

## **Erasmus+ supports competences development in the field of sustainable development of urban-rural eco systems.**

Urbanization is a global trend and its environmental, social and economical consequences raise up new challenging problems: air and water pollution, soil degradation, labour migration, etc.

Green urban areas play a key role for the sustainability of megalopolis, acting as multi-functional infrastructures for the improvement of environmental quality. The natural elements composing urban ecosystems can be specifically designed to reduce pollution (air, water, soil), the impacts of climate extremes, the loss of biodiversity and at the same time be functional elements to improve the citizen quality of life. In the recent years, there is an increasing awareness about the needs of their integration into urban planning to optimise the benefit they can provide.

Urban development requires innovative expertise in urban-rural interactions and sustainable development and the educational sphere provides a unique chance to bring together the expertise of researchers and decisionmakers to address the issues of sustainable urban management to future generations, involving multi-disciplinary knowledge in environmental sciences, landscape planning, sociology, urban policies and management.

In order to support the development of the new professional skills necessary for the design and management of green infrastructures a new ERASMUS + project entitled **TAURUS -Training Capacities in Agriculture and Urban Rural Interactions and Sustainable development of megacities**, has been funded by the European Union. The project is coordinated by the University of Tuscia (Italy) in cooperation with seven other universities: three Russian (Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Russian State Agrarian University, Voronezh State University), two Chinese (Nanjing Forestry University and Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University) and two European (Wageningen University and Georg-August-Universitaet Goettingen).

The main objective of the project is creating educational facilities allowing graduates to adapt to the national and international market demands, to increase their competences and in result to benefit from new career opportunities in the sphere sustainable urban development.

The project is based on four integrated actions.

**1. Analysis and identification of the skills required by the labour market.** A specific survey will be produced with the support of companies, administrations and non-governmental organisations operating in urban green design and management in all partner countries;

**2. Development of intensive courses and training programmes**, based on the best practices in an international dimension. Courses will be based on the educational needs emerging from the survey and on the exchange of experiences and knowledge among all partners.

**3. Activation of focused internships programmes** in companies, administrations and non-governmental organisations of the five countries involved in the project. A total of 45 mobility grants will be provided by the ERASMUS+ programme and destined to students enrolled in MSc degree courses.

**4. Development of an online multi language platform**, to facilitate the access to professional internships/training programmes, improving the cooperation of Universities and employers at international level.

The Taurus project has already entered the first phase of implementation; from 21 to 23 May the partners met to present the first results of the survey on training needs, along with a major international conference organised by the People's Friendship University of Moscow on the theme of green technologies and infrastructures to enhance urban ecosystem services.

The project represents a further step in the commitment of Tuscia University to activate training activities in order to facilitate a rapid and full employment of its graduates also in the international Labour Market.