

FOREST EUROPE EXPERT LEVEL MEETING

19-20 March 2019, Bratislava, Slovakia

DRAFT ANNOTATED AGENDA

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Adoption of the agenda**
- 3. Preparation of the Eight Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**
 - 3.1 Preliminary information on the date, venue and possible format of the Ministerial Conference as well as preparatory process until the Conference
 - 3.2 Possible inputs from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change”
 - 3.3 Possible input from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Future direction of the FOREST EUROPE process”
 - 3.4 Possible inputs from the other work streams
- 4. Further information on implementation of the Work Programme**
- 5. Information on the endorsement process of the Draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe**
- 6. Any other business**
- 7. Closure of the meeting**

Meeting hours: 19 March 13.00 – 18.00, 20 March 9.00 – 12.00

Venue: Crowne Plaza Hotel, Bratislava, Hodžovo námestie 2, 816 25 Bratislava

Reception: 19 March 2019, 19.00

ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the meeting

The meeting will be opened by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic H.E. Gabriela Matečná (tbc.).

The meeting will be chaired by the representatives of two co-chairing countries of the General Coordinating Committee (GCC) of the FOREST EUROPE process: Mr. Boris Greguška (Slovak Republic) and Mr. Thomas Haußmann/Mr. Aljoscha Requardt (Germany).

2. Adoption of the agenda

In accordance with the established procedure, the co-chair of the Expert Level Meeting shall, at the beginning of the session, introduce the draft agenda and ask for its adoption. Preliminary time schedule is attached as Annex I to this document.

3. Preparation of the Eight Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

3.1 Preliminary information on the date, venue and possible format of the Ministerial Conference as well as preparatory process until the Conference

The representative of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic will announce the date and venue of the Eight Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. Proposed roadmap for preparation of the ministerial documents for the Ministerial Conference (including drafting meetings) will be presented to the ELM in order to ensure timely and efficient preparation of the Conference.

Similarly, the format and content of the Ministerial Conference should attract as broad participation of ministers responsible for forests as possible. The ELM in 2017 decided on actions to be taken regarding the future direction of FOREST EUROPE, including recommendations on several measures which might increase participation of ministers. Exchange of views among signatories and observers on the possible steps enhancing attractiveness of the Ministerial Conference is expected. Proposals of GCC on format and content will be presented.

In line with the decision taken by the ELM on 28-29 November 2017, increased participation of ministers at Ministerial Conferences is possible by following measures:

- a. concentrate on few, most politically relevant topics identified and prepared at ELM level;
- b. explore possibilities for informal and/or direct discussions among ministers, and if requested, providing space for bilateral meeting arrangements in order to facilitate experience exchange and partnership among countries;
- c. conduct interactive and more dynamic session formats with professional facilitation;
- d. consider involving representatives of other sectors where appropriate;
- e. launching of joint ministerial initiatives to ensure better visibility and outreach of ministerial commitments;
- f. media coverage and enhanced media communication, invite well-known personalities.

ELM is invited: to take note of the information provided on the date, venue of the Eight Ministerial Conference, and exchange views on possible format as well as proposed preparatory process until the Ministerial Conference.

3.2 Possible inputs from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change”

A need for a common pan-European approach to protection of forests against various threats has been the initial impulse for launching this intergovernmental cooperation in 1990 and became the central theme of the previous ministerial conferences. Due to unprecedented intensity, frequency and spatial coverage of recent forest disturbance impacts across Europe linked to climate change, adaptation of forests and SFM to climate change has gained growing attention at policy level in many European countries.

At the Madrid Ministerial Conference, the ministers responsible for forests expressed their commitment to enhance the protection of forests and to this end strengthen cooperation in the region. For this purpose, the Expert Group (EG) on adaptation to climate change comprising experts from signatories as well as international organisations, was established. In line with the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme, EG conducted a questionnaire survey on the current state of implementation of adaptation measures to climate change at national levels. Based on the results and outputs of the forthcoming EG meeting, publication covering the existing knowledge base on adaptation measures in the pan-European region is being prepared.

