

# FOREST EUROPE

Issue 1/2017, August 2017

The Newsletter of the Liaison Unit Bratislava

## Forest sector needs flexible, creative, open-minded people with subject specific as well as cross-cutting skills

To support the implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme, the workshop aimed at promotion of green jobs in the forest sector was held on June 27-28, 2017 in Bratislava providing a platform for dialogue of nearly 70 participants from 18 signatory countries as well as representatives of various stakeholders and experts. The workshop was opened by the Minister of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic, H.E. Gabriela Matečná. In her opening speech, she highlighted that the green jobs concept offers a great opportunity for the European forest sector in the changing world.



*The Minister during her opening speech. From left to right: Alexander Buck, Executive director of IUFRO; Gabriela Matečná, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, Ľudmila Marušáková, Head of Liaison Unit Bratislava, Alicja Kacprzak, Forestry Officer at UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section*

The Minister as well as panellists stressed the need to adapt to the new developments and megatrends, such as demographic change, climate change and related policy objectives, digitalisation as well as specific issues influencing the forest sector such as growing social claim on forests and ecosystem services on one hand and increasing demand for wood supplies on the other. “If the

forest sector wants to stay economically viable and maintain its role in the society, these trends cannot be ignored” said the Minister.

Several speakers presented interesting and inspiring examples of possible green jobs in the sector, such as bio-remediation of polluted water, forest eco-therapy activities, eco-tourism, forest pedagogics and outdoor educational programmes. Similarly, potential of developing the bioeconomy and respective new technologies for the employment was highlighted.

The Minister also reminded that “to secure necessary diversification and application of new technologies, we need not only financial investments – there is also a need to invest into forest sector’s work force development and to attract flexible, creative, forward looking and open-minded staff with diversity of views and new ideas.”

In this respect, it was emphasised that competence and qualification profiles (identifying particular skills requirements) must be developed in the framework of multi-stakeholder platforms including, inter alia, employers, education and training providers, scientists and other relevant players of the labour market. Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation of Skills, and European Skills, Competences, Qualification and Occupations (ESCO) can be seen as good examples from sub-regional level. Applying scientific approaches and objective methods for new skills requirements also seems to be promising in this respect. Mobility of students and teachers as well as using proper didactic tools and approaches are necessary preconditions for building new qualified workforce together with effective communication through social media to attract young people to study forestry programmes.

Attracting more people as well as bringing more diversity to the sector was also in the centre of the debate focused at gender. Higher involvement of women in the forest

sector was presented as a way to increase diversification and management approaches thus increasing resilience and adaptability of the sector to changes, which will come in future. Improving the gender balance in the sector should be therefore seen as an opportunity not as an obligation.

Participants also suggested that further efforts at pan-European level should be targeted at social issues of forestry operations, such as adequate remuneration and job stability. As it was pointed out during the discussion, „fragmentation of the forest sector labour force is a barrier to decency – small contractors often struggle working for very cheap prices, market competition often do not develop decency of jobs”. In this respect, an appropriate way of adapting particular public procurement procedures considering decency requirements may improve the situation of forest workers but also quality of work and environmental aspects of forestry operations.

Representative of the International Labour Organisation highlighted the need to fight against informalities in the forest sector as the first precondition to improve decency aspects of forest work, where also proper training, labour inspection and supervision, reliable and comparable data on health and safety play an important role. Labelling of jobs as green jobs in the framework of national classification systems of occupations based on assessment of their environmental aspects can also be beneficial for communicating the sector’s contribution to green economy.

Furthermore, involvement of migrant workers in the forest sector offers an opportunity for the sector in many countries to tackle the lack of qualified workforce, but also opens questions related to decent work. There is a need for proper coordination of the existing instruments such as validation of informal and non-formal learning, recognition of national certification and/or additional compulsory or voluntary standards and certification schemes at various levels (notably assessment and certification of skills) as well as field supervision of forestry operations to ensure sufficient skills levels and improve health and safety standards.

The workshop brought many other interesting ideas and provided useful advice highlighting numerous aspects which need to be taken into account when tackling employment in the forest sector including promotion of new green jobs. Although, particularly new jobs must be a subject of proper social, technological, environmental, economic and political analyses, it was simultaneously noted that diversification of business and employment opportunities in the sector must be creative, innovative and courageous.

