



4<sup>th</sup> MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE  
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE



# Protected Forests in Europe

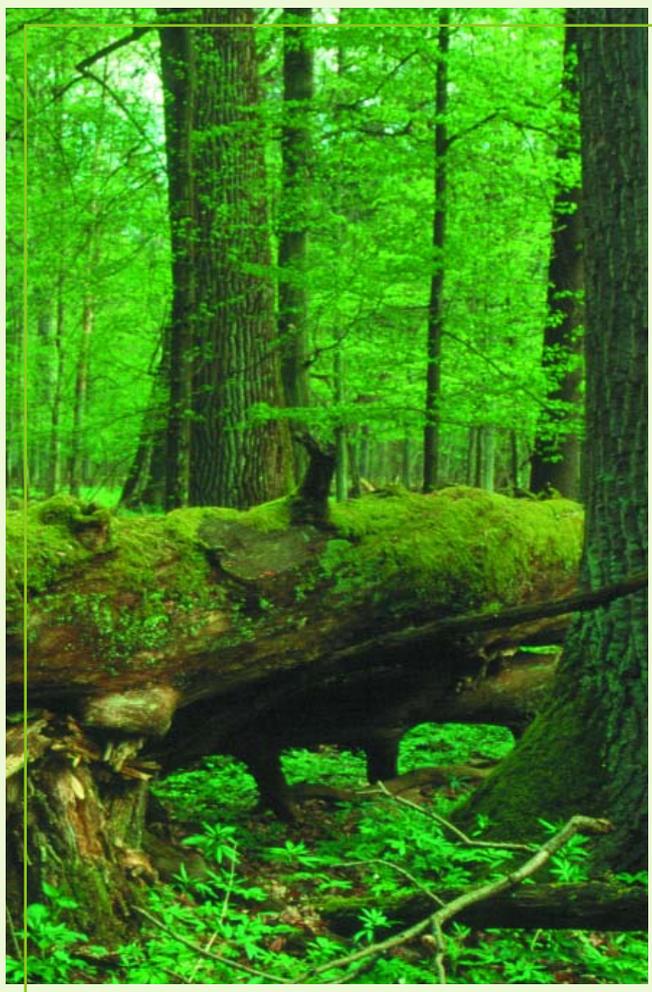
## Protected forest areas

### A means for nature conservation

Protected areas constitute a well-established and important means for the protection of nature and natural resources. Protected forest areas aim either to conserve forest biological diversity, i.e. the diversity of genes and species in forests and the diversity of forest ecosystems, or to protect landscapes.

### A central topic of the MCPFE's work

The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) developed a common tool for assessing protected forests. The new MCPFE Assessment Guidelines pave the way for collecting comparable data and presenting comprehensive information on protected forests. The outcome of a recent data collection provides a detailed insight into the status of protected forests in Europe.

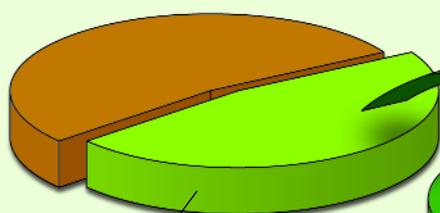


## About 12% of Europe's forests are protected

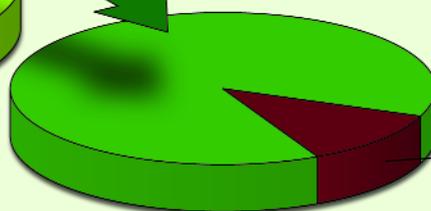


Forests cover about 1 000 million hectares in Europe. Consequently, almost half of Europe's land area is forested. But how much of this area is designated for the protection of forest biological and landscape diversity?

Protected forests amount to 11.7% of the total forest area in Europe. Of these, 85% are designated to conserve forest biodiversity, while 15% are designated to protect landscapes. Altogether, Europe's protected forest areas cover about 127 million hectares.



