TOGETHER for FORESTS AND PEOPLE through Sustainable Forest Management
What is FOREST EUROPE?

- High level/intergovernmental process providing a policy forum for Ministers responsible for forests to support cooperation towards Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) across Europe.
- Over 25 years has developed common solutions to key challenges of forests, forestry and forest related issues.
- An initiative involving 47 European countries as signatories which joined efforts to make a range of political commitments towards Sustainable Forest Management.
- Open and participatory platform for cooperation and networking of different stakeholders: governments, governmental organizations, civil society, non-governmental organizations.
- A major contributor to the coordination and cooperation of policies between different actors at national, regional and global levels.
- Its mission is to enhance the cooperation on forest policies under the leadership of Ministers, and to secure and promote SFM with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to society.
What are the main achievements?

FOREST EUROPE has introduced a range of new concepts for forest policy, many of which have been at the forefront of development since its inception:

- **Definition of Sustainable Forest Management** - FOREST EUROPE has been recognized for its pilot role in introducing the concept of Sustainable Forest Management, including its widely accepted definition, which implies that forest resources are managed in a sustainable way to meet the social, economic, ecological, cultural and spiritual needs of present and future generations.

- **Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (C&I)** - FOREST EUROPE was one of the first regional policy processes to develop and endorse C&I. They are a basic tool in implementing and promoting SFM by providing relevant information for forest policy development and evaluation, national forest policies, plans and programmes. They enable monitoring, assessment and reporting progress on SFM at regional and national level and cross-sectoral communication. The pan-European C&I set has served as a basis for the development of national C&I sets in most of the FOREST EUROPE countries.

- **The report "State of Europe's Forests"** represents a flagship publication that offers a comprehensive overview of European forests, their status, trends as well as an insight into SFM in Europe. It serves for political discussions and evidence-based decision making on future opportunities and challenges and associated political responses.

- **National Forest Programmes** provide an important tool for implementation of sustainable forest management. They facilitate coordination and cohesion of all policies related to forests and forestry based on broad participation and integration of forest matters in broader societal goals. To date, 32 countries have a national forest programme in place, while forest strategies exist in practically all FOREST EUROPE countries.

- **Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management** form a common framework of recommendations that are used on a voluntary basis and as a complement to national and regional instruments to further promote sustainable forest management in forested areas of Europe. They have become a cornerstone for forest certification systems.

- **In total, twenty-one resolutions and two decisions** have been adopted by seven Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe reflecting all relevant emerging issues, such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, illegal logging, forest fires, forest and water, forest and energy and green economy. Moreover, two decisions have been adopted in relation to the negotiation of the Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.

Sustainable Forest Management is the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.
What makes FOREST EUROPE unique?

- It is the only open and inclusive dialogue forum for cooperation on forest policies in the pan-European region whereby participating countries and stakeholders can regularly meet and discuss relevant emerging issues and give timely responses to those issues.

- It provides a key link between global, regional and national forest policy dialogue.

- It develops and adopts key commitments and actions, and promotes their implementation into national policies.

- It promotes healthy forests, which mitigate climate change, secures the supply of good-quality fresh water, enhances and preserves forest biodiversity and provides other forest ecosystem services while supplying timber.

**At global level**
FOREST EUROPE cooperates with global forest related processes and institutions to enhance the contributions of European countries towards the implementation of broader international commitments such as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

**At regional level**
FOREST EUROPE is a regional pillar of Sustainable Forest Management. Through the FOREST EUROPE commitments, the concept of SFM has been defined and continuously developed at the pan-European level. Furthermore, FOREST EUROPE has had a spin-off effect on the creation of new projects, activities and networks at the pan-European level.

**At national level**
FOREST EUROPE provides key policies, measures and actions to be taken by signatories at national level on a voluntary basis. Outputs and guiding principles work as a reference framework for national actions.
Work Programme 2016-2020

An implementation plan for the commitments made at each ministerial conference is set out in a rolling work programme, which includes the following main topics:

- Further development of SFM tools, such as National Forest Programmes, Criteria and Indicators for SFM including development of appropriate subsets of indicators in order to make them fit for addressing new regional and global challenges.

- Monitoring, assessment and reporting on the state of Europe's forests.

- Contribution to efforts in transition to a green economy, including bio-economy and circular economy through enhancing the role of SFM therein, including social aspects and an evaluation of forest ecosystem services.

- Adaptation of forests in Europe to climate change, their protection in a changing environment against related threats, mitigation of climate change by enhancing the role of forests, SFM and the use of forest products.

- Exploration of possible ways to find common ground on the Legally Binding Agreement.

The outcomes of the work will be presented - and new policy commitments adopted - at the next ministerial conference to be held in 2020.
Linkage of FOREST EUROPE Work Programme Actions to regional and global forest related goals and targets
Future challenges

What is unique about FOREST EUROPE is that the process has maintained an open and informal nature coupled with a high-level political grounding. Nevertheless, there are a number of challenges ahead:

- To maintain relevance of FOREST EUROPE by addressing challenges and issues which impact on forests, forestry and forest-related human activities;
- To increase relevance of FOREST EUROPE by enhancing regional contribution to global forest policy agendas;
- To encourage national implementation and follow up to FOREST EUROPE commitments;
- To keep forestry visible as an active and contributing sector in the high level political agenda in Europe;
- To support a holistic approach to forests and link forestry with environment, water, rural development and other sectors necessary to meet these challenges and to fulfill the FOREST EUROPE mission.
- To review the FOREST EUROPE process, especially its structure, procedures and work modalities, in order to make it more effective, inclusive and fit for future to respond to current and new challenges and opportunities.