

FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
ON THE PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

28 – 30 April 2003, Vienna, Austria



VIENNA RESOLUTION 4

**CONSERVING AND ENHANCING
FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN EUROPE**

1. Recognising the importance of forests for biological diversity and reaffirming that the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in all types of forests is an essential element for their sustainable management,
2. building on the commitments of Resolution H2 “General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European Forests”, the CBD¹, including its Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity, the IPF/IFF² Proposals for Action, the decisions of the UNFF³, as well as the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD⁴,
3. aiming to further maintain, conserve, restore and, as appropriate, enhance forest biological diversity,

the Signatory States and the European Community commit themselves to

4. strive for co-ordinated implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity of the CBD and the Proposals for Action of the IPF/IFF at all levels,
5. address the maintenance, conservation, restoration and appropriate enhancement of forest biological diversity in national forest programmes and other relevant policies and programmes, and to set measures to achieve the coherence and mutual supportiveness of these policies,
6. assess the impact of relevant policies and programmes on forest biological diversity, collaborate in removing distortions and failures of policies resulting in loss of forest biological diversity, and in promoting the compatibility of trade regulations with forest biodiversity related goals,
7. provide and analyse information about the impact and underlying causes of illegal harvesting of forest products and related trade on forest biological diversity; take effective measures to combat illegal harvesting of forest products and related trade, and build capacity to ensure effective forest law enforcement,

¹ Convention on Biological Diversity

² Intergovernmental Panel on Forests / Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

³ United Nations Forum on Forests

⁴ World Summit on Sustainable Development

8. develop a regional understanding of the linkages between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management as defined by the MCPFE; share this understanding with the relevant bodies in the assessment of the relation between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management at the global level,
9. apply the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe (Annex 2) and further develop them, when appropriate,
10. analyse and further develop protected forest networks, taking into account existing networks, in terms of their comprehensiveness, representativeness and adequacy relative to forest types and the effectiveness of their management with regard to the conservation goal,
11. prevent and mitigate losses of forest biological diversity due to fragmentation and conversion to other land uses and maintain and establish ecological connectivity, where appropriate,
12. promote, as appropriate, the restoration of forest biological diversity in degraded forests and forests established on former forestlands or other landscapes, including plantations, and enhance incentives to promote natural regeneration and regeneration with native tree species and provenances,
13. improve the assessment and monitoring of forest biological diversity in Europe, taking into account existing monitoring systems and contribute to harmonised international classification systems through developing a pan-European understanding on forest classification systems including forest types, naturalness and introduced forest species, in line with the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management,
14. contribute to the development of a pan-European strategy which prevents and mitigates the impacts of invasive alien species that threaten ecosystems, in accordance with the decisions of the CBD,
15. promote forest management planning and practices and landscape planning that is specifically suited to maintain, conserve, restore and enhance forest biological diversity, making use of the natural processes of forests,
16. promote the conservation of forest genetic resources as an integral part of sustainable forest management and continue the pan-European collaboration in this area,
17. encourage and support inter-disciplinary research in order to take knowledge-based decisions on sustainable forest management aiming at maintenance, conservation, restoration and enhancement of forest biological diversity
18. continue the fruitful collaboration with the ministerial process “Environment for Europe”/PEBLDS⁵, and put into action the “Framework for Co-operation” (Annex 1) by identifying common objectives and activities, especially through the co-operation of the MCPFE Liaison Unit and the Joint Secretariat of the PEBLDS,

⁵ Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy

and adopt

19. the “Framework for Co-operation” (Annex 1) between the MCPFE and the ministerial process “Environment for Europe”/PEBLDS,
20. the “MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe” (Annex 2) whilst proceeding to further co-operate with IUCN⁶ and its World Commission on Protected Areas to aim at full comparability with their Protected Area Management Categories.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Framework for Co-operation Between the MCPFE and Environment for Europe/PEBLDS

Annex 2: MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe

⁶ IUCN The World Conservation Union

ANNEX 1 TO VIENNA RESOLUTION 4

FRAMEWORK FOR CO-OPERATION BETWEEN MCPFE AND ENVIRONMENT FOR EUROPE / PEBLDS

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) constitutes the high-level process for forest policy dialogue and co-operation in Europe, including forest biodiversity issues. “Environment for Europe” is the high-level process for environment related co-operation in Europe. Within the ministerial process “Environment for Europe”, the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy (PEBLDS) constitutes the co-ordinating framework for efforts to conserve biological and landscape diversity in Europe¹, including forest biodiversity.

