

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Oslo, 27 October 2010

### **FOREST EUROPE: Fostering Biodiversity Conservation**

Sustainable forest management in Europe contributes to global biodiversity goals

Photo: Enhancing biodiversity in Europe's forests

Forests are the most species-rich of all terrestrial ecosystems and provide essential benefits to society. In Europe, forest management practices increasingly promote conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The policies and tools of FOREST EUROPE play an important part in combating global biodiversity loss. These are the findings of a recently completed assessment, which has been carried out in relation to the 10<sup>TH</sup> Conference of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which is taking place in Nagoya, Japan. The high-level segment with ministers starts today and will be convened until Friday, 29 October. The FOREST EUROPE policies for sustainable forest management will be an important instrument for achieving new biodiversity targets for 2020, which are expected to be adopted in Nagoya.

The analysis demonstrates that FOREST EUROPE has addressed the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and helped to transmit global provisions on forest biodiversity to the European level. In particular, regional activities have been carried out to implement the ecosystem approach in forests. This strategy has been elaborated by the Convention on Biological Diversity for the integrated management of land, water and living resources to promote conservation and sustainable use in an equitable way. Specific actions have also been taken by the FOREST EUROPE participating countries to enhance protected forest areas and forest law enforcement.

#### **European policy tools for global biodiversity goals**

In Europe, it is recognised that the conservation of forest biodiversity is an integral element of forest management practices. FOREST EUROPE promotes sustainable forest management as an essential tool for reaching the global goals on biological diversity. The participating countries have adopted pan-European criteria and indicators as well as guidelines for sustainable forest management and practice. The guidelines promote the conservation and enhancement of biological diversity in woodlands, e.g., through increased natural regeneration and more mixed-species stands. FOREST EUROPE has also elaborated guidelines for afforestation and reforestation to address climate change. It is a guiding principle that climate change measures should not run counter to biodiversity objectives.

FOREST EUROPE also promotes conservation and use of forest genetic resources as part of sustainable forest management. A technical guideline for genetic conservation and use of tree

species in Europe has therefore been developed. Another important policy area is forest fire prevention. Forest fires are a devastating factor connected to climate change, which can cause great harm to biodiversity. For this reason, the policy co-operation works on innovative strategies, best practice, policy instruments and recommendations for forest fire prevention.

### **Vital political decisions at FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference in 2011**

Europe's forests play an important role in solving challenges such as biodiversity protection, climate change and water protection. At the next FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, it is foreseen that ministers will take robust political decisions necessary to promote the sustainable development of the continent's forests and safeguard their important environmental and social benefits. The conference is being held on 14-16 June 2011 in Oslo, Norway. This event will be a major European contribution to celebrate and highlight the importance of forests in the International Year of Forests 2011.

Find more information about the assessment report on our website,  
[www.foresteurope.org/Enriching\\_Forest\\_Biodiversity](http://www.foresteurope.org/Enriching_Forest_Biodiversity)

### **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 for the protection and sustainable management of forests. Founded in 1990, the continuous co-operation through FOREST EUROPE has led to achievements such as the guidelines and criteria for sustainable forest management.

High-priorities for FOREST EUROPE are to strengthen the role of forests in mitigating climate change, to secure the supply of good-quality fresh water, to enhance and preserve forest biodiversity, and to 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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