Background

The Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (FOREST EUROPE) is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Important achievements are recognised during the work of the ministers responsible for forest policies in Europe through the cooperation within Forest Europe. It is time to consider what to keep and what to change.

The mission of Forest Europe, as agreed by ministers at the Ministerial Conference in Oslo, is to enhance the cooperation on forest policies in Europe under the leadership of ministers, and secure and promote sustainable forest management with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to society.

This mission will still guide the work on the future of Forest Europe, but we should now consider how we fulfill this mission in the best way.

Roadmap for deliberations on the future direction of Forest Europe

A roadmap could be prepared directing the work towards the next ministerial conference in order to decide on the future direction of the Forest Europe process. The following roadmap establishes the steps to be fulfilled in order to set up the discussions on the future direction of the FOREST EUROPE process. This roadmap should contain a timeline and different options to be discussed (set out in the terms of reference for the respective WG).

1. Ministers decide to review the structure and process of FOREST EUROPE.
2. First meeting of the working group on the discussion on the future of Forest Europe.
3. Co-chairs draft report and proposal for the next meeting on the basis of the discussions of the working group.
4. The last meeting of the working group on the deliberation of the future direction of Forest Europe is held before October 2016.
5. Co-chairs finalize report from the working group.
6. The report from the working group is presented to the first ELM after the finalization of the working group.

7. The ELM decides whether the result of the working group needs the attention of ministers. In that case, a ministerial meeting may be arranged during 2017. If the result does not need a ministerial decision, it will be adopted by the ELM and endorsed by ministers at the next ministerial conference in Bratislava (Slovak Republic).