

Work programme 2021-2024

FOREST EUROPE - Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
Liaison Unit Bonn



Executive summary

The main objectives of FOREST EUROPE are to develop common strategies to strengthen Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the pan-European region and to find proper responses to current forest policy challenges for its 45 signatory countries and the European Union. Thus, the first endeavour will centre on the concept of SFM and will especially investigate its nexus to other concepts and its potential to serve as a balancing tool to continuously moderate the various claims on forests and forest resources in the future.

Next, the Bratislava Ministerial Resolution sets a joint commitment to connect national and international activities to work towards a coordinated pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism. This will work on the adaptation of forests to changing climatic and site conditions and enhancing forest resilience as well as the adaptation and mitigation potential of forests.

Likewise, FOREST EUROPE will continue to join the discussion about the diversity of forest-based job opportunities that support SFM. Green Jobs in the forest sector contain much more than just the classical image of a forester. The Liaison Unit Bonn (LUBo) will facilitate work on broadening the perspectives of job opportunities along the whole value chain, focusing mainly on university education in cooperation with existing networks and ongoing projects.

FOREST EUROPE is a platform for policy dialogue, notably for Ministers responsible for forests, exchanges of positions, good practices and opinions, and taking political decisions and actions. It is crucial that the process reacts to emerging issues. Thus, scientists will present the latest research on those emerging issues as a basis for a High-Level Policy Dialogue.

The new period will put FOREST EUROPE more in the centre of the policy dialogue by using innovative approaches and modern strategic communication that will assist in achieving these objectives.



Dissemination level (RE - Restricted to a group specified by the Liaison Unit Bonn)

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Review by ELM

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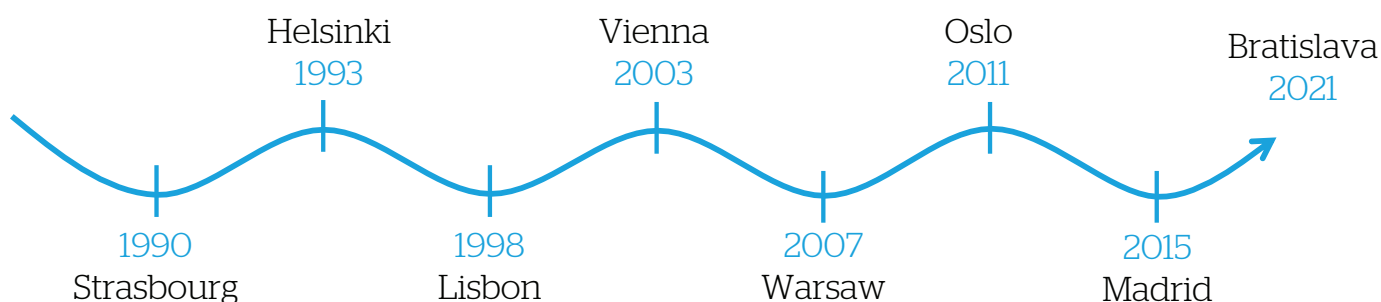
**FOREST EUROPE, Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe
Liaison Unit Bonn (LUBo)**

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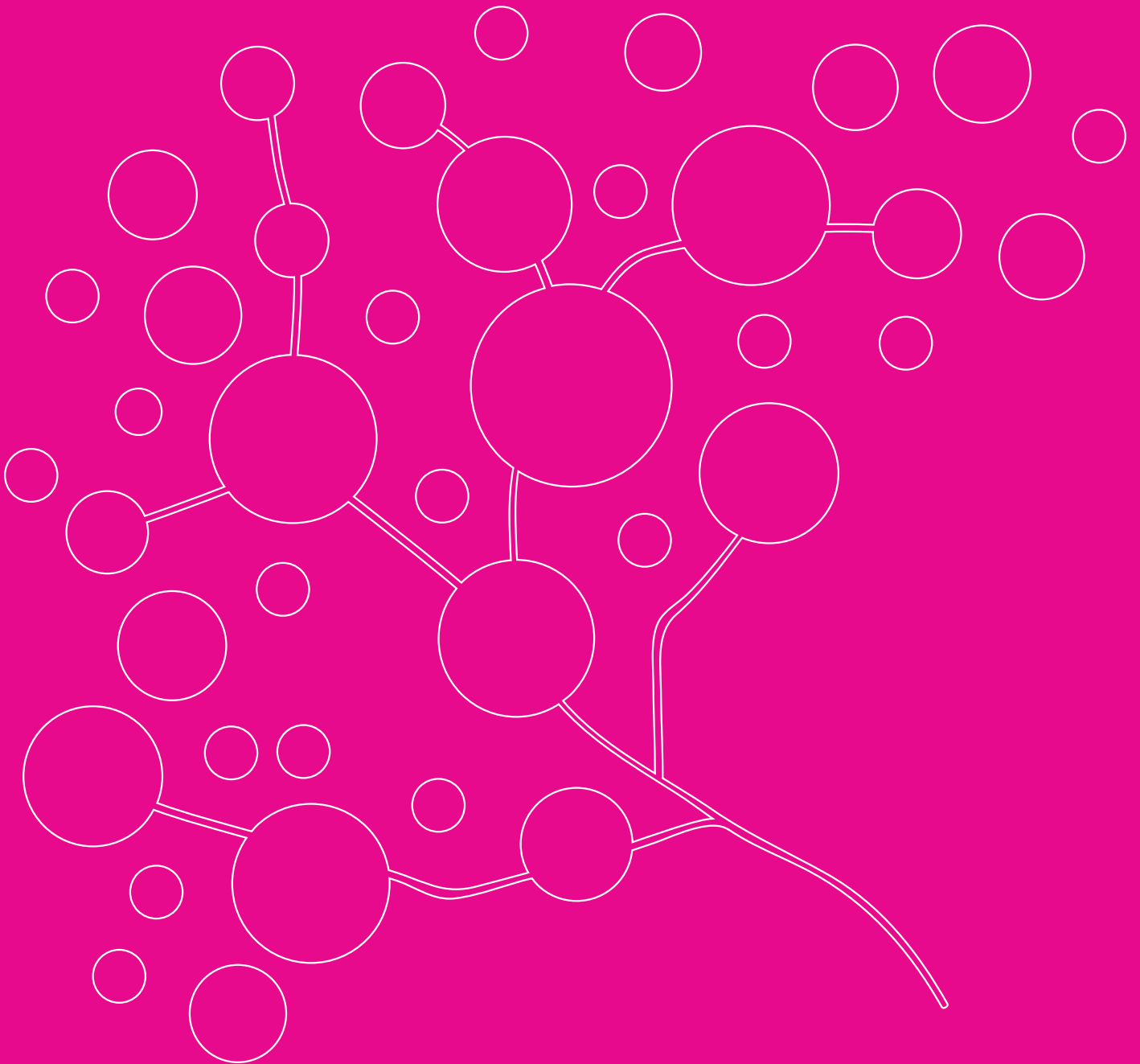
Introduction

