculty in Europe. The project aims also to generate, a project definition document for the specification, design, delivery and evaluation of forestry courses by distance learning using ICT. The aims will be achieved by gaining experience in managing curricula developments and delivered using ICT in forestry education.

### Objectives

- \* Analyse the current situation in the utilisation of ICT in higher forestry education in Europe
- \* Explore opportunities and discover an effective and reasonable way to use web-based teaching and learning;
- \* Train lectures to effectively use ICT applications and to create web-based study material
- \* Develop preconditions for the modification of existing study material to virtual format
- \* Facilitate the effective use of know-how of forestry specialists and the expertise of different European forestry institutes in ICT based distance learning.

### Progression

Virtual European Forestry Faculty got its own www-pages one year ago when the basic outlook of the virtual campus was launched. Step by step the contents and services of VIEFOR have been designed. At the first stage VIEFOR serves mainly the developers and designers by offering efficient tools for communication and co-operation:

- bulletin board (existing)
- meeting room for discussions (existing)
- links (existing)
- teacher/expert database and forum (**coming**)
- producer software of joint-papers (**coming**)

A later date will see the launch of the Virtual Library which will enable students to find course material etc. The Second Stage of the VIEFOR project will also serve the students by offering courses and study material, tools for communication with other students and teachers, student mobility activities and study secretarial services. Currently information about MSc European Forestry program as well as some study material can be found through the pages. To design a customer friendly faculty that really serves the needs of both students and teachers it's important that also the students are involved the development work from the beginning. The survey study for students has just started in the end of July at the University of Joensuu.





## Exam AQUARIUM

### Net based virtual exam system

A significant step in the virtualisation of the Forestry education of the University of Joensuu, Finland, has been the development of the net based virtual exam system, which is known as "Exam Aquarium". The Virtual Aquarium, which was established in association with *Sordino Information Systems Ltd\** was successfully tested during the academic year 2001-2002. Several courses have already put their exams in complete virtual surroundings. The target of the Faculty is to offer students a possibility to take all their exams in Aquarium.

#### Aquarium

Aquarium is a computer aided Internet based application with which students can take the examination and teachers can verify the answers in Internet. Students choose a suitable time for the exam and make the reservation on the system. When starting the exam the student log in to the system with the username and password received when he/she registered for the examination in question. The system creates an individual exam using the instructions and a set of questions given by the responsible teacher and gives a certain time for answering the questions. At Joensuu the problem of supervising the exam is resolved by the use of video camera.

#### The advantages of virtual exam

The advantages besides giving greater independence of time and place are:  
For teachers: when the block of questions are in the database the system arranges the exam each time a student wants to take one. This saves the limited time of the teachers. Furthermore the answers are easier to read when no handwriting of the students has to be "interpreted".  
For students: the Test Aquarium offers independence of time; the possibility to plan one's own studies more freely, gives time to access the limited number of study books and offers peaceful place to take the exam.

#### The user experiences

The experiences during the first year have been very good and both teachers and students rapidly accepted the new format. The new version with versatile question types was launched during the summer semester 2002. In future the plan is to make the virtual exam available to distance learners.

**A user survey for students has just started and will be available in the end of this year.**

#### The Exam Aquarium Demonstration

The Exam Aquarium will be introduced by demo in the fifth SILVA Network European Workshop of "*Virtual European Forestry Faculty, Information and Communication Technologies in Forestry Education in Europe*"

For more information contact the SILVA secretariat:  
[silva.network@joensuu.fi](mailto:silva.network@joensuu.fi).

\* Sordino Information Systems Ltd  
 Systems for Open Research & development Information  
 Information: [Contact@sordino.fi](mailto:Contact@sordino.fi)  
 URL: <http://www.sordino.fi>

# **MSc European Forestry Thesis of “The Comparative Analysis of Forestry Curricula for the Development of ICT in Education”**

## **Background**

My name is David Gritten, I am one of the eleven MSc European Forestry students. As part of my Applied Period for the MSc EF, I worked for the Silva Network. One of the main aspects of my work was to assist in the development of the Virtual European Forestry Faculty (VIEFOR). This and my background in teaching have led me to choose forestry education and ICT as the basis for my thesis topic: “The comparative analysis of forestry curricula for the development of ICT in education”.

## **Virtual Education**

I am a firm believer in co-operation at this level, for me the benefits of VIEFOR are clear: exchange of knowledge benefiting both students and lecturers, and potential for a more efficient method of delivering information. The great potential of using ICT must not be wasted through poor delivery, and with this in mind my thesis will attempt to compare existing online material used focussing mainly on the VIEFOR partners, but also will look at material used by other SILVA members.

## **Information is required**

The utilisation of the potential of ICT has varied from institution to institution and from course to course. My thesis will attempt to focus on its development, concentrating primarily on the VIEFOR partners. I am currently in the research stage of my thesis, and would greatly appreciate receiving information from both VIEFOR and non-VIEFOR members.

1. The first step will be to analyse the curricula of the VIEFOR members.
2. Look at the courses they currently have online. Considering the issues that have arisen as a result.
3. Look at the internationalisation of Higher Education.
4. Explore the aspects of the use of ICT in Higher Education.
5. Examining the pedagogical effects of using ICT with regards to both students and lecturers.

The advisers for the thesis:

Prof. Dr. Lewark of Albert-Ludwig Universitat, Freiburg, Germany. Who will advise me on the Forestry education side of my thesis.

Dr.'s Patrikainen and Makinen of Mentorit Education Consultants, Joensuu, Finland My advisers for the pedagogical area.

Dr. Tahvanainen of Sordino Information Systems, Joensuu Finland will advise me on the ICT aspect.

I will present my findings at the SILVA Conference in Warsaw in September.

**Contact address:** [gritten@cc.joensuu.fi](mailto:gritten@cc.joensuu.fi)



#### SILVA News

*SILVA News is the newsletter of the SILVA Network and it is published 1-2 times per year and distributed to approximately 200 individuals and organisations.*

#### Call for contributions

Readers of the SILVA News are warmly welcomed to send short articles on international activities in the field of forestry education. SILVA Network reserves the right to edit the articles if necessary. Members of the SILVA Network are welcome to send also short announcements of events and publications to be published in SILVA News free of charge.

#### Subscription

SILVA News is free of charge. In order to receive a copy, please send you full address to the SILVA Network Office.

## Administrative Changes

The Secretary General **Ms Liisa Tahvanainen** has come back from her maternity leave. **Mr Eero Forss** who has successfully taken care of the responsibilities of Secretary General during that time, is leaving the office at the end of August.

We regret the inconvenience that might have caused to you due to changes in personnel. If you have any questions, comments, ideas etc. concerning the SILVA Network and its activities, please feel free to contact us. The contact information can be found at the first page of this newsletter.

#### *A New Project Co-ordinator*

During the summer we also have got a new employee from the European Master program, MSc EF student **Mr. David Gritten** is taking care of various responsibilities as a project coordinator. His main duty is to collect data for his master thesis (see the special article in this newsletter). He will be employed at least until the end of this year.

E-mail: david.gritten@joensuu.fi

The SILVA group expresses its warmest thanks to **Mr Eero Forss** by wishing him all the best and welcome **Mr David Gritten** to our Network.