

# IFSA BELGIUM – GEMBLOUX @ SERM: SOUTHERN EUROPEAN REGIONAL MEETING – PORTUGAL, APRIL 2018

For the first time, 2 IFSA Belgium representatives from the IFSA Gembloux Committee (2017-2018) participated at SERM 2018 in Portugal, an important meeting...

*What is SERM and why is it so important?*

SERM (= Southern European Regional Meeting – <https://infoserm18pt.wixsite.com/serm2018>) happens every year in a different Southern Europe country. It is an opportunity for IFSA member countries of the region to meet, share their passion about forests and environment, as well as promote cooperation with other Local Committees (LCs). During “IFSA workshops” the representatives discuss regional topics, trends and the effectiveness of IFSA work in the region, among other things.

As a reminder, IFSA (= International Forestry Students' Association – <http://www.ifsa.net/>) is a worldwide association aiming at getting forestry students together to share experiences, cultures and knowledge to brainstorm on a sustainable future for our forests. IFSA is a network of 102 registered LCs around the world (which represents more than 3000 students)!

There are two types of important meetings happening every year in the IFSA community: 1) a worldwide meeting (IFSS, International Forestry Students' Symposium), where all LCs from all the countries of the world can participate; 2) regional meetings, organized by most of regions in the world to bring students from their region together. For example, there is SERM, NERM (Northern European regional meeting), NARM (Northern Africa Regional Meeting) and APRM (Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting).

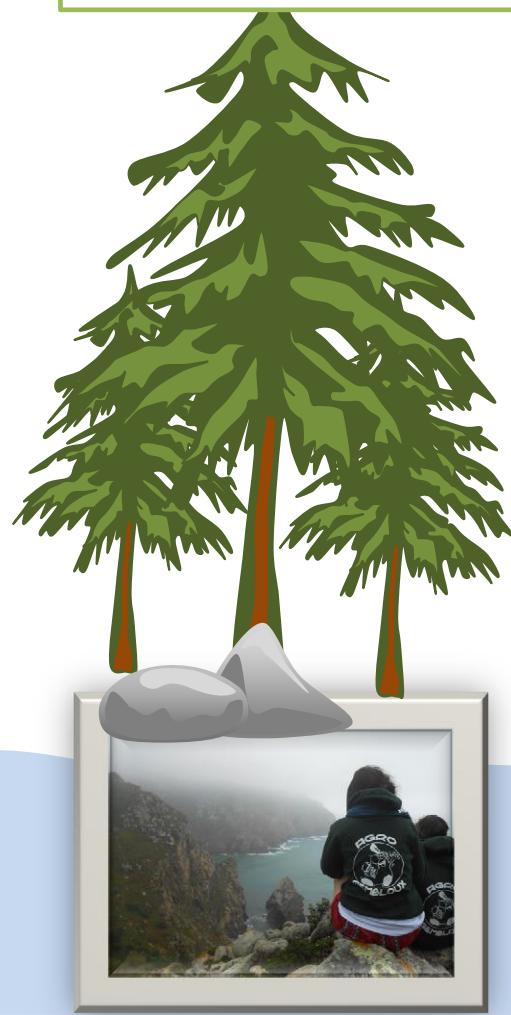
During these yearly meetings, elections take place. At SERM, we elect the location of the next SERM meeting, as well as pre-elect regional representatives of Southern Europe, who will be finally selected during the IFSS. In addition, at the IFSS, students can run for positions as an IFSA official (such as president, treasurer, executive secretary). At best, every LC should be represented by at least one or two students so that as many members as possible have the chance to express their opinion.

However, Belgium had never been represented at regional nor at worldwide meetings before. Thus, we never had the chance to let our voices heard nor run for an IFSA position. Finally, this year, thanks to the support of our university, Gembloux Agro-Bio Tech (ULiège <http://www.gembloux.ulg.ac.be/>), 2 Belgian representatives flew off to Portugal for a week to attend SERM.

**At SERM, we were 48 students, from 10 southern Europe countries and 7 from other countries of the world: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia, South Korea, Switzerland and Turkey.**



Ophélie Groenweghe & Sarah Wertz –  
representing IFSA Belgium - Gembloux in  
Portugal





### IFSA Workshops

Aside from these elections, participants also discover the country hosting SERM. The Local Committee of the University of Lisbon, Instituto Superior de Agronomia (ISA) – Associação Portuguesa de Estudantes Florestais (APEF), organized a series of activities to present us their country and its nature.

#### Hiking-observing-recognizing in Tapada de Mafra

We hiked in a park originally created for royal and court recreation, that is now open to the public and welcomes diverse outdoor activities (hiking, mountain biking, archery, horse riding, etc.). If you're quiet enough, you can see wild boars, deer, birds of prey and maybe foxes. Also, along the paths, you can recognize different plant species, such as *Pistacia* spp.



[Tapada Nacional de Mafra, Portugal]

#### Helping out pedra amarela rangers

In a national park, “Parque Natural de Sintra-Cascais”, acacia is getting more and more invasive. “Cascais Ambiente”, workers in charge of cleaning and planting were happy to receive the help of young nature enthusiasts like us to remove acacia young plants!



[*Pistacia* spp.]

#### Visiting Aliança Nursery – Carmen Correia forest engineer

Viveiros Aliança is a worldwide reference in nursery for forestry plants. They take care of forestry and ornamental plants - such as Eucalyptus - for themselves as well as for the external market. Portucel Soporcel is a Portuguese company which plays an important part on the international market of paper production and paper pulp. We were explained the whole process of nursery.



[Aliança nursery]



#### Getting to know more about cork, *Quercus suber* L.

Portugal is known for its cork and the different ways of using it. We visited “Herdade de Gambia”, a Portuguese company owning vineyards and cork production. We saw how they take the cork off the trees.

Report by Sarah Wertz



[*Quercus suber* L.]

We would like to thank again our university and the Portuguese LC for organizing this great week! We hope to take part soon in another regional or world meeting!



[Hungarian, South Korean, Bulgarian and Belgian representatives]



[Czech Republic and Belgian representatives]