FOREST EUROPE, the Ministerial Conference on Protection of the Forests in Europe, founded on 18 December 1990, is a high-level political process that involves Ministers responsible for forests from 45 countries and the European Union (plus observers from 15 additional countries and 48 organisations). The main objectives of this process are to develop common strategies to strengthen SFM in the Pan-European region and to find suitable responses to current forest policy challenges. It builds upon FOREST EUROPE's definition of SFM¹ and employs criteria and indicators (C&I) as the data basis of its flagship report *State of Europe's Forests* (SoEF). As part of the process, signatories make decisions of the highest political relevance regarding forests, forest management, and socio-political topics aiming at safeguarding ecological, social, and economic benefits of European forests.

Ministers responsible for forests in Europe signed the Bratislava Ministerial Declaration "The Future We Want: The Forests We Need" and the Bratislava Ministerial Resolution "Adaptating pan-European Forests to Climate Change" at the 8th Ministerial Conference, which took place as a virtual event on 14 and 15 April 2021. Both ministerial documents are the basis of the Work Programme 2021 - 2024 and are annexed to this document.



¹ RESOLUTION H1 "General Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Forests in Europe" (16-17 June 1993, Helsinki/Finland)



Objective and main principles

SFM is essential to maintain the ecological, economic, and social-cultural functions of forests. Thus, further promoting SFM in the Pan-European region is the starting point of the FOREST EUROPE Work Programme 2021-2024. The definition of SFM and its tools such as C&I, as well as other high-level political commitments adopted at the eight Ministerial Conferences held to date, represent the most important accomplishments of FOREST EUROPE and will thus remain as the basis of future work.

As the custodian of the concept of SFM in the pan-European context, FOREST EUROPE could still be better known by forest policy advisors, academia, forest practitioners, young professionals and trainees, and the public in the Pan-European region. Therefore, a strong emphasis will be placed on communication in the new Work Programme. To achieve this, LUBo will use modern and engaging communication methods to raise awareness about the work and achievements. Key messages will be continuously shared across a variety of channels to ensure consistency and clarity of communication. A storytelling approach will bring all these messages to life and make them identifiable in relation to the target groups. Real-life case studies will illustrate the impact of SFM in society. For this important work, LUBo will liaise with the communication strategies of our partner organizations to maximise synergies.

For the new Work Programme period, the nature of FOREST EUROPE as a forest policy platform for high-level political dialogue and technical exchange will be intensified and further developed, including the creation of new interaction mechanisms. The overall principle of the process to generate added political value by its inclusiveness, consensus building ability and flexibility, will remain. When implementing the new Work Programme, more flexibility is needed regarding emerging issues of political relevance. In line with the Bratislava Ministerial Declaration, the implementation of the Work Programme reflects overarching political priorities on inter alia climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity protection, promoting a circular bioeconomy and allow for flexibility regarding new and emerging issues. The Work

Programme and its implementation need to reflect the financial and administrative capacities of FOREST EUROPE and its Secretariat.

FOREST EUROPE puts a strong emphasis on science-policy interaction in all of its work. The cooperation with academia and forest research organizations such as EFI, the International Union of Forest Research Organizations (IUFRO), and others will guarantee that the latest scientific knowledge is a key part of all FOREST EUROPE activities.

The role of partnering is key in the FOREST EUROPE process. It is of high importance to carry out the Work Programme in cooperation with signatories, observers, and other relevant organizations and stakeholders. FOREST EUROPE is also open in this respect to new partners across the sector and outside of the geographic region. The partnering will be done in a transparent and trustful way on a continuous basis. FOREST EUROPE will continue to contribute to global forest policy agendas and to strengthen the science-policy dialogue. Engaging international organizations in FOREST EUROPE activities and events, cooperating with them, and representing FOREST EUROPE at relevant international fora, could enhance such an exchange of knowledge and practices, within the mandate given by the Ministers. Substantial knowledge has been generated and collected by the FOREST EUROPE process over its 30 years of existence. This treasure should form the basis for knowledge transfer and capacity building within the Pan-European region. The Work Programme is strongly rooted in the Bratislava Ministerial Declaration and Resolution and will set the goal to establish a few, but strong work streams of high political relevance.

According to the recommendations of the 2017 Report on Future Direction of FOREST EUROPE, a multi-donor trust fund was established by LUBo's partner, EFI, where signatories, observers, and other possible donors can provide financial resources. The information on these financial donations but also the in-kind contributions made by partners to the FOREST EUROPE process will be made available to the ELM if not otherwise decided.



WORKSTREAM 1

A dynamic concept of Sustainable Forest Management in Europe

The Pan-European concept of SFM has been a success story for more than 30 years as it has safeguarded a common approach for dialogue, monitoring, and policymaking across Europe. In the meantime, forest policy and management have been confronted with emerging challenges in both the changing environment but also altering political frame conditions. New demands on forests and new concepts directly or indirectly related to forests and forest resources have recently emerged (e.g. circular bioeconomy, ecosystem services, climate-smart forestry, biodiversity-smart forestry, etc.). However, balancing the different claims on forests and forest ecosystem services is a complex task that requires proper handling of trade-offs occurring in forest land use, management and forest value chains. SFM is a dynamic concept and a complex one. Hence, it is important – based on the SFM definition as laid down in Helsinki Resolution 1 - to constantly revisit the role of SFM and investigate its nodes to other concepts, its strengths and weaknesses, and its potential to serve as a balancing tool to continuously moderate the various and varying claims on forests and forest resources in order to keep it fit for future challenges.