PEBLDS has incorporated activities related to forest biodiversity in its first Action Plan (1996 – 2000) under Action Theme “Forest Ecosystems”. PEBLDS also addresses the issue in its current Rolling Work Programme, which is now structured in line with the Strategic Plan of the CBD², with focus on the European situation through the co-operation of relevant European instruments and processes. The PEBLDS Joint Secretariat collaborates with the CBD Secretariat in the frame of a Memorandum of Co-operation to promote a consistent approach and common objectives for national and regional action to implement the CBD in Europe.

The European ministers responsible for forests have taken regard to the fact that the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in all types of forests is an essential element in sustainable forest management. The MCPFE has therefore tackled the subject since its beginnings in 1990 through commitments at the Ministerial Conferences and subsequently in the follow-up processes. The 2nd Ministerial Conference in 1993 in Helsinki explicitly adopted General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European Forests in Resolution H2 in response to the forests related outcomes of the UNCED 1992³, especially the CBD. In addition biodiversity conservation was explicitly included in the Guidelines for Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe, adopted by the Ministers as Resolution H1. The MCPFE is co-operating with the CBD to contribute to the regional implementation of the decisions on forest biological diversity.

The joint “Work Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Diversity in Forest Ecosystems 1997–2000”, endorsed by both the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) and “Environment for Europe” at their ministerial meetings in Lisbon and Aarhus in 1998, proved to be a useful tool for the collaboration on forest biodiversity issues between the pan-European forest and environment processes. Based on these experiences, the decision-making bodies of the MCPFE and “Environment for Europe”/PEBLDS underlined the benefit of a continued co-operation. Building on the work done so far and considering the synergies and complementarities to be

¹ The PEBLDS was endorsed by the ministers of the environment in Sofia in 1995.

² Convention on Biological Diversity

enhanced by the two processes in relation to forest biodiversity, and the importance of regional approaches in contributing to global fora, the MCPFE and Environment for Europe/PEBLDS agree on the following:

Areas for co-operation

The respective priorities of both processes in the conservation of biological diversity in European forests should be considered as areas for co-operation. Recalling the regional contribution of the MCPFE to global level initiatives and the Memorandum of Co-operation between the PEBLDS Joint Secretariat and the CBD Secretariat, the work under this Framework for Co-operation should also contribute to the deliberation on and implementation of forest biodiversity related global activities.

In this context the collaborative work should focus on pan-European priorities in forest biodiversity conservation in the implementation of the Expanded Work-Programme of the CBD and the UNFF Multi-year Programme of Work and Plan of Action. The forest biodiversity related commitments of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe should be an important basis for the selection of common themes and related tasks for co-operation. The specific themes and related tasks to be selected should especially contribute to creating synergies between the two ministerial processes and to facilitate a joint regional contribution to ongoing global processes.

The co-operation between the MCPFE and “Environment for Europe”/PEBLDS should also serve as a stimulus for co-operation at global level (UNFF-CBD/other CPF partners) and for other regions.

Modalities of co-operation

The selection of common themes and related tasks for co-operation should be undertaken by both the MCPFE Expert Level Meetings and PEBLDS Council Meetings. The results should be reflected in the respective work programmes, indicating the joint activities. Along the same lines, the results of the common pan-European activities should be reported regularly to MCPFE Expert Level Meetings and PEBLDS Council Meetings. A joint presentation of results and/or proposals to the ministerial conferences of the MCPFE and “Environment for Europe” and to global fora such as CBD and UNFF should take place when appropriate.

