

USSE Statement

FOREST EUROPE Expert Level Meeting 11-12 May Bratislava, Slovak Republic

First of all the Union of forest owners of Southern Europe would like to take this opportunity to share our views beginning by expressing our support and gratitude to the General Coordinating Committee and to the Liaison Unit Bratislava for the preparation of this meeting and for the development of such a comprehensive Work Programme based on the outcomes of the last Ministerial Conference in Madrid.

In this Expert Level Meeting we are setting up the FOREST EUROPE work for the next years and we are glad to see that the Work Programme contains all the matters that are of high political relevance for forests right now.

There is no doubt that the transition to a low carbon economy sets up the momentum to actively work on policies which specifically promote the use of renewable natural resources and their contribution to the bioeconomy. We truly believe that forests and its sustainable management are key elements in this transition and therefore we very much welcome all the related proposals of the Work Programme in which USEE is willing to participate and contribute as much as possible.

As forest owners of Southern Europe we are pleased to see and strongly support the activities concerning the protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change. From the perspective of forest owners this kind of initiatives helps to increase the knowledge and effectiveness when preventing risks or facing challenges derived from natural hazards or human induced threats. Protecting our forests and maintaining their multifunctionality is one of the main priorities to our members so we would like to reiterate our strong support to these activities.

USSE would also like to contribute and participate in the review of the process of FOREST EUROPE. As part of FOREST EUROPE we would like to encourage signatories and stakeholders to ensure that the open dialogue on sustainable forest management continues in the pan-European region. Reviewing the structure, procedures and work modalities, reflecting on the lessons learnt will contribute to strengthen the role of FOREST EUROPE as the high level policy platform where the stakeholders have always had a voice. We will work on this review with this aim so this process keeps its essence and what has made it successful for so many years, making it more effective and efficient to respond to current challenges.

Finally USSE would like to take this opportunity to call for the political willing of signatories to not lose the momentum and to find common ground and conclude the negotiations of the LBA on forests. Otherwise we will keep on being ruled by

Unión de Selvicultores del Sur de Europa, AEIE

Parque Tecnológico de Bizkaia, c/ Kanala, Edif.103, 2ª planta, 48170 – ZAMUDIO, SPAIN

Tel: + 34 94 474 78 26, Fax: + 34 94 476 37 15 usse@usse-eu.org



other sectors. We strongly believe that Europe needs a sound political framework, which is effective beyond individual countries and which leads to common standards in sustainable forest management. For this reason we would like to reiterate once more that a Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) on Forests in Europe is needed.

USSE is committed to this process and we strongly hope these next years of work will serve to maximise the contribution of European forests to ecological, social and economic well-being of the region.

Unión de Selvicultores del Sur de Europa, AEIE

Parque Tecnológico de Bizkaia, c/ Kanala, Edif.103, 2ª planta, 48170 – ZAMUDIO, SPAIN

Tel: + 34 94 474 78 26, Fax: + 34 94 476 37 15 usse@usse-eu.org