The C&I of SFM have been the most powerful tool for evaluating SFM. Since their adoption in Lisbon in 1998 they have served as a common framework for monitoring and reporting and have undergone several adaptations, also in collaboration with other regional processes and in the global context. Recent developments in C&I work indicate that multi-level use of C&I can enrich the outreach of forest information and broaden target groups. For instance, core or key indicators can be used to provide condensed and more comprehensible information to audiences also outside the forest sector. This makes it possible to answer the right questions with the right tools, and also generate opportunities for redesigning the SoEF report in order to broaden it from a purely forest expert instrument to a communication instrument capable of reaching a wider audience.

The Bratislava Ministerial Declaration “The Future We Want: The Forests We Need” gives a clear reference and commitment to the concept of SFM and its various elements. Workstream 1 will aim at bringing these ends together and reviewing progress of SFM and use of its instruments (e.g., C&I, SoEF, Goals&Targets, Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines (PEOLG)).

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Expected outputs

The expected outputs will further strengthen the concept of SFM in politics and practice, and improve outreach to the society, supported by the Communication Strategy 2021 - 2024. FOREST EUROPE is known and respected as the custodian of the SFM concept in Europe and represents this concept in the political dialogue at pan-European and global level.

- a. A Think Tank will be established and a report on revisiting the role of SFM and its tools in the context of current challenges and other forest-related concepts will be elaborated and discussed widely with signatories and observers.
- b. A concept for the further use of C&I will be developed in close collaboration with signatories and other relevant organisations and processes.
- c. A concept for the redesign of the report “State of Europe’s Forests” (SoEF) will be developed.

Workstream 1 is the tier where all SFM-related aspects will be dealt with. This entails work on both a technical and political level.

The workstream will have multiple tasks. First, it contributes to previous efforts on the implementation of the Bratislava Ministerial Declaration to respond to the needs of forests and forests value chains expressed there and develop a node to connect these multiple claims and concepts.

The activities in workstream 1 aim to actively contribute to the political dialogue on forests at a European, EU, and global level, as well as to act as an active ambassador of the FOREST EUROPE process in these processes. It is planned to facilitate a SFM Think Tank, i.e. a FOREST EUROPE expert group composed of signatory delegates and international, cross-sectoral experts, that will review the concept of SFM and its instruments (e.g., C&I, Goals&Targets, PEOLG), for example by conducting a SWOT analysis, and develop recommendations for strengthening SFM and achieving Goals&Targets as a basis for policy dialogue. This will be done taking into account latest results from research, the needs from stakeholders and practitioners, but also the interests from the society aiming for inclusiveness in this activity. The group will present to the Expert Level Meeting advice for SFM implementation and offer the signatories a basis for policy decision-making. The collection of best practices and experiences shall with the support of signatories and observers demonstrate how SFM works in practice. For technical discussions additional experts groups

can be set up upon demand. Building on this, new communication means to enhance the efficiency of exchange and outreach will be sought (e.g., webinars, etc.).

Furthermore, LUBo will continue seeking close collaboration with international organizations (in particular UNECE, FAO) and processes (in particular UNFF, Montreal Process) to further develop C&I for SFM and increase outreach and communication to a broader audience. This will include investigating the potential of a core set of Pan-European indicators for SFM. Further work on data quality and completeness, monitoring aspects, data collection, and potential new indicators for SFM (e.g. for biodiversity, climate change, forest health) for the next SoEF will be conducted under the umbrella of FOREST EUROPE. Forest reporting will be organised in close cooperation with UNECE and FAO, and with the Team of Specialists on Monitoring SFM, as in previous periods. Means for a more frequent data reporting will be investigated in line with European and international initiatives.

Finally, a redesign for the SoEF will be proposed to the ELM, including a respective communication strategy for its further use and promotion.





WORKSTREAM 2

Pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism

Across the European region, forest ecosystems have been exposed to forest disturbance regimes followed by intensified damage events with increasing frequency in the last decade. Natural disturbances are an integral part of forest ecosystems; however, in recent times the intensified negative impacts on forests and associated ecosystem services reached a severe extent and are predicted to be even further accelerated by climate change.

The intensified trend in scale and frequency of forest damage events has gained increasing attention by politicians, scientists, practitioners and society. Recent political commitments and actions supported by scientific studies emphasized the need to further enhance cooperation, exchange, and coordination between key stakeholders that address forest disturbance risks and support them with the best available scientific knowledge and fact-based evidence.

Signatories of the Bratislava Ministerial Resolution “Adapting pan-European forests to climate change” at the 8th Ministerial Conference, held on 14 and 15 April 2021, committed themselves to strengthen national efforts and improve international cooperation in the pan-European region. Thus, the Bratislava Ministerial Resolution sets the joint commitment to connect national and international activities to achieve several goals: i) to work towards a coordinated pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism, ii) to inter alia further increase work on the adaptation of forests to changing climatic and site conditions and, iii) to enhance the resilience and the adaptation and mitigation potential of forests.

Expected outputs

Workstream 2 aims at the following outputs during the implementation of the current work programme:

- a. A proposal for terms of references (ToR) will be developed by LUBo and submitted to the FOREST EUROPE signatories for their consideration and possible adoption, the pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism will be established based on the results of the pilot phase.
- b. Signatories will consider their possibilities to actively contribute to the implementation of the forest risk knowledge mechanism based on the mutual commitment to adapt pan-European forests to climate change.
- c. The mechanism will support political decision-making and transboundary collaboration to better cope with current and future forest disturbance risks by providing timely and targeted information for policy making.
- d. Added values and synergies with existing activities addressing forest disturbance risks will be established and knowledge exchange and capacity-building will be fostered building on science-based and operational best practices.
- e. An integrated and inclusive information network among policy, science and practice will initiate linkages for scientific communities and forest practitioners at national and regional levels involving signatory countries, observers, and partner organisations as multipliers, including audience-tailored information and communication means.

