

FOREST EUROPE EXPERT LEVEL MEETING
5-6 December 2018, Bratislava, Slovakia

Draft Annotated Agenda

- 1. Opening of the meeting**
- 2. Adoption of the agenda**
- 3. Implementation of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision**
- 4. Progress in implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020**
- 5. Any other business**
- 6. Closure of the meeting**

Meeting hours: Wednesday, 5 December 2018, 10.00 – 13.00 and 15.00 – 18.00

Thursday, 6 December 2018, 10.00 – 13.00 and 15.00 – 17.00

Venue: Hotel Sheraton, Pribinova 12, Bratislava, Slovakia

Reception: Wednesday, 5 December 2018, at 19.00, Hotel Sheraton

ANNOTATION

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, Ms. Gabriela Matečná.

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

3. Implementation of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision

Following the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision adopted at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference held in October 2015 in Madrid, FOREST EUROPE " *at an appropriate time and at the latest by 2020 will explore possible ways to find common ground on the Legally Binding Agreement*".

▪ **Resume of the outcomes of the Roundtable Meeting on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe**

In line with the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020 and the decision taken by the ELM held in November 2017, the Roundtable Meeting on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe (RTM) took place in Bratislava on 19-20 September 2018. The purpose of the RTM was to exchange views and discuss possible procedural steps towards further negotiation and adoption of such an agreement.

Prior to the RTM a background document¹, comprising, *inter alia*, a summary of the previous developments was submitted to FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers in March 2018. The background document for the RTM contained set of guiding questions enabling preparation for the meeting and facilitation of the discussion at the RTM.

Before the RTM, the General Coordinating Committee released an *Explanatory Note on Possible Procedural Pathways to Follow-up of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision*² (hereinafter referred to as "Explanatory Note"). The purpose of this Explanatory Note was to provide an insight into procedural alternatives to follow-up the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision, as outlined in the guiding questions in the Background document, in order to facilitate discussion at the RTM. The Explanatory Note elaborated on options for a decision on the process to be taken by FOREST EUROPE as well as on institutional options for the negotiation, adoption, administration of and servicing the agreement.

Options for procedural follow-up of the Madrid Ministerial Decision identified within the above mentioned Background document, further described in the Explanatory Note and brought to the discussions at the RTM were as follows:

- A. Finalizing negotiations under Madrid mandate;
- B. New mandate and restart of negotiations under FOREST EUROPE by (re-) establishing INC;
- C. New mandate and restart of negotiations under UN system;
- D. New mandate and restart of negotiations under another international organisation/process.

¹ Background Document for FOREST EUROPE Roundtable Meeting on Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe: https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/RTM_LBA-2018-Background-document-1.pdf

² Explanatory Note on Possible Procedural Pathways to Follow-up of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision: <https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Explanatory-Note-FINAL-fixed.pdf>

The RTM Co-chairs' Summary was elaborated highlighting main points discussed and presented by the signatories and observers at RTM.

ELM is invited to take note of the RTM Co-chairs' Summary.

Document: ELM/2018/1/RTM Co-chairs Summary

▪ **Technical information by FAO and UNECE regarding the follow-up of the RTM**

To enable proper evaluation of the procedural options outlined in the GCC Note and taking appropriate decisions at the ELM to be held on 5-6 December 2018, the RTM invited UNECE and FAO to provide further “information previously prepared for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee covering options A and B, and to prepare similar information for option C” before ELM. Following this invitation by the RTM, a written request from GCC countries for particular technical information has been submitted by the Liaison Unit to the Secretariats of UNECE and FAO on 16 October 2018.

ELM is invited to take note of the technical information provided by FAO and UNECE regarding the follow-up of the RTM.

Document: ELM/2018/2/Technical Information by FAO and UNECE – will be circulated among signatories and observers as soon as it is provided by the FAO and UNECE Secretariats.

▪ **Ministerial decision and roadmap for the next steps**

Following discussions at the RTM, all outlined options for procedural follow-up of the Ministerial Decision are still maintained open for further consideration. The Explanatory Note reflected on options for a decision on the process to be taken by FOREST EUROPE as well as on institutional options for the negotiation, adoption, administration of and servicing the agreement.

Based on the discussions and outcomes of the RTM and following the preferences informally expressed, General Coordinating Committee elaborated a Draft of the Ministerial Decision taking into account possible pathways described under procedural option “C” as referred to in the Explanatory Note.

ELM is invited to:

- consider the outcomes of the RTM.
- discuss and take decision on the concrete procedural follow-up of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision.
- take decision on a Draft Ministerial Decision and next steps.