Forest sector, however, cannot solve all of the issues bound with its workforce, skills development and job creation on its own. Cross-sectoral cooperation with labour and education sectors as well as the involvement of all relevant stakeholders seems to be inevitable to implement broad range of actions and instruments necessary to deliver the required change.

## Organisation of the workshop

The purpose of organising the workshop Promoting Green Jobs in the Forest Sector was to share lessons learned and to stimulate discussions among relevant partners within and outside the forest sector on the promotion of green jobs and the development of new skills for the forest sector thus contributing to the implementation of the pan-European actions defined by the Madrid Ministerial Resolution 1 Forest Sector in the Centre of Green Economy as well as the Rovaniemi Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy.

The workshop was co-organized by FOREST EUROPE, FAO and UNECE to joint efforts and put together expertise gathered in the recent years in these processes and organisations.

Similarly, International Labour Organisation of the United Nations, which is together with its Green Jobs Programme a key organisation in the field of green jobs agenda and actively involved in the work of FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on Green Jobs, Education and Training Systems took part at the workshop.

Beside the above mentioned organisations, the workshop was attended by almost 70 experts from 18 signatory countries and several observer organisations as well as other relevant institutions.

Liaison Unit Bratislava gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all panellists, speakers and participants for their useful presentations and discussions at the workshop. Special thanks are due to Mr. Alexander Buck, the Executive Director of IUFRO, for moderating the plenary session during the first workshop day.

Presentations as well as conclusions from the parallel sessions can be found at

<http://foresteurope.org/event/11934>

## Social and cultural benefits of forests contributing to human health and well-being

In recent decades the perception of benefits of European forests has broadened towards socio-economic and cultural benefits, which are frequently mentioned as an emerging issue for the future. Green spaces, especially forests, are good for human health. There is clear evidence that forests as a place for recreation and eco-tourism have positive effects on physical and mental health, especially in terms of prevention of many civilization diseases. Given the positive impacts and benefits of forests on human health and well-being, forests are a unique place for leisure activities, restoration, recovery from stress and further social and therapeutic interventions. The contribution of forests to human well-being is being increasingly recognized by health experts and institutions.

Spending time in natural and cultural landscapes increases not only our personal welfare, but can also reduce the costs for health care by prescribed stays in green areas. These are the main messages from the third international conference on “Landscapes and Human Health: Forests, Parks and Green Care”, which took place from 17th-19th of May 2017 in Vienna, Austria. The conference was organized by the Federal Research and Training Centre for Forests, Natural Hazards and Landscape within the scope of the “Green Care FOREST” project, in collaboration with other relevant Austrian institutions and universities.

Mr. Gerhard Mannsberger, Director General of the Forestry Department of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, emphasized that Green Care offers new opportunities to establish closer collaboration within the sectors of health, tourism, social care and forestry, by advertising attractive means and meeting the different needs and therefore generating additional income.

Equally important aspect is the fact that forests as learning environment (through forest pedagogy programmes) encourage global and long-term thinking and acting, holistic approach, improve social behaviour, respect and responsibility for nature. Forest visitors can learn about benefits of using wood as a renewable material (to gain social acceptance for timber harvesting and forest management) and develop sense of responsibility and interaction for the role of forests and forestry ahead of climate change mitigation.

Incorporating new activities, such as forest recreation, eco-tourism, forest pedagogy, and forest eco-therapy, would strengthen the social and cultural aspects of sustainable forest management and lead to diversification

and new opportunities for the forest sector unlocking the potential for new green jobs development.

Building on former initiatives, ongoing work and experience in several countries and organisations, FOREST EUROPE tackles this highly topical issue, which is also in line with global agenda, mainly/namely the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

**The FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on human health and well-being** will be established in the forthcoming months according to the FE Work Programme – Action 4.6 “Enhancing the social dimension of SFM in the context of the benefits of forests to human health and well-being”. The EG will focus on collecting the already existing scientific resources published in the recent twenty years in Europe, such as research papers, project outcomes,

### FOREST EUROPE at UNFF 12

The twelfth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 12) was held 1-5 May 2017 at UN Headquarters in New York. Over 300 participants from Member States, international organizations, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests and Major Groups gathered to address implementation of the first-ever UN Strategic Plan on Forests 2017-2030. A number of panel discussions were held on contributions of forests and forestry to the Sustainable Development Goals to be taken up by High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Means of implementation for sustainable forest management; monitoring, assessment and reporting; and emerging challenges and issues were also debated. An omnibus resolution was adopted on the last day.

