

## **Summary of ongoing activities and outcomes of the FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on Adaptation to Climate Change**

### *Background document*

*Summary: The purpose of this background document is to update FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers on the progress made in implementation of FOREST EUROPE Work Programme action 4.5 “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change” and its three activities 4.5.1 “Continuing efforts to adapt forests to climate change through sustainable forest management”; 4.5.2 and 4.5.3 “Sharing expertise and experience on protection of forests in changing environments”.*

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

### **1. Background**

Following the outcomes of the Seventh Ministerial Conference (Madrid, Spain, 20-21 October 2015), the Expert Level Meeting held in Bratislava, Slovakia on 11-12 May 2016 approved FOREST EUROPE (FE) Work Programme (WP) for the period 2016-2020. The FE Expert Group (EG) on adaptation to climate change was established according to the FE WP Action 4.5 “Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change”.

### **2. Detailed activities of the Expert Group**

#### ***The first meeting of the Expert Group***

The first meeting of the EG took place on 6–7 September 2017, in Bratislava, Slovakia. The meeting was attended by 30 participants representing 13 signatory countries, 7 international observer organizations and other experts. A further 9 signatories and the European Commission provided their inputs to the meeting. EG members were nominated by the respective signatories and observer organizations.

The meeting was conducted as an informal discussion forum to enable brainstorming about key shared issues and challenges as well as outputs to be delivered by the EG on the basis of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016–2020.

#### ***Questionnaire on Adaptation to Climate Change***

In the questionnaire prepared by the FOREST EUROPE – Liaison unit Bratislava, resulting from the Action 4.5.1 of the FE WP, the focal points of FE signatories were asked to provide information for the FE publication *“Integration of adaptation measures into SFM in Europe”* comprising the knowledge base and information on work done in the region in the field of adaptation of forests to climate change (cf. evaluation of relevant Goals & 2020 Targets), national approaches to adaptation, the best practices and how to integrate adaptation measures into SFM. The aim of the questionnaire was to explore the current state of implementation of adaptation measures at national levels across the signatories and, if

applicable also for sub-national regions and to identify climate-change-related challenges for SFM.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts: a general part focused on legislative and institutional frameworks of climate change adaptation and the second part with descriptions of particular adaptation measures. The findings of the survey will provide evidence on the status of adaptation measures to climate change in the signatories as input to the publication “Integration of adaptation measures into SFM in Europe”.

***Workshop: Understanding the contribution of Agroforestry to landscape resilience in Europe: How can policy foster agroforestry towards climate change adaptation?***

The joint FOREST EUROPE and FAO workshop generously hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture of Hungary took place on 9-10 October 2018 in Budapest. Main purpose of the workshop was to share state-of-the-art knowledge and build mutual understanding and cooperation in the field of agroforestry between agricultural and forest sectors with the aim to increase ecological resilience at landscape level. Agroforestry was acknowledged to be a significant approach to climate change adaptation, contributing to rehabilitation of degraded land while providing livelihood and food security for people. The workshop was attended by nearly 90 participants from 20 countries and several international organisations. A short report containing also conclusions and recommendations how to promote interplay, cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships between relevant stakeholders in policy development to support adaptation to climate change through agroforestry was elaborated.

***The second meeting of the Expert Group***

The second meeting of the EG took place on 11 October 2018, Budapest, Hungary. The meeting was attended by 21 participants representing 10 signatory countries (including European Commission), 3 international observer organizations and other experts.

As the meeting was held back to back with the FE Workshop "*Understanding the contribution of Agroforestry to landscape resilience in Europe,*" the possible contribution of Agroforestry to adaptation of Europe's forests to climate change was briefly discussed. Then, the results of the above mentioned questionnaire (preliminary analysed by experts from European Forest Institute (EFI) were briefly presented and discussed. 25 filled in questionnaires were returned, 19 of which came from signatory countries (and European Commission), 5 from sub-national regions (4 autonomous communities of Spain and Wallonia, Belgium). Countries that had not responded before the meeting were encouraged to do so in the upcoming months and 3 countries took this opportunity. The representative of EFI suggested to distribute a short additional questionnaire (to the members of EG, not to national focal points) focused on the effectiveness of the measures taken.

Then the future scope and profile of the EG, the issue of activation of EG members and added value of the EG were discussed. The access to already existing information was found important.

The representative of EFI briefly presented the work of the EIP-Agri Focus Group Forest Practices & Climate Change and the outputs of its two workshops. He also introduced an ongoing new study funded by the EFI Multi-donor-trust fund for policy support “Bark beetle outbreaks: causes, impacts and adaptation strategies “.

The study will be launched on April 4<sup>th</sup> 2019 at a joint **ThinkForest and FOREST EUROPE event "How to Respond to Forest Disturbances in Europe?"** in Prague, Czech Republic.

### **3. Other related events**

An EFI – FOREST EUROPE meeting: “*Adapting European forests to climate-change-driven risks, such as bark beetle disturbances: science – policy interface*“ was held on 27- 28 August 2018, Zvolen (Slovakia). The main purpose of the meeting was to enhance cooperation between EFI, the European network “INTEGRATE” and the FOREST EUROPE on forest risks management in the context of adaptation to climate change.

### **4. Future activities of the Expert Group**

The EG will hold its **third meeting** on April 5<sup>th</sup> in Prague. The meeting will finalise a structure of the above mentioned publication “Integration of adaptation measures into SFM in Europe”, summarize regional evidence on recent forest disturbance events and proceed with the expert evaluation on the effectiveness of adaptation measures.

On September 3-5, 2019, the EG will hold its **fourth meeting** in Turkey back to back with the planned workshop “*Management of forests to combat climate-change-driven risks: Policies and measures for increasing forest resilience and climate change adaptation in Europe*”. The first draft of the workshop programme was developed at the second EG meeting in Budapest, including topics for presentations (success stories and good practices in climate change adaptation and management of forest disturbance risks).