



RESOLUTION H2

General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European Forests

The Signatory States and the European Community,

- A. Having regard to the fact that the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in all types of forests is an essential element for their sustainable management,
- B. Recalling the definition of biological diversity agreed upon in the Convention on Biological Diversity: *viz.* "Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.",
- C. Recalling the concept of conservation defined in the World Conservation Strategy (1980) as the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of future generations,
- D. Considering the urgent need to show respect for the evolutionary heritage of species and forest ecosystems, in order to enable the adequate genetic adaptive capacity to be safeguarded in the interest of present and future generations,
- E. Considering that the combination of the direct and indirect actions of man on forests can contribute to a decrease in intraspecific variability, species diversity and ecosystem variety,
- F. Considering the objectives and measures set out in the Convention on Biological Diversity that was signed at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in June 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, and considering in particular the precautionary principle in the preamble to the Convention, which notes that "where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimise such a threat",

- G. Recalling that biological diversity is also the basis of genetic improvement of species and varieties of technical and economic interest,
- H. Considering the general objectives and specific measures stated in the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972), the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitat (1979), the Convention of Barcelona and its Protocol Concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas (1982), the EC Directives concerning the Conservation of Wild Birds (1979) and the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora (1992), the Council of Europe's European Network of Biogenetic Reserves (1976), and the Council of Europe's Decision on Preservation of Natural Forests (1977);

commit themselves to promote:

The implementation of the following General Guidelines at the level (local, regional or national) appropriate to the exercise of their individual competencies in matters of forestry policy, and their further development.

PART I: GENERAL GUIDELINES

1. The conservation and appropriate enhancement of biodiversity should be an essential operational element in sustainable forest management and should be adequately addressed, together with other objectives set for forests, in forestry policies and legislation.
2. The conservation and appropriate enhancement of biodiversity in forests should be based both on specific, practical, cost-effective and efficient biodiversity appraisal systems, and on methods for evaluating the impact on biodiversity of chosen forest development and management techniques.
3. Where possible, the size and degree of utilisation of forest compartments and other basic management units should take account of the scale of variation of the site, in order to better conserve and manage the diversity of habitats. Management should aim at increasing the diversity of forest habitats.
4. Where possible the establishment of taxa¹ which are naturally associated with those that occur most frequently in the forest should be encouraged, and a variety of structure within stands should be favoured, where the natural dynamics of such associations permit.

¹ Any taxonomic group

PART II: FUTURE ACTION

5. The Signatory States and the European Community will recognise the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biodiversity as an essential element of sustainable forest management. This would mean, *inter alia*:
 - 5.1. The conservation of genetic resources of forest taxa, both those currently exploited for economic purposes and those considered secondary or rare as detailed in Resolution 2 of the Strasbourg Conference, and
 - 5.2. Taking account of the protection of threatened forest species and ecosystems, as listed nationally or locally, in the formulation of national forest policies.
6. The Signatory States and the European Community will establish at national or regional levels a coherent ecological network of climax, primary and other special forests aimed at maintaining or re-establishing ecosystems that are representative or threatened.
7. The Signatory States and the European Community will establish educational and public awareness programmes on the conservation of biodiversity emphasising, *inter alia*, the positive aspects of sustainable management of forests on the conservation of biodiversity. These programmes should be aimed, *inter alia*, at enabling effective participation by local communities, forest owners and Non- Governmental Organisations in the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity.
8. The Signatory States and the European Community will promote technical cooperation including exchange of experts, courses and seminars, and transfer of technology.
9. The Signatory States and the European Community will develop a coherent and responsible approach to the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biodiversity in forests through the development of national or regional guidelines with the aim, *inter alia*, of:
 - 9.1. Obtaining sufficient knowledge about the ecosystem functions and services derived from European forests,
 - 9.2. Obtaining sufficient knowledge of the status and requirements for management of the endangered, rare or representative biotic elements of the forests, and
 - 9.3. Achieving adequate forecasting, monitoring and evaluation of the consequences for biodiversity of different silvicultural techniques.
10. In order to attain aims 9.1., 9.2. and 9.3. the Signatory States and the European Community will implement surveys and research programmes which are specially adapted to their economic, social and environmental conditions and which are, where

appropriate, coordinated and integrated with similar work resulting from the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Strasbourg and Helsinki Conferences.

11. The Signatory States and the European Community will continue to improve methods for assessing biodiversity in forests and for evaluating the impact on biodiversity of forest management methods.