FOREST EUROPE as a regional process for dialogue and cooperation on forest policies in Europe has a recognized place in the UN Forum on Forests. The issues addressed by FOREST EUROPE [statements](#) in the general discussion included regional cooperation, gender equity (SDG 5) and monitoring, assessment and reporting on forests. The Liaison Unit also co-organized, together with UNECE and FAO, a [side event](#) on green jobs in forestry.



surveys pertinent to benefits and impacts of forests of human health and well-being. Based on these outputs, a workshop will be organised to transfer scientific knowledge to policy makers, and thus enable a science-policy dialogue and share the best practice examples. Opportunities for mainstreaming forestry activities to other sectors, such as health and social sector, education, tourism and other businesses will be sought. Recommendations for the integration of social and cultural aspects by means of eco-tourism and recreation, forest-related education and forest pedagogy, forest therapy and healing into Sustainable Forest Management gathered by the Expert Group at the workshop could serve as basis for designing forest policies and strategies not only promoting contribution of the sector for society but also leading to increasing diversification and entrepreneurship opportunities based on forest related services, wood and non-wood products. Collaborative data collection has received broad support from stakeholders including at the World Forest Week held by FAO in Rome, in July 2016. Along these lines, recommendations of the FRA Advisory Group meeting, held in Rome, in October 2016, supported collaboration with regional C&I processes and data collection through the CFRQ.

### Adjustment of Indicator 6.4 Investments in forests and forestry

The FOREST EUROPE – Liaison Unit Bratislava (LUB) in cooperation with UN ECE and FAO have started works on the preparation of the updated questionnaire for the data collection on quantitative and qualitative indicators for next report on the State of Europe's Forests (SoEF) 2020. Updated questionnaire will be based on the document "Updated pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management" that was adopted by the Madrid Ministerial Conference in 2015. The document contains a few altered indicators as compared to the preceding set of Criteria and Indicators used in previous reporting cycle. New wording of these altered indicators should be reflected in respective reporting forms and tables of the above mentioned questionnaire. Quantitative indicator 6.4 "Investments in forests and forestry" is one of the altered indicators. However, there are a few doubts and uncertainties in mutual links among the title, full text, reported categories and definitions of this indicator, as well as between its content and related indicators.

The above mentioned is the main reason why FOREST EUROPE LUB decided to kindly invite all FOREST EUROPE signatories and observers to contribute to the formulation of the reporting format for the indicator 6.4. For this

purpose, LUB has prepared the online survey where signatories and observers can express their opinions on reporting format of indicator 6.4.

We recommended to fill out the questionnaire in close cooperation with the experts who report data related to the socio-economic criteria and indicators and/or the European economic accounts for forestry. Respondents can consult related background document containing detailed information on the development, actual state and proposals related to the reporting content and format of indicator 6.4.

In order to follow stipulated road map for preparation of the next report on SoEF (2020), signatories and observers are kindly asked to provide their responses to the survey by 15 September 2017 via link [https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Questionnaire\\_indicator\\_6\\_4](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Questionnaire_indicator_6_4).

We would like to thank all countries' respondents in advance for their valuable contribution.

### FOREST EUROPE in touch with forestry universities and getting closer to forestry students

Liaison Unit Bratislava has approached forestry faculties across Europe to start cooperation aimed at raising awareness on international forest policy processes among students and increase interest of young people in policy-making.

To achieve better understanding what FOREST EUROPE is, how the international forest policy dialogue works and why it is important, Liaison Unit prepared a short animated movie and presentation about FOREST EUROPE.

These materials were distributed to the boards of relevant universities across Europe in cooperation with International Forestry Students' Association (IFSA). Main idea is to encourage university professors to incorporate information about FOREST EUROPE into their forest policy classes to raise awareness about FOREST EUROPE and its main achievements among forestry students.

Currently, a call for a PhD internship has been launched and distributed among students via FOREST EUROPE and IFSA channels. Duration of the internship will be three months, beginning in September. The trainee will assist the LUB team on given topics being actively engaged into preparation of meetings and work of expert groups.

