

FOREST EUROPE

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The Newsletter of the Liaison Unit Oslo

Elaborating Topics for

FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference Oslo 2011

The next FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe will be held 14-16 June 2011 in Oslo, Norway. Ministers and high-level representatives of the 46 signatory countries and the European Union will meet to take significant decisions on the future of Europe's forests. The Ministerial Conference will be a major contribution to the International Year of Forests.

The Ministerial Conference is planned at a time when society is expressing widespread concerns related to forests. Impacts of climate change on forests, protection of biodiversity, water supply, provision of renewable raw material and energy, and minimising risks from storms, floods, wildfires and droughts are all on the political agenda in Europe and globally. The conference is expected to address these challenges and take vital decisions on the future strategic framework for forest policies and cooperation in Europe. It is foreseen that the ministers will adopt a common vision, strategic goals and specific targets for forests in Europe. The conference will also address ways to strengthen cooperation in Europe, to achieve a balanced and stable continuity of all environmental, economic and social forest functions and contribute to the achievement of international objectives. One possibility is to open negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.

An Expert Level Meeting will be held on 14-15 December 2010 in Geneva, Switzerland where representatives from the participating countries will discuss the conference issues and guide how to further prepare for the commitments to be made at the Ministerial Conference Oslo 2011. Information about this meeting and documents pertaining to it are available on www.foresteuropa.org/ELM_2010_Geneva.

To promote the Ministerial Conference and enhance dialogue with relevant fora, the poster brochure *Healthy Forests for Europe and beyond* has just been launched. It can be downloaded or ordered from our website www.foresteuropa.org/Publications.

Options for a decision on a possible legally binding agreement prepared

Preservation and sustainable management of forests require a stable and effective platform for coherent policy development and implementation. Thus an initiative for exploring the possibility for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe was tabled at the last FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference in 2007. Two subsequent working groups were charged with exploring aspects of a possible legal agreement. The first working group completed its tasks in 2009.

The second Working Group, on preparing options for a decision on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe, has now also completed its work. The comprehensive scoping exercise and technical and analytical preparations resulted in the following documents: A Non-paper on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe; Technical background paper for a ministerial decision on negotiations; Draft Oslo decision on opening negotiations; Consideration of possible Rules of Procedure.

The issue of a legal agreement will be considered by ministers alongside other subjects concerning the framework for cooperation in Europe at the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference Oslo 2011. The Non-Paper and other documents are technical papers that should serve as a basis for national and regional consultations on the key issues and options for a possible legal agreement.

The results of the two working groups can be accessed at www.foresteuropa.org/Legally_Binding_Agreement.

For more information, please contact Ms. Malgorzata Briggs, email: malgorzata.briggs@foresteuropa.org

New 2020 Biodiversity Targets

The 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was held from 18-29 October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. COP 10 is considered one of the most successful meetings in the history of the Convention. 47 decisions were adopted.

In the CBD Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2020, Goal B, "Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use", Target 5 sets out ambitions on halting the loss of natural habitats, including forests: *"By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible, brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced"*. Sustainable forest management is addressed in Target 7, *"By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity"*. Forests are addressed in other COP 10 decisions, inter alia through Decision on Forest biodiversity, Decision on Sustainable use of biodiversity and Decision on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

As part of the concept of sustainable forest management, forest biodiversity is one of the priority topics of FOREST EUROPE. In preparation for COP 10, the Liaison Unit Oslo carried out an assessment of this work: *Enriching Forest Biodiversity - FOREST EUROPE is implementing Convention on Biological Diversity provisions* is available at www.foresteuropa.org/Enriching_Forest_Biodiversity.

New FOREST EUROPE Communications Tools and Publications

The report *Assessment of Forest Fire Risks and Innovative Strategies for Fire Prevention* is now published summarising policy conclusions, recommendations and best practices for the prevention of forest fires in Europe.

The brochure *Good practice guidance on sustainable mobilisation of wood in Europe* gives an overview of the substantial potential for increased wood mobilisation in Europe. It is a compact version of the same-titled report. Both publications have been jointly elaborated with the European Commission and UNECE/FAO as tools for policy-makers and practitioners with which to take appropriate measures.

The quickguide *FOREST EUROPE Policy Tools* provides a compact and comprehensive overview of the pan-European policies and tools for sustainable forest management. It has been developed to support national dialogue with other forest-related sectors.

These publications can be either downloaded or ordered via our website www.foresteuropa.org/Publications.

International Year of Forests 2011

The United Nations have declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests. The overall objective is to raise awareness to strengthen the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests for the benefit of current and future generations.

The FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference on 14-16 June 2011 in Oslo, Norway, will be a major European contribution to celebrate and highlight the importance of forests. The International Year of Forests will be launched at the Ninth Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF), which takes place on 24 January to 4 February 2011 in New York, USA.

The UNFF Secretariat is the focal point for implementation of the International Year of Forests in collaboration with governments and relevant partners. Further information is available at www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011.



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