



GENERAL DECLARATION

The Signatory States and International Institution,

recognizing the right of future generation to benefit from a quality environment that is healthy and unpolluted, which, for forests, must be expressed in ecological, economic and social terms in a way which is reflected in a sustainable and multi-purpose management of the forest,

conscious of the role of the forest in developing the living environment, notably in relation to soil protection, water saving, harmony of landscapes - for example in peri-urban areas - and sustainable production of goods and services,

conscious that phenomena such as, notably, atmospheric pollution, forest fires, global warming, major climatic events or industrial accidents, erosion, damage caused by insects or other pests, or pathogenic organisms, as well as damage caused in certain regions by game, over-exploitation or even under-exploitation, as well as interactions between all these phenomena, are threatening Europe's forests,

considering that a growing number of problems concerning the protection of forests in Europe and the maintenance of their biological diversity have a transboundary character and that, because of this, the entire European continent must be the framework in which they are to be defined, both specifically and in their diversity, and resolved in an efficient manner,

convinced that the protection and preservation of the biological diversity of European forests involves all the societies concerned and reaches beyond national boundaries,

conscious that the identification and the resolution of these problems involves an increasing number of participants whose everyday or incidental behaviour has a serious effect on the future of forest areas, as is borne out by the die-back of forests attributed to air pollution,

conscious that forestry operations are long term, and that because of this a central place must therefore be allotted, within the framework of an ecologically-coherent national

forestry policy, to continuity over time and to the consideration of dangers that are difficult to foresee, with the goal of maintaining the potentials of forests,

considering that, even if many of the adverse factors are difficult to control, significant results in forest protection can be obtained by recourse to appropriate silvicultural techniques, both traditional and innovative,

reaffirming the sovereign right of States to manage their own resources within the framework of their environment policies, in conformity with the United Nations Charter and to the principles governing international law, notably by taking into account existing international agreements and supranational legal prescriptions,

reaffirming also their obligation to ensure that activities carried out under their jurisdiction or within their area of competence have no harmful repercussions on the environments of other States,

recalling the 1979 Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution, and reaffirming the need to have regard to the commitments contained in the HELSINKI and SOFIA protocols linked to this Convention,

insisting on the importance of cooperation with international organizations already working in the field of forest protection or, more generally, protection of the environment,

recalling the recommendations set out in "The Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond" (UNEP) and "The Regional Strategy for Environmental Protection and Rational Use of Natural Resources in the Member Countries of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Covering the Period up to the Year 2000 and Beyond",

taking into account the recommendations of the "World Conservation Strategy", the "World Charter for Nature" and the report by the World Commission on Environment and Development,

recalling that the SILVA international conference held in Paris in 1986 culminated in the "Paris Appeal for Trees and Forests", which insists on the pressing need to act in unison beyond national borders for the conservation and promotion of trees and forests in the interests of present and future generations, thus indicating the direction in which the signatories of the present declaration wish to take joint action,

recalling that, whereas the SILVA conference gave equal attention to the protection of tropical forests, and the present ministerial conference concerns only European forests, nevertheless the problems relative to tropical forests deserve an initiative of the same type,

identify two types of operational approach, the first aiming at better observation and understanding of the functionings and malfunctionings of forest ecosystems in all their

diversity, the second at taking action in thematic areas of concern, such as the conservation of forest genetic resources, or in areas of special fragility, such as mountain forests and forests susceptible to fire;

declare their intention to:

1. promote and reinforce cooperation between European states in the field of forest protection and sustainable management, by developing exchanges of information and experience, and by supporting the efforts of the international organizations concerned,
2. improve exchanges of information between forestry research workers, managers and policy makers, both within and between the signatory countries, in order that the most recent advances can be integrated into the implementation of forest policies,
3. encourage operations for restoring damaged forests,
4. demonstrate, by way of an agreement on common objectives and principles, their will to implement, progressively, the conditions and the means necessary for the long-term management and conservation of the European forest heritage,
5. examine the follow-up of decisions taken during the present conference and pursue the actions that will have been initiated, in the course of any subsequent meetings of government ministers or officials, and of international institutions, responsible for seeing that forests fully assume their ecological, economic and social functions.