In September 2019 a workshop “*Management of forests to combat climate-change-driven risks: Policies and measures for increasing forest resilience and climate change adaptation in Europe*” will be carried out in Turkey.

Moreover, a joint ThinkForest and FOREST EUROPE event: “*How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe*” scheduled to take place on 4 April 2019 in Prague, will feature more prominently on how to respond to forest risks, and aims to provide a better understanding of forest disturbances and the role climate change plays in their increase.

ELM will be provided with information on the progress made in implementation of Action 4.5 of the Work Programme “Protection of forest in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change” and its respective EG.

Considering these actions conducted by FOREST EUROPE in cooperation with other international organisations, the co-chairs will introduce on behalf of GCC a proposal for a holistic forest disturbance risk management initiative to be brought to the attention of ministers as a potential common action to respond to climate change driven risks in forests.

As background information Document ELM1/3/2019/Discussion paper: Mobilising knowledge and expertise on managing forest risks to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of European forests was prepared by the European Forest Institute in cooperation with LUB.

ELM is invited: to take note of the provided information and to discuss proposed inputs for the Ministerial Conference resulting from the work stream on forest protection including the adaptation to climate change.

Documentation:

ELM1/1/2019/Summary of ongoing activities and outcomes of the Expert Group on Adaptation to Climate Change

ELM1/2/2019/Item 3.2: GCC proposal for possible inputs from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change”

ELM1/3/2019/Discussion paper: Mobilising knowledge and expertise on managing forest risks to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of European forests

3.3 Possible input from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Future direction of the FOREST EUROPE process”

The Madrid Ministerial Decision “*Future direction of FOREST EUROPE*” affirmed the need for the process to be re-examined to respond to current and new challenges and opportunities in order to maintain and enhance its contribution to sustainable forest management in Europe. The subject of the review was the FOREST EUROPE process, especially its structures, procedures and work modalities, which were reviewed reflecting on the lessons learnt in order to make it more effective and inclusive.

The review was planned, guided and overseen by the Working Group on Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE established at the Expert Level Meeting held in May 2016. The Working Group was composed of representatives of the FOREST EUROPE signatories and observer organizations, with membership based on their interest and availability to contribute to the work of the group. It was chaired by the representatives of Ukraine and France. According to the mandate from Madrid Ministerial Decision, the respective Working Group developed a set of recommendations adopted by the ELM held on 28-29 November 2017 in Bratislava¹.

In 2017, the ELM decided to mandate Liaison Unit Bratislava, under strategic guidance of the GCC, to implement set of actions based on recommendations of the Working Group on Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE. In accordance with this decision, the Liaison Unit guided by GCC have started its work and present first outcome - a draft document “Description of the FOREST EUROPE structures, procedures and work modalities”, which is submitted to the ELM for consideration and possible adoption. Further work on the other tasks in under way/preparation.

ELM is invited:

- to discuss and adopt the draft document “Description of the FOREST EUROPE structures, procedures and work modalities”
- to exchange their views on a possible pathway of how implementation of these agreed actions of the review process will be brought to the attention of ministers for their consideration and/or endorsement.

Documentation:

ELM1/4/2019/Description of the FOREST EUROPE structures, procedures and work modalities

3.4 Possible inputs from the other work streams

▪ **State of Europe's Forest 2020**

SoEF 2020 as a reference source of information on the status and trends in sustainable management of European forests, is being prepared for the Eight Ministerial Conference in 2020.

The joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO data collection on the Updated pan-European indicators was launched jointly with FAO's FRA 2020 in March 2018, setting October 2018 as a deadline for the national data delivery. Up to date, about half of FOREST EUROPE signatory countries delivered their national reports.

GCC encourages remaining countries to deliver their national reports on both quantitative and qualitative SFM indicators at their earliest convenience to allow processing of data and preparation of report on the State of Europe's Forest for the Ministerial Conference.

ELM is invited: to take note of information provided.

