

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOREST EUROPE: Working for Healthy Forests in Europe** *365 days to the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference 2011*

*Link to photo: Mr Lars Peder Brekk, Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food*

In exactly 365 days, ministers and high level representatives responsible for the forests of all 46 European countries and the EU are invited to Oslo for the 6<sup>th</sup> FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference to take decisions that affect the well-being of people and the environment both within and beyond their borders. The conference is being held in the Norwegian capital from 14-16 June 2011.

The health and sustainability of Europe's forests play an important role in solving challenges like climate change, biodiversity protection and fresh water. Their vitality is also crucial to foster a green economy both in Europe and globally. It will be the task of the ministers attending the conference to take the robust political decisions necessary to promote the sustainable development of the continent's forests and safeguard their important environmental and societal benefits.

The conference will be hosted by the Norwegian Minister of Agriculture and Food, Mr Lars Peder Brekk.

Safeguarding sustainable forest management of Europe's forests is not only about economic, environmental and other social benefits for Europe - it can also help protect these functions in other parts of the world. Therefore, I am looking forward to welcome my colleagues in Oslo for this important event for forests in Europe, Mr. Brekk says.

High on the agenda will be the elaboration of a strengthened policy framework for sustainable forest management throughout Europe. To this end, it is expected that the ministers will decide whether to enter into negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in the pan-European region. It is also anticipated that ministers will adopt vision, goals and targets for forests in Europe as a part of the future FOREST EUROPE strategy.

The last ministerial conference was hosted by Poland and took place in 2007 in Warsaw. On that occasion Europe's forest ministers made a firm commitment to ensuring that forests and sustainable forest management play an active role in the sustainable development and well being of the European society. The ministers also highlighted the role of forests and sustainable forest management in combating negative effects of climate change, for energy supply and in water

protection. Following Poland, Norway took over the chairmanship of FOREST EUROPE and in the intervening period has taken appropriate action to follow up on these commitments.

The FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference will be a major contribution to the International Year of Forests in 2011. This year-long celebration of forests across the globe will be used to raise awareness and to engage the world in taking action to secure sustainable forests for present and future generations.

Follow the road to the Ministerial Conference Oslo 2011 via our website [www.foresteurope.org](http://www.foresteurope.org)

**Background information:  
FOREST EUROPE – The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**

FOREST EUROPE is the pan-European policy process for the sustainable management of the continent's forests. It develops common strategies for its 46 member countries and the European Union on how to protect and sustainably manage forests. Founded in 1990, the continuous co-operation of FOREST EUROPE has led to achievements such as the guidelines and criteria for sustainable forest management.

High-priority topics of FOREST EUROPE are to strengthen the role of forests in mitigating climate change, to secure the supply of good-quality fresh water, enhance and preserve forest biodiversity and provide renewable forest products. Other important tasks are to develop a framework for future political collaboration and to prepare options for decision by ministers on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. Norway currently holds the chairmanship of FOREST EUROPE and will convene the next ministerial conference on 14-16 June 2011.

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