The overall objective of the workstream 2 is to improve the transboundary cooperation related to forest disturbance risk management building on a collaborative, trustworthy and novel format, defined by adopted terms of reference (ToR), hereby supporting the FOREST EUROPE signatories to adapt pan-European forests to climate change.

In order to achieve the set objective, the beneficial interrelations of SFM to enhance the resilience as well as the adaptation and mitigation potential of forests will be further assessed and strengthened. In addition, the main, but not exclusive, focuses will be on transboundary cooperation on forest disturbance risk management, risk prevention and preparedness, early response and recovery best practices, enhanced knowledge exchange opportunities, and improved information sharing and proactive engagement with the public and media. The development of ToR, including an evaluation of possible funding sources of the pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism, will take existing related activities and networks at European and sub-regional levels thoroughly into account in order to increase potential added values and to avoid duplications.

As a starting point, an in-depth screening and condensing activity will define the key working areas aiming at potential synergies back-to-back with major European forest risk-related processes.

Key products of existing forest risk-related processes will be identified, evaluated, and condensed to provide up-to-date and concise evidence-based information. Based on this, the potential of FOREST EUROPE as a platform to ensure the timely discourse in the context of the dynamic and time-critical forest risk development will be evaluated and discussed, including the rules of procedure to safeguard an exchange between signatories and observers. In parallel, the possibilities to further improve the linkages of existing fora to enhance knowledge, exchange opportunities of, for example, best practices and recent scientific findings will be analysed. A concept for a pilot phase of the forest risk knowledge mechanism will be presented to the ELM in 2022 with the proposal for implementation. Hereby, the development of the ToR shall be supported based on an evaluation of the pilot phase in close cooperation with the signatories and observers.

The forest risk knowledge mechanism will be closely interlinked and supported by the FOREST EUROPE 2021 - 2024 Communication Strategy to proactively engage with key stakeholders and particularly with the public and media. Here, appropriate instruments (e.g. events, communication platforms and channels) will be examined to facilitate exchange and engagement interfaces between important transboundary policy, scientific and practice formats.





WORKSTREAM 3

Green Jobs

Skilled personnel are required to adapt European forests to climate change and manage the increasing societal needs of ecosystem services. However, a distinct decrease of Green Jobs in the forest sector has been reported in the SoEF 2020 report. Additionally, the topic of Green Jobs is only loosely represented in current SFM reporting and requires a broadening of the scope and clarity of definitions and concepts. Addressing the topic can specifically contribute to achieving the 2030 European Target VIII. Further work is needed in this field to identify opportunities and challenges in order to improve the competitiveness of the forest sector. To achieve this, innovative ideas of how to promote Green Jobs in the forest sector will be developed.

The linkage between forest education and possible areas of work along the whole value chain is important. There is a need to ensure that best fitting education provides attractive up-to-date job opportunities to skilled staff in the forest-based sector. This includes classical jobs, but also novel, innovative concepts that are to be explored (e.g., the service sector or the area of circular bioeconomy). New means of work, including digitalization and post-Covid-19 strategies play a crucial role in the sector nowadays.

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Expected outputs

- Signatories and observers will have a better understanding about the status quo regarding the situation in the area of Green Jobs in the forest sector on a national and pan-European level. Where possible, comparable data will be made available, serving as the basis to identify areas where action is needed.
- FOREST EUROPE will be perceived as a leading initiative in the field of Green Jobs in the forest sector and the Expert Group serves as a platform that brings together leading experts in the field.
- Support material for universities will be developed and published. By using these materials, students in the field of forest education will learn more about the variety of Green Jobs and the concept of SFM.

forest sector

This topic has been addressed by many experts and working groups and a lot of valuable outputs have been published. Just one example is the recent publication (February 2021) of *Guidelines on the promotion of Green Jobs in forestry*, by UNECE/FAO and FOREST EUROPE. In addition, networks are already established, and collaboration is certainly encouraged here. To give an example, the collaboration with the members of the UNECE Team of Specialists (ToS) on Green Jobs will play a key part for FOREST EUROPE. This ensures knowledge exchange and enables networking.

Despite the work done already, gaps still exist, for example in data collection. The Institute of International Forestry and Forest Economics (Thünen Institute) will support this workstream with a full-time scientific expert as an in-kind contribution by Germany. As a first output, a scientific report will analyse the situation in the area of Green Jobs in the forest sector of the FOREST EUROPE signatory countries by mid 2022. This study will serve as a background document with a special focus on the relevance of Green Jobs in the forest sector for rural areas, income opportunities, comparison of average income, and the overall economic development of the countries. An Expert Group “Green Jobs in the forest sector” will be set up until the end of 2021. Signatories and observers will nominate members from relevant sectors in order to provide input to the preparation of the described analysis and mandate them to present those topics, which are relevant for the respective countries. Following (national) interests and needs of participants, a detailed agenda will be defined at the first expert meeting and be brought to the attention of the signatories e.g. by written procedure.

Based on the findings of the Expert Group, an information campaign targeting young people for Green Jobs will be considered depending on the interest of the countries and the observer organizations. Additionally, a collaboration around the “Visualization Project” (giving best practise examples for recommendations made in the above-mentioned guidelines) by the members of the ToS is foreseen. It is planned to publish the gathered information in line with the Communication Strategy of FOREST EUROPE by the end of 2021. It will be used to inform the young generation about Green Job opportunities in the forest sector, going beyond the classical image of a forester.

forest education

Promoting enhanced cooperation between existing organizations in order to identify the skills and qualification profiles required by labor markets is crucial. This should be done simultaneously with streamlining forest education and training to meet the dynamic needs of the forest sector and to ensure a highly qualified workforce in the long run. The sector is transforming rapidly, and digitalization and artificial intelligence is now a huge part of this field. Hence, enhanced communication and mediation skills are needed.

The work will concentrate mainly, but not exclusively, on tertiary education. Already existing networks such as the International Forestry Students’ Association (IFSA) and ongoing projects by e.g., FAO, UNECE, IUFRO, the Subgroup of Forest Communicators Network (FCN) Forest pedagogic (FAO) or EFI are invited to cooperate in the process to guarantee the most efficient information flow and the inclusion of needs and expectations by the next generation of skilled employees. Further cooperation is envisaged as well with the global forest education platform, but also other ongoing initiatives.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is putting additional pressure on the job market, special focus is put on overcoming this obstacle for those who are beginning to enter the job market. Suitable means (e.g. webinars or other digital formats) to connect members of this target group with each other will be organised together with relevant stakeholders. Additionally, different e-learning materials will be developed to provide support for lecturers at universities about the variety of Green Jobs and the concept of SFM.