Forests in relation to the land area of Europe: 47%



Protected forests in relation to the forest area in Europe: 11.7%

# Conserving forest biological diversity

## No active intervention

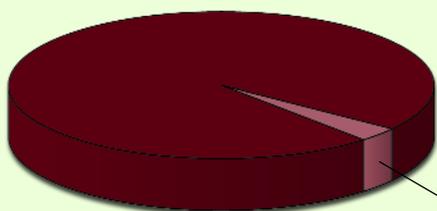
Some protected forest areas in Europe are designated to conserve forest biological diversity without direct human intervention (MCPFE class 1.1). These are often primary forests and wilderness areas in Eastern and Northern Europe.

Countries with the highest proportion of protected areas with no active intervention in relation to their overall forest area are Liechtenstein, Sweden, Georgia, the Slovak Republic and Bulgaria.



### Bialowieza National Park, Poland

The park is one of Europe's oldest national parks protecting a primary forest since 1921. This lowland mixed forest of spruce, alder, oak, pine and beech covers an area of 10 502 hectares. The Park is located in the Eastern part of Poland, at the border with Belarus, and designated as a Biosphere Reserve as well as a World Heritage Site. It is partly assigned to MCPFE class 1.1.



Protected forests with no active intervention in relation to the protected forest area in Europe: 3.2%



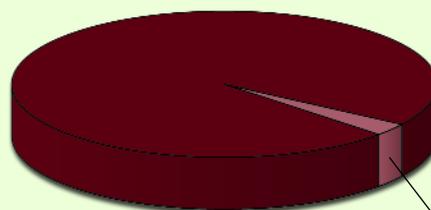
### Øvre Pasvik National Park, Norway

The largest undisturbed coniferous forest in northernmost Europe is located in the Eastern part of Northern Norway, close to the borders with Russia and Finland. The size of the national park is 6 660 hectares, of which 63% is pine forest. This area has been protected since 1970. It is assigned to MCPFE class 1.2.

## Minimum intervention

Some protected forests designated for the conservation of forest biological diversity are managed allowing a minimum of human intervention (MCPFE class 1.2). These characteristics often apply to core zones of national parks. The largest areas of these protected forests are located in Northern as well as Eastern Europe.

Nevertheless, in relative terms, Malta, Liechtenstein, the Netherlands, Finland and Albania have the highest proportion of protected forests with a minimum of intervention in relation to their forest area.



Protected forests with minimum intervention in relation to the protected forest area in Europe: 2.8%

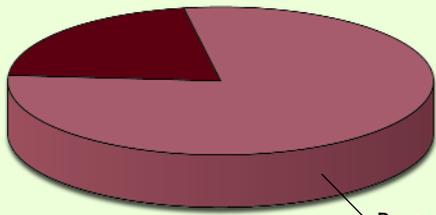
## Active management

Most of the protected forest areas are actively managed to conserve biological diversity (MCPFE class 1.3), covering 79% of Europe's protected forests.



### Gerzkopf Nature Reserve, Austria

This unique area is a natural mosaic of high-elevation spruce forests, bog forests and mires. It covers 91 hectares in the Western part of the Austrian Alps. The management aims to conserve the very high diversity of endangered species and their habitats. The nature reserve is part of the Natura 2000 network and assigned to MCPFE class 1.3.



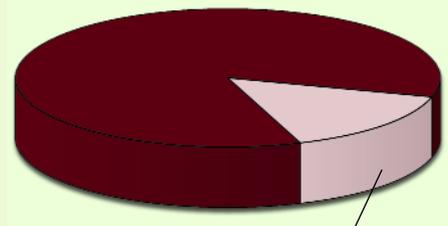
Protected forests with active intervention in relation to the protected forest area in Europe: 79%

## Protecting landscapes

In addition to protected forests conserving forest biological diversity, there are those dedicated to the protection of landscapes and specific natural elements (MCPFE class 2). They comprise 15% of the protected forest areas and are mainly located in Central and Western European countries.



