

FOREST EUROPE EXPERT LEVEL MEETING

19 February 2020, Bratislava, Slovakia

Summary of key decisions

The FOREST EUROPE Expert Level Meeting (ELM) took place in Bratislava, the Slovak Republic on 19 February 2020 (back to back with the Drafting Meeting held on 17-18 February 2020). The meeting was attended by 40 delegates representing 27 signatory countries and the European Union, 6 representatives of 5 observer organisations and the Liaison Unit Bratislava (LUB). ELM was co-chaired by Mr. Boris Greguška (Slovakia) and Mr. Thomas Haußmann (Germany).

The aim of the ELM was to discuss preparations for the Eighth Ministerial Conference to be held in Bratislava, the Slovak Republic on 28-29 October 2020, and give guidance on this preparatory process.

Agenda item 1. Opening of the meeting

Mr. Boris Greguška opened the ELM and informed signatories and observers about the objectives of the meeting. He welcomed the Secretary General of the Office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic, Mr. Jaroslav Regec who delivered a welcome speech.

Agenda item 2. Adoption of the agenda

The co-chair introduced the draft agenda and proposed to change the order of the sub-items of the agenda item 3 starting with the discussion on the draft ministerial resolution followed by the discussion on report on implementation of the ministerial commitments, SoEF 2020 preparation, and the draft ministerial declaration. He further suggested to add a discussion points on GCC membership and on Forestry Summit to be held in early October 2020 under the agenda item 5 Any other business. The agenda was adopted with the proposed amendments.

Agenda item 3. Preparation of the Eighth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

3.1 Draft ministerial declaration

The co-chair introduced the draft ministerial declaration improved by the drafting meeting held on 17-18 February 2020.

ELM welcomed the work of the drafting meeting as presented. ELM agreed that the Liaison Unit with the support of the GCC will prepare a revised version of the draft declaration based on the comments provided, and circulate it among signatories and observers as soon as possible. Written reactions to this revised version should be submitted by the end of March 2020 to the Liaison Unit. It is the understanding of ELM that discussion in June 2020 should concentrate mainly on the remaining open issues.

3.2 Draft ministerial resolution

The co-chair introduced the draft ministerial resolution improved by the drafting meeting held on 17-18 February 2020.

ELM welcomed the work of the drafting meeting as presented. ELM has the intention to submit this version to the next ELM in June 2020 for a final adoption in order to present it to ministers. ELM understands that the work on the draft resolution was completed with the understanding that substantial reactions could still be submitted by the end of March 2020 to the Liaison Unit in writing.

3.3 Preparation of the report – Implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Commitments

ELM took note of the information on the Report on implementation of the FOREST EUROPE commitments that is being prepared for the Eighth Ministerial Conference.

ELM agreed to keep preliminary analysis on progress towards the Goals for European Forests and the European 2020 Targets for Forests as an internal document and suggested to prepare a very short draft to be published in the implementation report containing disclaimer stating that the report does not cover responses from all signatories.

The draft of the Report on implementation of the FOREST EUROPE commitments comprising assessment of the progress towards Oslo Goals for European Forests and the European 2020 Targets for Forests, pan-European (FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2016-2020) and national implementation of the Madrid ministerial commitments will be submitted to the next ELM in June 2020.

3.4 Other aspects of the preparation of the Ministerial Conference

ELM took note of the information on the Ministerial Conference to be held in October 2020 in Bratislava.

ELM also took note of the information on the progress in drafting the report State of Europe's Forest 2020.

Agenda item 4. Information on implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme

ELM took note of the information on the implementation of activities of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme.

Agenda item 5. Any other business

ELM took note of the co-chair's announcement on behalf of the GCC regarding an open call for a new GCC country to replace Spain who will leave the GCC at the end of 2020.

ELM took note of the information provided by Turkey about organization of the International Forestry Sector Summit to be held in early October 2020 in Istanbul.

ELM decided to approve the request of the Seed Training Culture and Nature Association for an observer status.

Agenda item 6. Closure of the meeting