IV. Rapid response on emerging issues

FOREST EUROPE is a platform for high-level forest policy dialogue, exchanges of positions and opinions, and taking political commitments and actions. The topics to be discussed need to be addressed in a timely manner and be high ranking on the pan-European and international forest policy agenda. To make a difference and to give added value, it is important that this dialogue is based on sound and reliable scientific knowledge. Recent events such as large-scale forest fires, storms, bark beetle calamities, and droughts across Europe indicate the need for coordinated responses (e.g., at High-Level Policy Dialogue). Hence, selecting future topics to be addressed requires careful consideration and preparation. It is indispensable that the FOREST EUROPE process reacts on emerging issues. Such actions will also take into consideration already adopted ministerial decisions and resolutions. All these activities will be accompanied by sound communication activities.

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Expected outputs

- a. Ministers and other policy decision-makers responsible for forests will be offered the opportunity to meet regularly and exchange their positions in a dialogue with other signatories, observer organizations, and observer countries.
- b. The FOREST EUROPE process will be recognised as a forum to discuss current forest policy topics in a pan-European context, built on sound science and information.
- c. The science-policy publication and the main conclusions of the High-Level Policy Dialogue will be used for the communication work of FOREST EUROPE with the aim to inform the interested public, academia, forest practitioners and forest policy advisors.
- d. The FOREST EUROPE process will remain flexible and be able to react within short notice on emerging issues. This will also take into consideration already agreed ministerial declarations and resolutions.

LUBo has reserved staff and financial resources to implement the rapid response mechanism and to react on emerging issues. The EFI FOREST EUROPE team will support this task. Currently it is planned that the task will be organised by virtual or physical High-Level Policy Dialogue possibly at the ELM where emerging issues will be discussed by Ministers and other policy decision-makers responsible for forests and invited experts. The selected topics and panelists will be chosen by the GCC based on the proposal by LUBo; the topics listed in the Bratislava Ministerial Declaration could be a potential basis for the selection. In preparation of the High-Level Policy Dialogue, LUBo will propose to GCC scientists renowned for the selected topic to collate the latest scientific knowledge in a concise report that will be published before the event. One of the authors of this report will present the main findings at the High-Level Policy Dialogue to set the scene. In the preparation and organisation of those events maximum synergies should be reached with the work of other science-policy initiatives.

Based on the communication strategy, the High-Level Policy Dialogue will be accompanied by intensive communication work.

LUBo, with the support of the EFI FOREST EUROPE team, will use its communication tools to also react on emerging issues within short notice. The positions expressed will be based on the already adopted ministerial declarations and resolutions. If a new emerging topic needs to be addressed and is not yet covered by the ministerial decisions, the GCC will get involved and decide on the further procedure on this specific topic.

V. Communication and society

The main goal of the communication activities is to assist in achieving FOREST EUROPE's objectives and ensure the visibility of our work and resulting impact by using effective and innovative communication with relevant stakeholders and society. The final outcome will be to motivate European policymakers to engage further in this political dialogue and work together towards forest policy.

Our efforts will be structured following the five elements of all good communication strategies: messages, audience, channels, frequency, and evaluation. The following key messages act as a foundation for creating communication activities:

- FOREST EUROPE is a platform for dialogue and cooperation on SFM.
- SFM is essential to maintain the ecological, economic and social-cultural functions of forests.
- Transboundary cooperation on forest disturbance risk management is needed to improve the ability to cope with disturbance events.
- Products and services from sustainably managed forests play a key role in the green transition. Consumers demand more sustainable and digital solutions, which in turn also prompts innovative Green Jobs.



FOREST EUROPE key audiences have been grouped into five categories: policymakers, forest management related stakeholders, academia, media and society. It is important to use communication tactics that are best suited for each group.

Communication with policymakers will focus on the way that the decisions taken at the Ministerial Conference can influence national and multi-national policies and how this relates to their specific context. We will provide background information, recommendations for specific policy actions, tools, methodologies and implications (positive and negative impacts) that justify the decisions in any potential political debate through policy briefs, publications, meetings and participation in forestry-relevant events.

Joint work with international organizations is relevant to reaching out to all forest management related stakeholders (including owners, managers, industry and NGOs). LUBo will seek strategic partnerships with international and regional organizations, such as UNECE, FAO and the European Commission. This will facilitate their understanding of FOREST EUROPE, gain social, business and political support, attract potential message multipliers, and reduce risks of misinformation and misconceptions. Likewise, a particular focus on forestry education and young people interested in forest issues will be sought using synergies with other organizations.

Journalism is a powerful tool to communicate the activities and impacts of FOREST EUROPE to a wider public. However, merely sending press releases is no longer effective for the media. Therefore, we will offer information via a variety of online and offline channels and make it easier for journalists to find information on social media and search engines. Offline activities include a media capacity building training (e.g., Lookout Station Solution Hack) that can prove beneficial in the long run for media engagement and trust-building.

Finally, the general public is usually interested in tangible results, facts and benefits. The decisions taken at the Ministerial Conference affect everyone, so FOREST EUROPE has the responsibility to communicate the outcomes and how this will impact society. In order to achieve this, we will seek general media engagement, have a strong online presence, and make good use of social media.

Apart from the communication channels already mentioned, we would like to introduce webinars, which can take on many forms, from a simple presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar. We will design them to be interactive with presentation slides, polls, links to social media and live Q&As to involve and engage with the audience. We will center them in providing value for all the participants.

All decisions concerning new communication tasks will be based on the monitoring and evaluation of ongoing activities to determine the success of the different communication tactics and refine those that do not perform as expected. The detailed planning of communications activities is laid down in a separate FOREST EUROPE Communication Strategy 2021-2024.

