



## The New Afforestation Season in the Šumoborci Campaign has Begun

Scouts, students and other Šumoborci volunteers plan to plant as many as 80,000 new seedlings this year, restoring forests affected by climate change

The Šumoborci (Forest Figheters) campaign is a volunteer afforestation program and a part of the CO<sub>2</sub>MPENSATING BY PLANTING project, the first Croatian program to neutralize carbon dioxide by planting trees. The project is being implemented by the Croatian Scout and Guide Association, the HEARTH agency and the Croatian Forests as an innovative response to the consequences of climate change. This is the first such program in Croatia, but also in the entire region, and is intended for companies, institutions and other organizations, but also for all other stakeholders who want to compensate for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by planting trees and neutralize their own carbon footprint, thus becoming a positive example of environmental and community concern.

As part of the project, in addition to afforestation actions involving Scouts, students and all other interested citizens, educational workshops are held in schools on climate change, the importance of forests and the environment. The first Šumoborci campaign started at the end of last year, when in less than 2 months more than 1,500 Šumoborci volunteers, with the help of Croatian Forests employees, planted 26,000 new seedlings in locations around Zagreb, Velika Gorica, Ivanić Grad and the island of Čiovo. In addition to afforestation actions, 24 educational workshops were held in primary and secondary schools in cooperation with the Tativaka Association, Croatian Forests and the Directorate of Civil Protection.

At the beginning of March 2022, the new season of the Šumoborci campaign began. In the Marča Forest near Kloštar Ivanić and in the forest near Draganić, Šumoborci volunteers have already planted over 8,000 new oak seedlings in the last week. The Draganić forest is probably the best example of the negative effects of climate change on forests and nature where the parasite, the fungus Chalara, which is a new disease, has destroyed tens of thousands of ash trees.

"Through the Šumoborci campaign, we enable children and young people, but also all others interested, to visit forests with the help of the forestry professionals, learn about their importance and vulnerability but also realize that climate change is present everywhere around us. By planting new seedlings together, we are helping to restore forests and create new forest stands that we will leave behind for generations to come." - said Dan Špicer, Business Director of the Croatian Scout and Guide Association.

Croatian Forests emphasizes that they, as the national forestry company, annually plant over 9 million seedlings, but that every seedling that volunteers come to plant is extremely valuable because it helps raise awareness of the importance of forests and care for the environment.



The HEARTH agency, co-organizer of the CO2MPENSATING BY PLANTING project, announced that activities this year will continue even more intensively with the aim of planting 80,000 seedlings at many locations in Croatia. Afforestation actions will be accompanied by a creative information and media campaign aimed at raising awareness of the general public about the carbon footprint we create, the effects of climate change, the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development.

The CO2MPENSATING BY PLANTING project is being carried out in cooperation with the Croatian Forestry Institute, the Hrvoje Požar Energy Institute, the Center for Climatological Research at the Faculty of Science and the Croatian Mountain Rescue Service (HGSS).

The project is sponsored by the US Embassy in Croatia, the European Parliament Office in Croatia, and the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development. The technological sponsor of the project is GIS Cloud.

The first business partners and holders of the CO2MPENSATING BY PLANTING Label in 2022 are Coca Cola HBC Croatia, Raiffeisenbank Croatia, E.ON Croatia, PwC Croatia, L'Oreal Adria, Porsche Croatia, Delt Papir, Germania and Designer Outlet Croatia.

So far, 16 primary and secondary schools have joined the project, and as the project expands, it is planned to include additional business partners and schools throughout Croatia. Already this week, afforestation actions are continuing with the help of hundreds of new Šumoborci volunteers and thousands of new planted seedlings.