



**ROYAL NORWEGIAN  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD**

Liaison Unit Bratislava

Your ref

Our ref

Date

16/251-

04.05.2016

**FOREST EUROPE Work Programme priorities**

We would like to thank the Liaison Unit Bratislava and the GCC for the background material for the first Expert Level Meeting under the chairmanship of the Slovak Republic.

Reference is made to the email from Liaison Unit Bratislava and the request to submit a questionnaire regarding priorities for the FOREST EUROPE work programme.

We would prefer to answer by this letter, rather than submitting the questionnaire. Our concern is that we will not be able to convey important nuances through the questionnaire.

Norway sees the SFM tools as the core work area for FOREST EUROPE. This is the area where the added value of FOREST EUROPE as a regional political process is most evident. Reporting on sustainable forest management is also an important aspect of this. Our priority would therefore be that the activities 4.1.1 to 4.2.4 is carried out through this work programme.

In addition to this, our priority will be the activities proposed as a follow up to the ministerial resolution on protection of forests in a changing environment. We see this as one of the core topics for FOREST EUROPE, which will link our current work to the starting point for the entire process 25 years ago. Adaptation to climate changes and to new threats are important tasks for the entire region, and there are great possibilities in transboundary cooperation in this area. This includes the activities 4.5.1 to 4.5.3.

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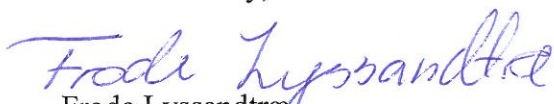
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Furthermore, we will support the establishment of the working group on the future direction of FOREST EUROPE. We also see the need to set up a process for implementing the decision by the Extraordinary ministerial conference that we "... at the latest by 2020, will explore possible ways to find common ground on the Legally Binding Agreement. We agree with the proposal to do the first step in the format of a round-table meeting. We do, however, not see the need to arrange this round-table meeting before early 2018. Our priority will be to finish the working group on the future direction of FOREST EUROPE before we enter into the discussions on the LBA.

We look forward to discuss this further in Bratislava.

Yours sincerely,

  
Frode Lyssandtræ  
Deputy Director General

  
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Senior Adviser