Annexes

Bratislava Ministerial Declaration

“The Future We Want: The Forests We Need”

Adopted by Expert Level Meeting through a silence procedure on 16 December 2020 for consideration and signature by the ministers at the Eighth FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference

We, the representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE, at the Eighth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held in Bratislava on 14-15 April 2021,

1. STRESSING the vital role of forests and sustainable forest management in Europe for providing multiple benefits for the environment, economic and social development, and livelihoods.
2. NOTING the unprecedented situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative effects on the European and global economy and societies, and in this regard STRESSING the irreplaceable role that European forests play for human health and well-being.
3. EMPHASIZING that forests and sustainable forest management in Europe play a critical role in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Forest Goals of the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests, and contributing positively to the implementation of the goals and objectives of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, the Katowice Forest Declaration, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the European Union’s Green Deal.
4. RECALLING the historical background and long-term tradition of sustainable forest management in the European region.
5. REAFFIRMING the definition and principles of sustainable forest management from the H1 Helsinki Resolution¹, which provides the principal policy framework for balancing the provision of ecological, economic, and social functions of forests in Europe to contribute to these three dimensions of sustainable development.
6. RECALLING the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management² that provide guidance for implementing this overall concept.
7. REAFFIRMING the role of FOREST EUROPE, as the voluntary high-level political process for dialogue and cooperation on forests in Europe³.
8. REAFFIRMING the mission of FOREST EUROPE to enhance cooperation on forest policies in Europe, under the leadership of ministers, and to secure and promote sustainable forest management with the aim of maintaining the multiple functions of forests crucial to society⁴.
9. RECOGNISING the essential role of forests and sustainable forest management in protecting the environment, including biodiversity, habitats, soil, water sources, climate, and air quality, and REAFFIRMING that the implementation of sustainable forest management provides for the conservation of primary and climax forests.

¹ H1 Helsinki Resolution, the Second Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Helsinki, Finland, June 1993

² L2 Lisbon Resolution, the Third Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Lisbon, Portugal, June 1998

³ Taking into account recommendations from the review process conducted in 2017 in response to the Madrid Ministerial Declaration on the future direction of FOREST EUROPE: Final Report of Working Group

⁴ Oslo Ministerial Decision “European Forests 2020”, the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Oslo, Norway, June 2011

10. BEING HIGHLY CONCERNED about negative impacts of climate change and associated natural hazards on forests in Europe and worldwide, such as the increased frequency and severity of disturbances by storms, fires, droughts, pests, and diseases affecting forests' ability to fulfil their multiple functions.
11. BEING AWARE of other developments affecting forests, such as growing urbanization, depopulation of rural areas, and the need for transformation to a sustainable circular bio-economy, while NOTING the potential growing demand for forest biomass which can cause trade-offs in view of demands and policies in other sectors.
12. BEING CONCERNED about deforestation, forest degradation, and fragmentation worldwide, with their negative impacts on biodiversity and climate, and the role that European societies play in this regard.
13. STRESSING that sustainable forest management is an essential approach for enhancing the role of forests in mitigating the above mentioned negative trends, addressing the challenges and concerns.
14. STRESSING that the full value of forests and the ecosystem services they provide need to be taken into account in policies and programmes which are relevant to forests.
15. ACKNOWLEDGING that forests and the forest-based sector are crucial for making our societies more sustainable and resilient. They represent great potential for sustainable economic and social development, generating green jobs, income and livelihoods, in particular in rural and peri-urban areas. The supply of renewable bio-based materials and products from sustainable sources provides benefits for society as a whole and contributes to climate neutrality, as well as to the development of local wood-based value chains.
16. HIGHLIGHTING the importance and role of a skilled workforce in implementing sustainable forest management.
17. WELCOMING the progress made on sustainable forest management⁵, while RECOGNISING the challenges ahead in implementing sustainable forest management in the European region.
18. WELCOMING the progress made in achieving the Goals for European Forests and the European 2020 Targets⁶, while, on the other hand, RECOGNISING gaps and challenges ahead.
19. REITERATING the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision of 2015 and Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe of 2019, and in this regard TAKING NOTE of the lack of consensus⁷ as regards the FOREST EUROPE Signatories' invitation to resume negotiations on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.
20. BUILDING ON the vision for forests in Europe from the Oslo Ministerial Decision "European Forests 2020", and HIGHLIGHTING the need to update this vision to reflect recent international developments.

⁵ As reflected in the State of Europe's Forests 2020 report.

⁶ As reflected in the report Implementation of the FOREST EUROPE Commitments, 2016-2020

⁷ Decision ECE/EX/2020/L.3 relating to the possible Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe adopted by the Executive Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

We, the representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE commit ourselves:

Vision for European forests 2030

21. To share the vision that European forests are sustainably managed to be resilient, healthy, productive, and multifunctional, and contribute to sustainable development by providing economic, social, environmental, and cultural benefits for present and future generations. At the same time, the role and importance of trees outside forests in rural and urban areas is recognised.
22. To recognise the key role of public and private forest owners and managers in achieving this vision.
23. To acknowledge the importance of stakeholder involvement in realizing this vision.
24. To support forest research and to communicate evidence-based knowledge on forests and sustainable forest management in the light of society's needs and concerns in order to ensure broad public support for this vision.

Goals for European Forests and the 2030 European Targets

25. To continue to implement sustainable forest management because its holistic and iterative approach facilitates continuous adaptation to changing environmental conditions and societal demands on forests.
26. To affirm and to retain the existing Goals for European Forests⁸ and decide to update the European Targets⁹ to be achieved by 2030 exemplifying the shared vision and sustainable forest management:
 - I. Signatories are developing and implementing national forest programmes, or their equivalents, in line with the shared vision and goals and the pan-European approach to national forest programmes¹⁰.
 - II. In addressing emerging issues, forest knowledge is improved through research, education, innovation, information sharing, and communication.
 - III. In response to political objectives on climate and circular bio-economy, signatories are promoting carbon sequestration and storage in forests, as well as the sustainable supply of wood with due regard to storage of carbon in forest products and substitution of non-renewable materials and energy sources.

⁸ Oslo Ministerial Decision "European Forests 2020", the Sixth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Oslo, Norway, June 2011

⁹ Meeting the targets refers to the level of signatories, not individual forest stands or spatial units lower than whole signatory countries.