Another activity targeted at strengthening cooperation with students will be an upcoming student conference to be held during the first week of December 2017. At the beginning of next semester – in September, FOREST EUROPE will issue a call for abstracts, when the forestry

students should present their ideas and opinions on/research or other activities linked to the particular topics of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme. Subsequently, the conference steering committee will select 30 best abstracts to be presented during the conference.

Overall, the survey indicated a high degree of support for the continuation of FOREST EUROPE as a voluntary high-level political process for dialogue and cooperation on forest policies in Europe, with adjustments needed at operational level. Ministerial Conference including its commitments remains to be the core of the process.

Members of the WG emphasized the central issue of enhancing political relevance of FOREST EUROPE, which is often associated with participation and engagement of ministers at Ministerial Conferences. This can be achieved by effectively addressing emerging issues that are relevant to the wider society. Furthermore, a science policy dialogue needs to be used for knowledge management, forecasting and formulation of proper responses of the forestry sector to the broader societal challenges. The idea of developing a rapid response mechanism was discussed at length, and is viewed by a number of signatories as a way to increase both relevance and effectiveness of FOREST EUROPE. Such a mechanism would enable FOREST EUROPE to make joint, timely statements and prepare position papers for relevant fora.

The WG also expressed its support for strengthening partnerships with other actors at regional and global levels, including cooperation with forest related organizations and with other sectors. This is seen as a way to enhance implementation of the ministerial commitments, and to increase efficiencies. Several participants acknowledged existing examples of current cooperation with other actors, and continued proactive approaches by FOREST EUROPE were encouraged.

The WG recognized the work done by the Liaison Unit in communications. New tools for sharing best practices and other on-line discussion features of internal communications were introduced. In future, various events such as the International Day of Forests, European Forest Week and others offer opportunities for cooperation, including, for instance, joint press releases with partners.

Maximizing the effectiveness and efficiency of structures, procedures and work modalities has been a key area for this review. The WG expressed strong support for more interactive and more dynamic conduct of the Ministerial Conference itself, as well as the Expert Level Meetings and other events organized by FOREST EUROPE.

Finally, in terms of financial resources, it remains crucial to secure a solid budget for the secretariat (Liaison Unit) and its operations, and at the same time to mobilize in-kind contributions for ensuring full implementation of Work Programme actions. The value of in-kind contributions, which could take the form of staff

**INTERNSHIP AVAILABLE**

Are you...?

- PhD student?
- Interested in Forest Policy?
- In touch with topics such as:
  - Forest monitoring and reporting
  - Green Economy, Bioeconomy and Green Jobs
  - Forest Ecosystem Services
  - Forest Protection & adaptation to climate change

Yes?

Then sign for 3 months fully-covered FOREST EUROPE internship!

Send your CV and motivation letter to [liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org](mailto:liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org).

Deadline is 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017

September 25, 2017  
December 18, 2017

For more info visit [www.foresteurope.org](http://www.foresteurope.org)

Forest Europe growing life

## Second Meeting of Working Group on Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE

The second meeting of the Working Group (WG) took place on 13-14 June 2017, in Bratislava. It was attended by 35 participants representing 21 signatory countries and the European Union as well as 4 international observer organizations (see full minutes of the meeting [here](#)).

The WG discussion was led by the Co-Chairs, represented by France and Ukraine, and focused on challenges, opportunities and possible recommendations for future direction of FOREST EUROPE. The meeting considered outcomes of the questionnaire survey, which had been conducted in the beginning of 2017. A total of 31 signatories and 8 observer organizations responded to the survey. The analysis of the results is available [here](#).

secondments, studies, workshops, and other types of activities, was recognized by the WG. Travel support for eligible countries is important and one of the fundamental principles of international cooperation ensuring inclusiveness through solidarity.

The idea of setting up a Multi Donor Trust Fund received relatively high support in the survey and was re-iterated by several WG members as a promising way forward, using available experience from international organizations. It could serve as a pool of resources for implementation of the Work Programme, either in its entirety or for specific activities in future.

The final report of the WG with recommendations for action will be presented to the Expert Level Meeting for adoption in autumn 2017.



### **Expert Group on Adaptation to Climate Change kicking off**

Implementation of the Madrid Ministerial Resolution 2 “Protection of forests in a changing environment“ focuses on integrating climate change adaptation considerations into mainstream Sustainable Forest Management. This part of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016–2020 aims at strengthening the resilience of forests and enhancing their protection against natural hazards and human induced threats associated with climate. An Expert Group has been set up to exchange experience, share examples and assess the current state of implementation of adaptation measures in the pan-European region. Its first meeting will be held on 6–7 September 2017, in Bratislava. About 25 experts representing the signatories and observer organizations are expected to attend.

