

Press Release – 31-07-08

Biodiversity protection project
Portucel Soporcel Group hosts
European Moth Night

- **The main objective of night-time moth watching at the Espirra Estate was to raise awareness to the importance of protecting biodiversity**

This week the Portucel Soporcel Group hosted the last stage of the 5th “European Moth Night” edition at its Espirra Estate in the Palmela region of Portugal. This international event was organised by the European Moth Nights, with in-country support from the Lusoborboletas website and AmBioDiv (an associate of the “Countdown 2010” initiative). The goal was to raise awareness to the need to protect biodiversity and to the subject of conservation as a whole, both by watching the moths themselves and by learning about how important they are to the balance of our ecosystems.

By taking part in this initiative to increase environmental awareness and provide scientific education, with a particular focus on the fight against loss of biodiversity, the Portucel Soporcel Group wanted to reaffirm its public commitment as a member of “Countdown 2010”, which also includes supporting teaching programmes designed to educate people about protecting nature in general and conserving biodiversity in particular.

26 people took part in this event at the Espirra Estate, where they were able to listen to a number of specialists and observe various species of moths in the field. The insects were attracted by a lighting station that had been specially assembled at the site. As we said, the idea was to learn about nocturnal moths – a group which is highly representative of the biodiversity that exists on the face of our planet, and which is seen as an excellent bioindicator for gaining a better understanding of the environmental quality of ecosystems. The night’s work included the observation of moths from 36 different species, 15 of which were eligible for the European Moth Nights project, and took place in a good-humoured atmosphere and with a feeling of personal satisfaction inspired by the acquisition of new knowledge.

We should recall that in 2007 the Portucel Soporcel signed the Countdown 2010 Declaration. This initiative is a voluntary programme that entails some major political undertakings by heads of state at the international level, with a view to halting or significantly reducing biodiversity loss by 2010. By adhering to this initiative the Group has committed itself to helping to increase public perception and participation in the conservation of biodiversity, namely by promoting examples of activities that fall within the framework of the goals for 2010.

The Group joined the Countdown 2010 initiative during the international Conference on Business & Biodiversity in Lisbon. The Conference brought together senior representatives from organisations and companies which share the same environmental concerns on a world scale as the Portucel Soporcel Group.

With a business that is centred in ecologically sensitive areas, such as forests and industry, the Group believes that this voluntary commitment addresses its long-standing concerns in this area, which have been tackled in the light of a Business & Biodiversity philosophy. Indeed, the Group stepped up its commitment to this philosophy when it entered a Protocol of Understanding with the Portuguese Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Institute (ICNB), and also through the publication of its Biodiversity Statement

It is worth emphasising that the Group adds value to a renewable natural resource – Portugal's forests – by transforming it into high quality paper for office use and the graphics industry.

In the industrial field, the Group has focused its activities on a win-win relationship with Nature - a policy that has produced highly positive results in terms of carbon capture - and has invested heavily in renewable energies: the Group is the country's largest producer of biomass-based energy.

About the Espirra Estate

The 1,700 hectare Espirra Estate is located in the Palmela region and belongs to the Portucel Soporcel Group. It is mainly devoted to a diversified range of forestry-related activities, particularly the growing of eucalyptus, cork oak and pine, and its nurseries have the capacity to produce 10 million certified plants for reforestation purposes each year. The Espirra Estate is sustainably managed in accordance with the most demanding biodiversity criteria. It combines the production of wood with the offer of various different goods and services, such as hunting, fruit growing (pine nuts), CO₂ capture, floristic biodiversity, pasture for ovine and bovine livestock, the production of

biological honey, and also the production of superior quality wines that are becoming increasingly well known both in Portugal and internationally.

PS: For more information please contact IMAGO (Adelina Cabral, Tel. +351 - 219 239 700)