¹⁰ The pan-European approach to national forest programmes endorsed at the Fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Vienna, Austria, April 2003

- IV. The value of forest ecosystem services across Europe is being estimated with a view to using standard valuation approaches¹¹, and that values are increasingly reflected in relevant national policies and market-based instruments, such as payments for ecosystem services.
- V. Signatories implement strategies for forests and climate change adaptation through national forest programmes or equivalents and other relevant instruments, including, as appropriate, making use of relevant financial mechanisms.
- VI. The rate of loss of forest biodiversity at habitat level is brought close to zero, and where possible, halted, and measures are taken to significantly reduce forest fragmentation and degradation and to restore degraded forests.
- VII. The role of forests and their sustainable management in combating land degradation and desertification is fully recognised and forests are also managed to that end.
- VIII. Signatories have policies and measures which ensure a significant increase in socio-economic and cultural benefits, especially for human health¹², livelihoods, rural development, and employment from forests.
- IX. Effective measures are taken at regional, sub-regional, and national levels to eliminate illegal logging and associated trade in Europe and worldwide.
- X. The role of urban and peri-urban forests, as well as urban trees, in providing benefits to the public and making European cities sustainable and resilient, is fully recognised.

National and pan-European Actions

- 27. To jointly explore measures to improve monitoring of progress towards the above targets, and report by one of the next Ministerial Conferences on the implementation of actions to achieve them.
- 28. To further promote and support interdisciplinary research and development, innovation, including digitalization, in relation to forests, sustainable forest management, and the forest-based sector, contributing to a sustainable circular bio-economy, addressing climate change and disaster risk management, safeguarding biodiversity, and developing social aspects of forests.
- 29. To fully recognise the essential role of sustainably managed, genetically diverse and healthy forests in relation to the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of its components.

¹¹ Overview of approaches and methods that are practically applicable and used for valuation of forest ecosystem services in Europe is available at FOREST EUROPE web-based portal on forest ecosystem services <https://foresteurope.org/overview-valuation-approaches-methods/>

¹² Examples can be found in the recommendations of the FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on Human Health and Well-being https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/HHWB-Key-conclusions_web.pdf

30. To recognise the need for dynamic conservation and utilization of forest tree genetic resources and management of forest tree species populations for production of forest reproductive material¹³ and continue pan-European collaboration on forest genetic resources through the EUFORGEN¹⁴ to this end.
31. To enhance the attractiveness of forest-based sector employment on the labour market, by promoting, for example, fair income, adequate health and safety standards, and ensuring equality, non-discrimination, and promoting gender balance.
32. To promote enhanced cooperation with the education sector in order to identify the skills and qualification profiles required by labour markets, while streamlining forest education and training to meet the dynamic needs of the forest sector and ensure a highly qualified workforce in the long run.
33. To work further on valuation of forest ecosystem services and on exploring potential policies and instruments, including market-based, especially those that reward their provision, while taking into account regional particularities and needs, differences in national legislation and, where applicable, the existence of traditional rights of owners and citizens.
34. To further promote the important role of forests, the forest-based sector and, where relevant, sustainable afforestation¹⁵, reforestation, and forest restoration in rural development policies and in other inter-sectoral policies affecting rural welfare, addressing land abandonment, and demographic imbalances.
35. To promote the development of a circular bio-economy where forests contribute to, *inter alia*, sustainably sourced innovative bio-based products, long-lived wood products, and non-wood forest products.
36. To promote and use a proactive science-policy dialogue to further inform decision-makers.
37. To raise awareness of the importance, role, and multiple benefits of sustainably managed forests for society at large and in achieving sustainable development, *inter alia*, through strengthening dialogue with society in the most effective ways.
38. To further strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue and involvement, including indigenous peoples and local communities, giving special attention to the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups, and by integrating a gender perspective as a cross-cutting approach, as well as to strengthen cross-sectoral collaboration, in particular with the tourism, health-care, and land-use planning sectors.

¹³ As reflected in the updated pan-European indicator for sustainable forest management 4.6 Genetic Resources

¹⁴ European Forest Genetic Resources Programme

¹⁵ Pan-European Guidelines for Afforestation and Reforestation with a special focus on the provisions of the UNFCCC

FOREST EUROPE beyond 2020

39. To continue to work on the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, in cooperation with all relevant partners, with a view to further implement and strengthen monitoring, reporting, and assessment of forest resources and sustainable forest management in Europe.
40. To continue to regularly report on, based on the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management, and provide a comprehensive picture of European forests in the next “State of Europe’s Forests” report.
41. To continue working on and providing guidance on policy relevant topics, as well as on emerging issues that relate to forests and the forest-based sector, while promoting policy coherence, synergies, and improving communication.
42. To strengthen inter-sectoral and cross border cooperation on the protection of European forests due to the transboundary nature of threats.
43. To analyse the need for updating the “Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management”, endorsed at the Third Ministerial Conference in 1998, with a view to bringing such a possible decision on updated guidelines to the attention of the Ninth Ministerial Conference.
44. To focus our work at the pan-European level in the next programming period, with the support of the Liaison Unit and guided by the General Coordinating Committee and, as far as resources are available, on, *inter alia*, adaptation of forests to climate change and their role in climate change mitigation, on safeguarding biodiversity, facilitating the development of a sustainable circular bio-economy, and on the promotion of green jobs and forest-based sector employment.
45. To continue and further enhance, as appropriate, cooperation and synergies with the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and other relevant international actors, including other processes on criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

Bratislava Ministerial Resolution

Adapting pan-European Forests to Climate Change

Adopted by Expert Level Meeting through a silence procedure on 17 November 2020 for consideration and signature by the ministers at the Eighth FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference

We, as representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE, at the Eighth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, held in Bratislava on 14-15 April 2021,

