



*The Ministerial Conference
on the Protection of Forests in Europe*

Preserving the Roots of our Future

Who we are and what we do

FOREST EUROPE is the pan-European policy process for sustainable management of the continent's forests. It develops common strategies to meet challenges like climate change, protection of biodiversity and freshwater in Europe and globally.

Political Commitments

Countries participating in FOREST EUROPE agree on forest policy and actions vital to the well-being of the continent's forests and society. They reach consensus on political decisions and undertake commitments on a voluntary basis.

Sustainable Forest Management

What is it?

Europe's population reaps the benefits of sustainable forest management through ongoing associated ecological, economical and social goods and services. Appropriate guidelines and tools help countries and local communities to achieve the right balance for society's needs.

Why is it so important?

Sustainable forest management keeps forests healthy and helps mitigate climate change. It protects water and soil,

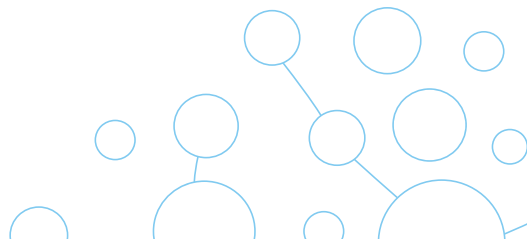
enhances biodiversity, secures the supply of environmentally friendly wood products, creates jobs and bolsters a green economy. Forests also offer opportunities for recreation.

Leading role in Europe

FOREST EUROPE provides the policy making framework for ministers responsible for the continent's forests to make decisions that foster growth and diversity in Europe's forests. 44% of the continent is covered by forests and the area continues to expand.

Signatory countries and observers

FOREST EUROPE's 46 participating countries and the European Union cooperate for the common good of the continent's forest reserves. Also international organisations, NGOs and many non-European countries contribute to this work.



Objectives and key issues



FOREST EUROPE signatory countries commit to enhancing forest resources, maintaining healthy forest ecosystems, safeguarding biodiversity, soil and water resources and encouraging productive functions of forests and forest-related socio-economic matters.

Global warming

Europe's forests effectively trap some 53 billion tonnes of carbon while more is stored in forest litter, soils and wood-based products. Sustainable forest management cushions the effect of climate change.

Water protection

Healthy forests absorb precipitation and maintain soil infiltration providing protection from floods and soil erosion. FOREST EUROPE participating countries are committed to maintaining and enhancing these protective functions for water and soil. Ten percent of Europe's forests are designated primarily for this purpose.

Biodiversity

FOREST EUROPE promotes forest biodiversity through forest protected areas, increased natural regeneration and more stands of mixed tree species. Sustainable forest management contributes to a rich

diversity in forest ecosystems, species, populations, genes and landscapes.

Renewable resource and energy

Wood is an important source of renewable energy and is universally valued as a durable and versatile material for uses as diverse as construction, paper making and heating. FOREST EUROPE oversees the increase of Europe's forest resources by about 360 million cubic metres per year. The policy and tools for sustainable forest management ensure that wood and timber products come from sustainable and legal sources.

Strengthening policy framework

FOREST EUROPE develops common strategies and instruments to maintain and develop Europe's valuable forest resources. A legally binding agreement is considered an option for strengthening cooperation on forests in Europe.



FOREST EUROPE:

Co-operating for growth and diversity

Sustainable forest management is crucial for climate change mitigation, enhancing biodiversity, good-quality fresh water, renewable energy and a sufficient and sustainable supply of timber products in Europe and globally.

FOREST EUROPE - The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe works at policy level where vital decisions are made by the co-operation of ministers through identifying issues of high relevance and developing common strategies through political commitments.

Follow the ongoing work of FOREST EUROPE by regularly visiting
www.foresteurope.org

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