The Framework for Co-operation between MCPFE and EfE/PEBLDS does not have a specific time limit. Priorities for co-operation will, however, change over time. The priority themes for co-operation for the first period after the endorsement of the Framework for Co-operation are reflected in the annex to this document.

³ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro 1992

Annex to Framework for Co-operation

Priority Themes for Co-operation Between MCPFE and EFE/PEBLDS for the Period 2003-2005

This annex presents priority themes and tasks for co-operation, which were selected for the period 2003 – 2005 as a rolling work programme, which will be updated, as required.

Themes for co-operation

Pan-European contributions to the four following themes, which are global and pan-European priorities at the same time, are considered suitable areas for co-operation between PEBLDS and MCPFE. All these themes refer to commitments made at the 4th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe:

- The theme “*Ecosystem approach*” will contribute to the clarification of the relationship between the Ecosystem Approach and Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), building on the work achieved so far by MCPFE on SFM.
- The theme “*Protected forest areas*” will contribute to the global work on protected forest areas and simultaneously contribute to the general work on protected areas for CBD-COP7 (2004) by making a link between the concepts of protected forest areas and protected areas in general. In the Pan-European context, the work will build on existing work on protected areas of the MCPFE and current work on ecological networks.
- The theme “*Forest law enforcement with regard to biodiversity conservation*” is a global cross-cutting issue, which is also of pan-European relevance and refers to the impacts of illegal harvesting and related trade and institutional capacity building.
- The elaboration of “*Recommendations for site selection for afforestation*” in the context of the decisions of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, taking account of biodiversity interests, was identified as a fourth area of co-operation. This work will build on recent work by IUCN and UNEP, adapted to the European situation.

ANNEX 2 TO VIENNA RESOLUTION 4

MCPFE ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES FOR PROTECTED AND PROTECTIVE FOREST AND OTHER WOODED LAND IN EUROPE

1 Introduction

The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe are an outcome of the implementation of the joint “Work-Programme on the Conservation and Enhancement of Biological and Landscape Diversity in Forest Ecosystems 1997 – 2000” of the MCPFE and “Environment for Europe”¹. They are based on the analysis of national data on protected and protective forest and other wooded land in the European countries, which has been collected in the frame of a supplementary TBFRA² enquiry in 2000. The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines were elaborated in a consultative process in preparatory groups, working groups and workshops, involving the countries and organisations participating in the MCPFE.

The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines aim to give a comprehensive picture of protected and protective forest and other wooded land in Europe, while keeping links to international classification systems used for all kinds of protected areas³. As comparability at the international level is a goal of the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines, terms and definitions used are in compliance with the TBFRA terminology.

The MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe should thus provide an important tool for further MCPFE work on the conservation of all types of forest and other wooded land.

2 General Principles

Protected and protective forest and other wooded land have to comply to the following general principles in order to be assigned according to the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines:

- Existence of legal basis
- Long term commitment (minimum 20 years)
- Explicit designation for the protection of biodiversity, landscapes and specific natural elements or protective functions of forest and other wooded land

“Explicit designation” in the context of these guidelines comprises both:

- Designations defining forest and other wooded land within fixed geographical boundaries delineating a specific area
- Designations defining forest and other wooded land not within fixed geographical boundaries, but as specific forest types or vertical and horizontal zones in the landscape

¹ The pan-European ministerial process of the ministers for the Environment

² Temperate and Boreal Forest Resource Assessment of UNECE/FAO

³ There is a clear distinction between protected forests and protective forests, as the first are especially dedicated to the conservation of forest biodiversity, while protective forests are mainly managed for the protection of other natural resources, infrastructure and people.

Data on forest and other wooded land according to these two designation types should be distinguished in the reporting.

In addition to the regimes complying to these principles, the MCPFE takes account of protected and protective forest and other wooded land based on voluntary contributions without legal basis. As far as possible these forests and other wooded lands should be assigned to the same classes as used for the legally based regimes. However, data on these forests and other wooded lands should be compiled separately.

