

EuroPruning: Creating energy from wood residues

The European Union currently creates more than 25 million tonnes of agricultural wood prunings each year, but only a marginal percentage is used as solid biofuel. The EuroPruning project seeks to turn prunings into a valuable fuel source by developing solutions for their harvesting, transportation and storage that will create growth in the European biofuels market.

“The new logistics chain will take advantage of an unused agricultural residue to generate energy in a sustainable way”, said Fernando Sebastián, project co-ordinator from the Research Centre for Energy Resources and Consumption (CIRCE). Horticultural pruning by-products are an essentially unexploited biomass resource. In order to modify this, new logistics need to be developed to make the collection and use of prunings economically, technically and environmentally sound. “The mobilisation of available pruning residues could generate more than 30,000 jobs in Europe, bringing social and economic benefits to rural communities by diversifying their economies”.

EuroPruning will develop new machinery for harvesting and treating prunings from the field, provide solutions for cost-effective storage options, and develop a decision-support tool to improve logistics from farm to final user. EuroPruning will monitor the value chain in terms of economic performance, biomass quality, sustainability, and conservation of soil properties. Demonstrations of the identified value chains for Mediterranean, Oceanic and Continental climates will be held in Spain, France and Germany to show their feasibility and to evaluate the performance of the project results.

For more information contact Simon Hunkin
simon.hunkin@greenovate.eu

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Notes for editors

EuroPruning launched in April 2013 and will end in July 2016. It is co-ordinated by CIRCE (Research Centre for Energy Resources and Consumption) and the project consortium contains 17 members from Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Sweden and Belgium. The EuroPruning project website - www.EuroPruning.eu - will go live in June 2013.