Document: ELM/2018/3/Implementation of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision

4. Progress in implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme

The Expert Level Meeting held in May 2016 in Bratislava adopted the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020 addressing Madrid Ministerial Commitments. Implementation of the Work Programme and its activities seeks to promote sustainable forest management (SFM) in signatory countries and to enhance cooperation on forest policies in the pan-European region with special focus on 6 thematic areas. Signatories and observers will be provided with an overview of the progress made in the implementation of activities of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020 since the last ELM held in November 2017 as well as with an outline of the continuation of work in these work streams.

Document: ELM/2018/4/Work Programme Implementation

a) Further development and updating of policies and tools for SFM

The Expert Group continued its work on SFM indicators subsets for assessing and communicating the achievements of SFM and addressing other policy areas. Relevant terms and definitions used for the updated Pan-European indicators for SFM were updated (reflected and integrated in the Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO Questionnaire).

Future work includes:

- Development of indicators subsets for assessing and communicating the achievements of SFM and addressing other policy areas.
- Considerations on tools to promote and assess SFM.

ELM is invited to take note of the information provided.

b) Monitoring and reporting of the progress towards SFM

Monitoring and reporting on forests and SFM are regular and ongoing activities within FOREST EUROPE. In this regard, since 2003 FOREST EUROPE has periodically presented the State of Europe's Forests Report (SoEF) that provides a comprehensive, up-to-date description of the status and trends of forests and forest management in Europe. To monitor progress towards sustainable forest management at regional and national levels, State of Europe's Forests reports follow the pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management developed and regularly updated by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe - FOREST EUROPE.

State of Europe's Forests reports are prepared in a collaborative manner, in which Liaison Unit and many international organisations, especially UNECE, FAO, EFI, etc., as well as a large number of individual experts contributed significantly. National correspondents play a crucial role, providing national data through the Joint FOREST EUROPE/UNECE/FAO questionnaires on both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Reporting on the progress towards Goals for European Forest and European 2020 Targets is integrated into the qualitative part of the questionnaire.

The deadline for submission of national reports was 30 October 2018. Delivered reports are now subject to review process. Some countries also communicated specific delay in data delivery. **The signatory countries which have not submitted their reports yet are encouraged to communicate the date of data delivery and complete and submit their reports through the national correspondents at their earliest convenience.**

Future work will proceed in accordance with the Road Map available at the following link <https://foresteurope.org/event/13976/>.

ELM is invited to take note of the information provided.

c) Enhancing the role of SFM in a Green Economy

Draft guidelines on promotion of green jobs in the forest sector in the pan-European region has been prepared in line with time frame of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020. The draft of the Guidelines comprises outcomes of the FOREST EUROPE activities (technical meetings and the work of the FOREST EUROPE Expert Group) conducted in this working area by the current as well as previous Liaison Units. The draft was sent for commenting to FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers in September 2018 to collect views of signatories and observers and prepare more advanced version of the draft for subsequent drafting procedure.

Due to the parallel work of the Joint FAO/UNECE Forestry and Timber Section on similarly focused product, GCC decided to search for synergies between the work of the two entities before the further drafting procedure.

Simultaneously, workshop on enhancing long-term competitiveness of the forest sector in a green economy was organized in cooperation with Norway, EUSTAFOR and USSE in Brussels in May 2018. Final report of the workshop was prepared summarizing main outcomes of the discussion (https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Workshop-report_final-1.pdf).

Future work includes:

- Finalisation of the draft guidelines on promotion of green jobs in the forest sector in the pan-European region

ELM is invited to:

- discuss how to achieve possible synergies and avoid duplicities between the work on green jobs conducted under FOREST EUROPE and UNECE/FAO;
- take note of the information provided on the outcomes of the Workshop on Enhancing the Long-term Competitiveness of the Forest Sector in a Green Economy.

d) Incorporating the value of forest ecosystem services in a Green Economy

Expert Group on Forest Ecosystem Services (FES) finished the analysis of different approaches and methodologies on valuation of FES and has continued with analysis of payment mechanisms for FES. Liaison Unit Bratislava finalized content of two modules of a web-based portal on FES (Introduction to FES, Valuation of FES), which will serve as a platform for knowledge exchange and sharing best practices on valuation of and payments for FES implemented by signatories.

Future work includes:

- Collecting of case examples of payment mechanisms successfully implemented in signatory countries;
- Formulation of recommendations for implementation of valuation of and payments for FES;
- Finalizing the web-based portal on FES (module on payments for FES).