They will share information and experiences about the work already carried out by various organizations, initiatives and projects in the region, including the European Union’s EIP-AGRI Focus Group on new practices and tools for adaptation and mitigation to climate change.

The Expert Group is expected to develop a questionnaire survey on the current status of implementation of adaptation measures. In line with the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme, two workshops planned for 2018 serve to underpin implementation efforts at regional level. The first Workshop will be organized by FOREST EUROPE in collaboration with partner organizations in spring 2018, to share expertise and experience on protection of forests against current and future natural hazards and human induced threats. Second Workshop, to be held in autumn 2018, will focus on agroforestry strategies for promoting adaptation to climate change and combating land degradation.

### **The first meeting of Advisory Group on the preparation of the report on SoEF 2020**

The first meeting of Advisory Group (AG) on the preparation of the report on State of Europe’s Forests (SoEF) 2020 will be held in Bratislava, Slovakia, on 27-28 September 2017. The objective of the AG work is to contribute to the preparation of the report by providing technical and scientific guidance to the Liaison Unit Bratislava. The AG is composed of experts invited to the AG and nominated by relevant international organizations and countries. At the first meeting of the AG mainly recommendations on the format, structure and content of the next report will be discussed.

For more information, please visit

<http://foresteurope.org/event/12063/>.

### **Second meeting of the Expert Group on Implementation of the updated Pan-European indicators for SFM**

FOREST EUROPE in cooperation with EFICEEC and BOKU organizes second meeting of the Expert Group on Implementation of the updated Pan-European indicators for SFM that will be held 17-18 October 2017, in Vienna, Austria.

Experts will analyse the options for formation and uses of the pan-European C&I subsets including their applications at global, regional, sub-regional and national levels. The indicator subsets should contribute to assessing and communicating the achievements of SFM and addressing other policy areas.

For more information, please visit

<http://foresteurope.org/event/12682/>.

## First Meeting of the Expert Group on Valuation of and Payments for Forest Ecosystem Services

At the Seventh FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference in Madrid in 2015, the ministers responsible for forest in Europe adopted the Madrid Ministerial Resolution 1 “Forest Sector in the Center of Green Economy” where they committed themselves inter alia to incorporate the value of forests ecosystem services (FES) in a green economy. In order to support implementation of this commitment through the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme (Action 4.4), an Expert Group has been established to continue exploring different approaches to valuation of and payments for FES existing within the pan-European region. The Expert Group comprises of 22 members officially nominated by 12 signatory countries and the European Union, as well as 3 observer organizations.

The Expert Group will gather for the first time on 12-13 September 2017, in Bratislava, Slovakia. The meeting will be aimed among the others at sharing information, experience and lessons learnt from former and ongoing work in this field carried out by signatory countries and/or organizations in the pan-European region.

However, the core discussion will focus on finalization of the first part of analysis on different approaches and methodologies on FES valuation existing in the pan-Europe.

A draft of the analysis was prepared by the Slovak experts from the National Forest Centre-Forest Research Institute, guided by the Liaison Unit Bratislava, and subsequently commented by the Expert Group members.

The experts are also invited to discuss structure and content of the web-based portal that will serve as a platform for knowledge and information exchange on valuation of and payments for FES as well as for sharing best practice examples in this field.

Further information about the Expert Group meeting including the agenda and other relevant documents are available at <http://foresteurope.org/event/12060/>.

### About this newsletter:

This Newsletter provides an update on relevant forest policy developments in Europe. It is edited and published by the Liaison Unit Bratislava, which acts as the secretariat for FOREST EUROPE, a high-level forest policy process established in the 1990s. FOREST EUROPE enhances the cooperation on forest policies in Europe under the leadership of ministers, and secures and promotes Sustainable Forest Management with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to the society.

### **FOREST EUROPE**

#### **Liaison Unit Bratislava**

T.G. Masaryka 22, 960 92 Zvolen  
Slovak Republic

Tel: + 421 45 5314 209

[liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org](mailto:liaison.unit.bratislava@foresteurope.org)

[www.foresteurope.org](http://www.foresteurope.org)