1. RECALLING and BUILDING on FOREST EUROPE resolutions, declarations, and decisions, specifically Strasbourg Resolution 4, Helsinki Resolution 4, Vienna Resolution 5, and Madrid Resolution 2.
2. RECALLING that the impetus for the First Ministerial Conference (Strasbourg, 1990) was the need to tackle specific challenges in forest protection, such as combating the negative effects of air pollution, and STATING that our forests now face similarly grave threats.
3. ACKNOWLEDGING that climate change and biodiversity loss are the pressing and urgent issues of our time and their impacts are global in scope and unprecedented in scale, and therefore ACKNOWLEDGING that FOREST EUROPE should revisit and enhance its engagements.
4. RECALLING the findings of the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land, the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the IPBES Assessment Report on Land Degradation and Restoration, and the EEA report Climate Change, Impacts and Vulnerability in Europe 2016.
5. RECOGNISING that urgent actions to maintain and enhance the health condition of forests and the multiple role they play, including for future generations, are necessary to implement the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Paris Agreement.
6. BEING CONCERNED about negative impacts on European forests from storms, fires, drought, pests and diseases, which are increasing in severity due to climate change, affecting the ability of forests to fulfil their multiple functions.
7. UNDERLINING that the adaptation of forests to the negative effects of climate change is necessary if forests are to fulfil their essential role in mitigating climate change, as well as to prevent damage to forests, enhance their resilience, and safeguard the multiple functions of forests.
8. RECOGNISING that halting the loss and degradation of forest ecosystems and promoting their restoration are essential to reaching the targets of the Paris Agreement, and, in relation to that, RECALLING the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.

9. UNDERLINING that sustainable forest management safeguards the biodiversity and enhances the productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality, and resilience of forests, while maintaining relevant ecological, economic, and social functions in harmony with other terrestrial ecosystems.
10. ACKNOWLEDGING the potential of forests to provide long-term mitigation of climate change, including through sustainable forest management, afforestation, forest restoration, sustainable use and conservation of forest genetic resources, and sustainable use of forest biomass in the development of a bio-economy, reducing the use of fossil-based products and materials associated with high emissions of greenhouse gases.
11. HIGHLIGHTING that the further development of forest-based, renewable resources into innovative bio-based products and long-lived wood products, as well as non-wood products and other ecosystem services that healthy and sustainably managed forests provide, can make significant contributions to sustainable development and climate change mitigation.
12. RECOGNISING that action taken to address climate change is most effective if based on the best available scientific knowledge and fact-based evidence fed by forest management experience, both being continually re-evaluated in the light of new findings.
13. EMPHASIZING that forests are the most biologically rich terrestrial systems and it is therefore vital to sustainably manage them in order to safeguard and restore their biodiversity and the ecosystem services they provide.
14. NOTING the recommendations of the FOREST EUROPE Expert Group on Adaptation to Climate Change, WELCOMING the on-going work on forest protection and risk management carried out by international organizations and processes, and APPRECIATING the need to further cooperate with those actors.

As representatives of the Signatories of FOREST EUROPE, we commit ourselves to:

I. Strengthen our national efforts in order to:

15. Further increase work on the adaptation of forests and implement findings into forest management policy and practice to prevent and mitigate adverse impacts caused by changing conditions at local, national, and regional levels in order to secure all functions of forests while increasing their resilience to natural hazards and protecting them against threats.
16. Continue to raise public awareness of the vital role of sustainable forest management in protecting forests and strengthening their vitality, and increase efforts in the dialogue with society and forest owners.
17. Strengthen the national implementation of policies, tools, and measures for the protection, conservation, and appropriate use of forest genetic resources in order to contribute to the adaptation of forests to changing climatic and site conditions.
18. Facilitate research in the fields of protection of genetic diversity, adaptation of forests and forest management to climate change, including testing and selecting of species and suitable provenances for future conditions in line with international recommendations on Invasive Alien Species as well as on forest damage.
19. Strengthen work on forest landscape restoration, the rehabilitation of degraded forests and, where relevant, on afforestation.
20. Strengthen the work on development and implementation of disturbance risk assessment approaches in the context of national forest programmes and strategies, namely those that can be caused by biotic and abiotic agents, such as pests and forest fires, with the aim of better prevention and increased preparedness towards disturbances and managing them, if they occur.
21. Invest in the education and training of skilled forest staff and forest owners in order to promote and embed appropriate adaptation attitudes and actions into sustainable forest management practices.
22. Accelerate our actions to ensure that the global contribution of forests and forest products to mitigating climate change is maintained and enhanced by 2050, in order to reach the targets of the Paris Agreement.

II. Improve international cooperation in the pan-European region in order to:

23. Share examples of best practice and lessons learned, *inter alia*, on sustainable forest management, in order to make forests more resilient to the impact of climate change.
24. Continue to exchange experience on the restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forests.

25. Further promote interaction between research, innovation, policy, and sustainable forest management practice on the adaptive capacities of forests to climate change and the prevention of natural hazards in cooperation with international organizations and initiatives active in this field.
26. Further support transboundary forest health monitoring and enhance initiatives in the field of vegetation vitality monitoring, especially with a view to the identification of long-term trends.

III. Connect national and international activities to work towards a coordinated pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism

27. Work towards a coordinated pan-European forest risk knowledge mechanism. The format will be defined by terms of reference to be adopted by the signatories of FOREST EUROPE, taking into account already existing mechanisms and networks at European and sub-regional levels, with the premises to synergize efforts, add value, and avoid duplication. When developing the terms of reference, stable funding for such a mechanism and the potential role of national focal points will be duly considered, taking into account the following topics, *inter alia*:
 - a. Science-based best practice to inform policy makers and forest practitioners on how best to enhance forest resilience and foster adaptive capacity in the forest sector in order to manage forest disturbance risks;
 - b. Transboundary cooperation on disturbance risk management with specific but not exclusive focus on pests and diseases and forest fires;
 - c. Risk prevention and preparedness to improve the ability to cope with future disturbance events and thus offer assistance at the pan-European level;
 - d. Early response and recovery best practice to inform forest practitioners and decision makers after disturbance events;
 - e. Enhanced knowledge exchange opportunities in order to build expert capacity in the field of disturbance risk management;
 - f. Improved information sharing on climate change impacts and natural hazards, changes in site conditions, damaged areas, types of forests affected and wood volumes as well as insect, pest, and disease dynamics;
 - g. Proactive engagement with the public and media, and dissemination of information in an accessible and appropriate format.



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