ELM is invited to take note of the information provided.

e) Protection of forests in a changing environment including their adaptation to climate change

An online survey on implementation of adaptation measures in the pan-European region was conducted by the respective Expert Group. The purpose of the survey was to explore the current overall state of implementation of adaptation measures to climate change at national levels across the signatories and to identify climate-change-related challenges for SFM, various approaches to adaptation of forests to climate change and to take stock of best practices and possible recommendations for the integration of adaptation measures into SFM. **Signatories that have not reported yet to the questionnaire are encouraged to fill the questionnaire which is still available at the following link:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/AdaptationToClimateChange>.

FOREST EUROPE in cooperation with FAO, Hungarian Ministry of Agriculture and National Agricultural Research and Innovation Centre organised the Workshop “Understanding the contribution of agroforestry to landscape resilience in Europe”.

Future work includes:

- Finalization of the Report from the Workshop on Agroforestry including recommendations and next steps.
- Workshop “Active management of forest against climate-change-driven risks: Policies and measures for increasing forest resilience and climate change adaptation in Europe” to be held in June 2019, in Istanbul, Turkey.
- Based on the results of the questionnaire survey and workshops outcomes, recommendations will be formulated and a publication on integration of adaptation measures into SFM in Europe will be prepared.

ELM is invited to take note of the information provided.

f) Enhancing the social dimension of SFM in the context of the benefits of forests to human health and well-being

The Expert Group on Human Health and Well-being has worked on the study “Human health and sustainable forest management” comprising existing knowledge and best practices. Side event “Forest and sustainable cities in Europe: Contribution of forests and SFM to sustainable living and well-being in European cities” was organized at the occasion of 13th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

Future work includes:

- Finalization of the study “Human health and sustainable forest management”.
- Workshop on social benefits and health effects of forests to be held in Vienna, Austria in spring 2019.
- Preparation of policy recommendations for strengthening the integration of social aspects into SFM.

ELM is invited to take note of the information provided.

g) Future direction of FOREST EUROPE

The Madrid Ministerial Decision “Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE” affirmed the need for the process to be re-examined to respond to current and latest challenges and opportunities in order to maintain and enhance its contribution to sustainable forest management in Europe. The review was guided and overseen by the Working Group on future direction of FOREST EUROPE. The Working Group elaborated the Final Report consisting of recommendations for future direction of FOREST EUROPE and results of the questionnaire survey.

ELM held in November 2017 in Bratislava took note of the Final report of the Working Group including recommendations for future direction of FOREST EUROPE. ELM decided to mandate LUB, under strategic guidance of GCC, to implement set of actions based on recommendations of the Working Group.

A draft description of the existing FOREST EUROPE structures, procedures and work modalities; a proposal of rapid response approach; and a draft study on future funding arrangement of the FOREST EUROPE process including multi-donor trust fund are currently under preparation to be reviewed by GCC and subsequently submitted to signatories and observers for their consideration.

Further work:

- Implementation of actions listed in the Annex of the ELM decision taken in November 2017 in Bratislava.

ELM is invited to take note of the information provided.

h) Communication and outreach

ELM will be briefed on communication activities undertaken and planned by the Liaison Unit:

- Statements and Press releases on the specific occasions (Regional Forum on Sustainable Development for the UNECE Region, Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting at the UNFF13, Workshop Understanding the contribution of agroforestry to landscape resilience in Europe, etc.)
- FOREST EUROPE Side event at UNFF 13: Forests and Sustainable Cities in Europe
- Update on social media reach (Facebook, Twitter, FOREST EUROPE website)
- Preparation of short movie on forests and its benefits on human health and well-being

Delegates will be updated on activities related to the implementation of FOREST EUROPE commitments. BIOEAST Initiative and its Forestry Working Group (BFWG) build on intensive analysis of demands in CEE region on the forest-based sectors, the institutional and governance frameworks, and stakeholder perceptions on potentials and obstacles for implementing a forest-based bioeconomy will be presented.

5. Any other business

Delegates are invited to discuss any other issues that were not included under the agenda items.

Liaison Unit will provide a calendar of the FOREST EUROPE meetings to be held in 2019.

6. Closure of the meeting

LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

ELM/2018/1/RTM Co-chairs Summary

ELM/2018/2/Technical Information by FAO and UNECE - will be circulated among signatories and observers as soon as it is provided by the FAO and UNECE Secretariats

ELM/2018/3/Implementation of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision

ELM/2018/4/Work Programme Implementation