

# FOREST EUROPE

December 2008

The MCPFE Newsletter of the Liaison Unit Oslo

## **MCPFE Sets Milestone in Climate Change Policy**

Maintaining forest cover and securing sustainable management of forest resources are important means for mitigating climate change. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) works continuously with the elaboration and adaptation of policy measures and instruments for sustainable forest management in order to meet the challenges presented by climate change. At the Expert Meeting, held on 12-13 November 2008 in Geneva, Switzerland, the MCPFE decided on new guidelines and actions of great relevance to climate measures at both national and global levels.

## **New Guidelines for Afforestation and Reforestation**

In November 2008, the MCPFE and the Environment for Europe/PEBLDS adopted the "Pan-European Guidelines for Afforestation and Reforestation with a special focus on the provisions of the UNFCCC". These guidelines have been prepared for consideration in afforestation and reforestation programmes that aim inter alia at carbon sequestration and reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, including woody biomass production. They provide a set of recommendations for implementing economically viable, environmentally sound, and socially equitable, as well as culturally acceptable afforestation and reforestation programmes and projects.

The Guidelines address specific pan-European issues in balancing afforestation and reforestation needs with the requirements of other land-users, as well as considering the conservation of sites of high ecological, landscape and cultural value. Furthermore, they may serve as an example for developing and implementing CDM projects and other relevant international programmes.

*The guidelines can be downloaded from [www.mcpfe.org](http://www.mcpfe.org)*

## **Sustainable Production of Forest Biomass**

Forests, sustainable forest management and forest products play a vital role in climate change mitigation. Bioenergy from forests, produced in a sustainable way, can contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Legally Binding Agreement: First Meeting of Working Group**

At the fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe held in November 2007 in Warsaw, Poland, it was proposed to explore the possibility for a legally binding agreement (LBA) on forests in Europe. As a follow-up, the MCPFE established a Working Group to explore the potential added value of and possible options for a LBA on forests in the pan-European region.

The first meeting of the Working Group was hosted by the Hellenic Ministry of Rural Development and Food on 27-29 November 2008 in Athens, Greece. The Working Group has begun to work on identifying possible options for a future LBA and on the aspects of identifying the added value of such an instrument. Challenges and issues that a legal agreement on forests could tackle were presented by experts and discussed by participants. Aspects regarding possible impacts of a LBA at national, regional, EU and global levels were also addressed. Participants also provided guidance for the development of a methodology that can be used for analysing the potential added value, pros and cons and implications of selected options for a LBA.

The MCPFE has since 1990 developed pan-European policy tools for sustainable forest management. These tools consist of policy guidelines for sustainable forest management and for conservation of biological diversity, criteria and indicators, operational level guidelines, and guidelines for afforestation and reforestation.

The MCPFE tools have been elaborated in a participatory process, involving 46 European governments and the European Community, as well as representatives from the private sector, environmental and social non-governmental organisations, and the scientific community. The MCPFE is currently evaluating the existing policy tools for sustainable forest management in relation to new demands for sustainable production of forest biomass through an open-ended ad-hoc working group on "sustainability criteria" for forest biomass production, including bioenergy. The working group is expected to present recommendations on potential revisions or additions to the existing MCPFE tools by June 2009.

### **Input to the United Nations Forum on Forests**

At the latest MCPFE Expert Meeting the participants developed an MCPFE statement on promoting effective implementation of sustainable forest management in preparation for the Eighth Session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) to be held in April 2009. Delegates agreed that, among other issues, the UNFF should further identify the key elements and specific contributions of sustainable forest management vis-à-vis challenges of other sectors and their demands related to forests. Good governance and land tenure, as a precondition for sustainable forest management, should become a central part in the work of the UNFF to allow member states to take best advantage of new opportunities that emerge outside of the forest sector in the UNFCCC and other conventions, processes and fora, as well as in the private sector. The need to strengthen cooperation was also highlighted.

Additional to the statement, a report presenting a summary of pan-European achievements, major developments, challenges and plans for future actions on sustainable forest management in relation to issues that will be addressed at the Eight Session of the UNFF has been sent to the UNFF secretariat. The report was jointly prepared by the MCPFE, the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission (UNECE/FAO), the European Forest Institute (EFI) and the Environment for Europe/Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (Efe/PEBLDS) in response to an invitation from the secretariat of the UNFF.

*The report to the UNFF can be downloaded from [www.mcpfe.org](http://www.mcpfe.org)*

### **MCPFE Forests and Water**

In accordance with the decisions made at the Expert Level Meeting in May 2008, and as a follow-up on Warsaw Resolution 2 *Forests and water*, a workshop will be held in Antalya, Turkey on the 12-14 May 2009. The workshop aims to involve both forest and water sectors in discussions on cooperation and coherence of forest and water policies in the pan-European region.

### **European Forest Week**

At the Fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the ministers declared the week of 20-24 October 2008 to be the pan-European Forest Week. The main objective of the European Forest Week was to raise awareness about the contribution of forests in mitigating climate change, providing wood and renewable energy, securing the supply of fresh water and protecting our environment. The European Forest Week was jointly organised by the European Commission, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE). The Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food, Lars Peder Brekk, gave a speech on behalf of the MCPFE at the official opening in Rome. About 150 national and local events in countries throughout Europe highlighted the importance of our forests and the value of using them sustainably. At regional meetings in Rome politicians, policy-makers and experts from different sectors discussed possible solutions for the challenges facing today's forests.

Edited and published by  
**Ministerial Conference on the  
Protection of Forests in Europe,  
MCPFE Liaison Unit Oslo,**  
P.O. Box 115, NO-1431 Aas, Norway

Tel: + 47 64 94 89 30  
Fax: + 47 64 94 89 39  
E-mail: [liaison.unit.oslo@mcpfe.org](mailto:liaison.unit.oslo@mcpfe.org)  
Website: [www.mcpfe.org](http://www.mcpfe.org)