¹ https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Summary_key-decisions-of-ELM_approved.pdf

▪ **Other work programme actions**

Forest sector and Sustainable Forest Management promoted by FOREST EUROPE since its inception has been operating in interaction with other sectors and often under pressure of growing demands of the society towards forests.

Several actions of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme have underlined the role of forests, their products and services, SFM and forest sector for improving sustainability the overall economy as well as highlight particular benefits of forests for society going beyond the timber production.

A brief outline how the outcomes of these FOREST EUROPE work streams could be interlinked and brought to the attention of ministers as a concrete example how SFM activities can be aimed at fulfilling particular societal demands while also delivering benefits for forest owners and competitiveness of the sector will be presented.

ELM is invited: to brainstorm and exchange views on new and emerging, highly politically relevant topic(s) for the Ministerial Conference which representatives of signatories and observers consider to be relevant for ministers taking into account possible decisions already taken before on Item 3.2.

Documentation:

ELM1/5/2019/Possible input from the other work streams – to be distributed at a later stage

4. Further information on implementation of the Work Programme

The ELM will be updated about the progress in the implementation of activities of the Work Programme since the last ELM which were not covered in the previous agenda item.

This agenda item will contain main outcomes of the Workshop “*Understanding the contribution of agroforestry to landscape resilience in Europe*” organised in cooperation with FAO, Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture and National Agricultural Research and Innovation Centre and hosted by Hungarian government.

Expert Group on Human health and Well-being prepared a study: “*Human Health and Sustainable Forest Management*” which will be together with good practice examples presented at the workshop: “*Forests for Human Health: Challenges and Opportunities*” to be held on 8-9 April in Vienna.

A short update on the progress in the preparation of the joint UNECE, FAO and FOREST EUROPE Guidelines for promotion of green jobs will be presented.

ELM is invited: to take note of the information provided.

5. Information on the endorsement process of the Draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

The ELM participants will be informed about the results of the silent procedure for the endorsement of the Draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe. UNECE will provide information about the next steps.

ELM is invited: to take note of the information provided. No discussion is expected assuming the silent procedure will not be broken.

6. Any other business

Delegates are invited to discuss any other issues that were not included under the agenda items. Liaison Unit will provide information on FOREST EUROPE meetings and other international meetings and events to be held in 2019.

7. Closure of the meeting

LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

ELM1/1/2019/Summary of ongoing activities and outcomes of the Expert Group on Adaptation to Climate Change

ELM1/2/2019/Item 3.2: GCC proposal for possible inputs from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaption to climate change”

ELM1/3/2019/Discussion paper: Mobilising knowledge and expertise on managing forest risks to enhance the resilience and adaptive capacity of European forests

ELM1/4/2019/Description of the FOREST EUROPE structures, procedures and work modalities

ELM1/5/2019/ Possible input from the other work streams - to be distributed at a later stage

Annex I Indicative time schedule

19 March 2019	
13.00–13.10	Opening of the meeting (Agenda Item 1)
13.10–13.15	Adoption of the agenda (Agenda Item 2)
13.15–13.30	Preparation of the Eight Ministerial Conference (Agenda Item 3) 3.1 Preliminary information on the date, venue and possible format of the Ministerial Conference as well as preparatory process until the Conference
13.30–15.30	Preparation of the Eight Ministerial Conference (Agenda Item 3 cont.) 3.2 Possible inputs from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change”
15.30–16.00	Coffee break
16.00–18.00	Preparation of the Eight Ministerial Conference (Agenda Item 3 cont.) 3.3 Possible input from the FOREST EUROPE work stream “Future direction of the FOREST EUROPE process”
19.00	Reception
20 March 2019	
9.00–10.30	Preparation of the Eight Ministerial Conference (Agenda Item 3 cont.) 3.4 Possible input from the other work streams
10.30–10.50	Coffee break
10.50 – 11.20	Further information on implementation of the Work Programme (Agenda Item 4)
11.20–11.35	Information on the endorsement process of the Draft Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe (Agenda Item 5)
11.35–11.50	Any other business (Agenda Item 6)
11.50–12.00	Closure of the meeting (Agenda Item 7)