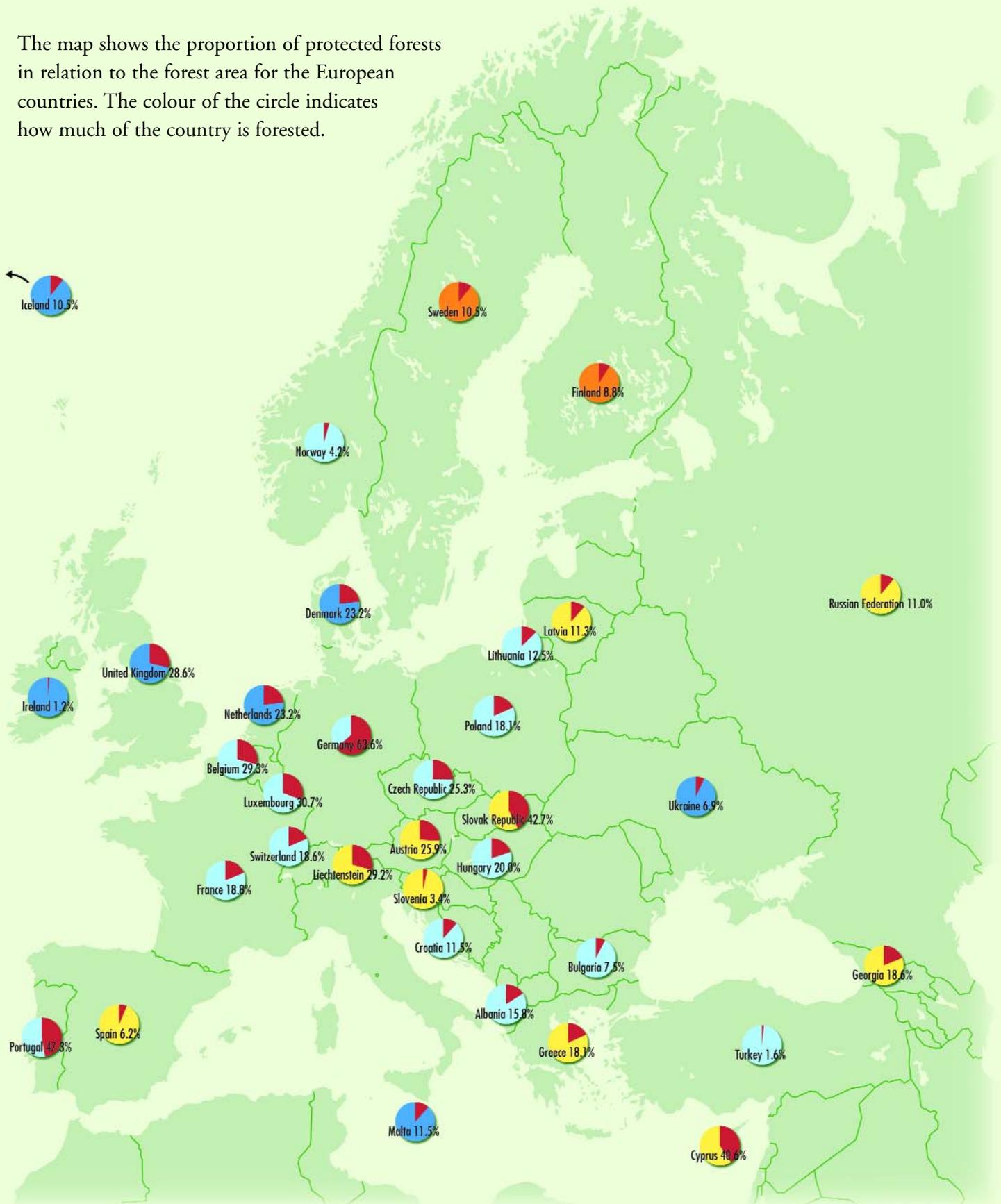
Countries with more than 20% of their forests in landscape protection areas are the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Austria, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Portugal, Cyprus and Germany.



Protected forests designated to protect landscape diversity in relation to the protected forest area in Europe: 15%

# Protected forest areas in the European countries

The map shows the proportion of protected forests in relation to the forest area for the European countries. The colour of the circle indicates how much of the country is forested.



The map displays data submitted by 34 European countries. Forests in relation to the land area:

- 0% - < 20%
- 20% - < 40%
- 40% - < 60%
- ≥ 60%
- ▶ Protected forest area



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