3 Structure

Protected and protective forests and other wooded lands are grouped according to their main management objective. In addition, restrictions to interventions are used as distinguishing factors. As a result, five classes of protected and protective forest and other wooded land in Europe are defined. As far as possible these classes are associated to the respective Protected Area Management Categories of IUCN – The World Conservation Union⁴. In addition, they are linked to the designation types used by EEA⁵ in its Data Base on Designated Areas. The intention is to establish proper linkages between the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe and these systems, which are used for all kinds of protected areas. The references are agreed with IUCN and EEA as indicated in the table below.

MCPFE Classes		EEA*	IUCN**
1: Main Management Objective "Biodiversity"	1.1: "No Active Intervention"	A	I
	1.2: "Minimum Intervention"	A	II
	1.3: "Conservation Through Active Management"	A	IV
2: Main Management Objective "Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements"		B	III, V, VI
3: Main Management Objective "Protective Functions"		(B)	n.a.

* References as identified in the Standard Data Form of the Natura 2000 and Emerald networks, and used in the same way in the framework of the Common Database on Designated Areas (CDDA), managed by the EEA on behalf of two other organisations (Council of Europe and UNEP-WCMC). The groups (A, B or C) are related to designation types and not to individual sites.

** Indicative reference:

- The equivalence of IUCN Categories may vary according to the specific management objective (of the forested part) of each individual protected area. A technical consultation process with IUCN and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) is underway to ensure full comparability between the MCPFE and IUCN systems.
- IUCN Categories III, V and VI have biodiversity conservation as their primary management objective. However, they fit more easily under MCPFE Class 2 than 1.

The area of forest and other wooded land assigned to the classes 1 and 2 should not be summed up with the data collected under class 3 to avoid double counting.

⁴ World Conservation Union

⁵ European Environment Agency

4 Definition of Classes

The individual classes of protected and protective forest and other wooded land are defined by the management objective and restrictions to interventions as follows:

Class 1: Main Management Objective “Biodiversity”

Class 1.1: “No Active Intervention”

- The main management objective is biodiversity
- No active, direct human intervention is taking place
- Activities other than limited public access and non-destructive research not detrimental to the management objective are prevented in the protected area

Class 1.2: “Minimum Intervention”

- The main management objective is biodiversity
- Human intervention is limited to a minimum
- Activities other than listed below are prevented in the protected area:
 - Ungulate/game control
 - Control of diseases/insect outbreaks*
 - Public access
 - Fire intervention
 - Non-destructive research not detrimental to the management objective
 - Subsistence resource use**

* In case of expected large diseases/insect outbreaks control measures using biological methods are allowed provided that no other adequate control possibilities in buffer zones are feasible.

** Subsistence resource use to cover the needs of indigenous people and local communities, in so far as it will not adversely affect the objectives of management.

Class 1.3: “Conservation Through Active Management”

- The main management objective is biodiversity
- A management with active interventions directed to achieve the specific conservation goal of the protected area is taking place
- Any resource extraction, harvesting, silvicultural measures detrimental to the management objective as well as other activities negatively affecting the conservation goal are prevented in the protected area

Class 2: Main Management Objective "Protection of Landscapes and Specific Natural Elements"

- Interventions are clearly directed to achieve the management goals landscape diversity, cultural, aesthetic, spiritual and historical values, recreation, specific natural elements
- The use of forest resources is restricted
- A clear long-term commitment and an explicit designation as specific protection regime defining a limited area is existing
- Activities negatively affecting characteristics of landscapes or/and specific natural elements mentioned are prevented in the protected area

Class 3: Main Management Objective "Protective Functions"

- The management is clearly directed to protect soil and its properties or water quality and quantity or other forest ecosystem functions, or to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards
- Forests and other wooded lands are explicitly designated to fulfil protective functions in management plans or other legally authorised equivalents
- Any operation negatively affecting soil or water or the ability to protect other ecosystem functions, or the ability to protect infrastructure and managed natural resources against natural hazards is prevented