

EURO – SITE – MANAGER

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2011 The UN International Year of Forests: Information for European Site Managers



INTERNATIONAL YEAR
OF FORESTS • 2011



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1. Forest Facts

Globally ¹:

- Forests cover 31% of total land area.
- Primary forests account for 36% of forest area.
- Forests are home to 80% of our terrestrial biodiversity.
- The livelihoods of over 1.6 billion people depend on forests.
- Forests are home to 300 million people around the world.
- 30% of forests are used for production of wood and non-wood products.
- Trade in forest products was estimated to be \$327 billion (approx €227 billion) in 2004.



In the EU ²:

- Forests and wooded land cover more than 42% of the land surface
- Forest-based industries have a turnover of more than €300 billion and provide more than 2 million jobs
 - Around 40% of forests are under public ownership
 - The remaining 60% is owned by more than 10 million private forest owners
 - There is a long-term trend of increasing forest coverage in the EU
 - Approximately 500,000 hectares are lost every year to fires and illegal logging,
 - 30% of NATURA 2000 sites are forest and other wooded-land habitats
- 66% of forest 'habitat types of Community interest' have unfavourable conservation status,
 - Only 5% of the forest area is old-growth, primary and undisturbed by human activity

Picture courtesy of Jeroen van Opdorp

1. Reference – International Year of Forests: www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/

2. Source, European Parliament Report P7_A(2011)0113 on the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change

2. Introduction – The International Year of Forests (IYF)

2.1 Background

The UN has declared 2011 as the International Year of Forests (Forests 2011) to raise awareness on the sustainable management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. A 'Forests 2011' website, has also been developed to provide a global platform to celebrate people's action to sustainably manage the world's forests: <http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/>

The IYF was officially launched on 2nd February 2011, during the ninth session of the UN Forum on Forests (UNFF 9), in New York, US, involving delegates from 192 countries. The UN commissioned French film-maker, Yann Arthus Bertrand to produce a short film called "Forest" which was premiered at the launch. The film by Yann Arthus-Bertrand and speeches from the launch can also be viewed via videos posted on the IYF website.

A logo has been designed along the theme of "Forests for People" celebrating the central role played by people in the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. The logo has been translated into over 40 languages and is available for use in line with a set of the guidelines, which can be downloaded from the website.

An International Forest Film Festival took place to celebrate the IYF and raise awareness. 167 films were submitted from over 30 countries and the winning films from the festival are being presented around the world throughout the year.

The website also includes a list of forest-related events happening throughout the year. A list of all the official events taking place in Europe during 2011 is given at the end of this newsletter in section six.



2.2 The UN Forum on Forests

The United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) was established by the UN Economic and Social Council in 2000 as a subsidiary body with the objective to promote "... the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end...", based on the Forest Principles that came out of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit.

The UNFF is composed of all 192 Member States of the UN and some specialised agencies. Member States of the UN have appointed UNFF national focal points, and a list of their contact details is available at: www.un.org/esa/forests/contacts-focal.html. The UNFF is based at the UN Headquarters in New York and more information about it is available at the following website: www.un.org/esa/forests/index.html

In 2006, the UNFF agreed on the following global objectives to direct international work on forests:

- Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management (SFM), including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation.
- Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people.
- Increase significantly the area of sustainably managed forests, including protected forests, and increase the proportion of forest products derived from sustainably managed forests.
- Reverse the decline in official development assistance for SFM and mobilize significantly-increased new and additional financial resources from all sources for the implementation of SFM.

3. EU Policy and Forests

3.1 Introduction

There is no provision for a common European forest policy within the EU treaties, which means that developing and implementing forest policies or legislation remains the responsibility of individual Member States. Whilst forestry is not an EU policy area in its own right, it is affected by other EU policies, especially in relation to agriculture and environment. There is some coordination between Member States on forestry activities through the Standing Forestry Committee, a group of government representatives which is coordinated by DG Agriculture: <http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/minco/othco/forest/index.htm>. Recent issues discussed by the working group include the establishment of an ad hoc technical working on forest information and monitoring; forest fires; and the impact of the economic crisis on the competitiveness of the European forest-based sector.



Picture courtesy of DDBRA

3.2 The EU Forestry Strategy and Action Plan

The EU Forestry Strategy was adopted in 1998 and lays out the basic principles for European action on forests, especially in relation to SFM and the multifunctional role of forests. To follow up the strategy, the Commission published an EU Forest Action Plan in 2006, which has four main objectives:

- to improve long-term competitiveness
- to improve and protect the environment
- to contribute to the quality of life; and
- to foster coordination and communication.

To download the strategy and action plan, please go to: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/forestry_strategy_en.htm

The European Commission is now looking to review and update the EU Forest Strategy and launched the process in April this year with a workshop for Member State representatives and other stakeholders. Further working group meetings will be organised throughout the year. Information from the workshop is available at: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/events/15-04-2011/index_en.htm

3.3 European Parliament Report on the Commission's Green Paper on Forest Protection and Information

In 2010, the European Commission produced and consulted on a Green Paper entitled 'Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change'. In May 2011, the European Parliament published a report welcoming the Green Paper and calling for the Commission to draft a White Paper on Forest Protection in the EU with a focus on maintaining and increasing European forests. The Parliament also recommended that the EU Forest Strategy on forests is updated and strengthened with a view to improving sustainable management and conservation. The EP report includes many other recommendations, for example, on forestry research, integration within the CAP, forest fire prevention and emissions accounting and reporting. To read the report, go to: www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0226+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN

Furthermore, the Parliament report says that the implementation of SFM principles in Europe is inconsistent and that the environmental and social aspects often get forgotten in favour of the economic aspects, as highlighted in the following quote from the report:

"Welcomes the success of Forest Europe in enhancing SFM and achieving European consensus on SFM guidelines, criteria and indicators; notes however that the existing context of SFM, lacks consistent implementation. Recalls that the aim of SFM is to reconcile production and protection aspects of forests, ensuring the continuity of their economic, social and environmental functions, in accordance with national, regional and local priorities; notes with concern that the growing trend to consider forests only from an economic perspective, forgetting their environmental and social aspects, is incompatible with the principles of SFM"

3.4 Forestry in the EU Biodiversity Strategy

The new EU Biodiversity Strategy, published in May 2011, includes a target and actions for forests because it: “seeks to improve integration in key sectors, specifically through targets and action to enhance the positive contribution of the agriculture, forest and fisheries sectors to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use”. The EU Biodiversity Strategy is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>. The target and actions that relate specifically to forests are:

Target 3

B) Forests: By 2020, Forest Management Plans or equivalent instruments, in line with Sustainable Forest Management (SFM), are in place for all forests that are publicly owned and for forest holdings above a certain size** (to be defined by the Member States or regions and communicated in their Rural Development Programmes) that receive funding under the EU Rural Development Policy so as to bring about a measurable improvement (*) in the conservation status of species and habitats that depend on or are affected by forestry and in the provision of related ecosystem services as compared to the EU 2010 Baseline.

(*) For both targets, improvement is to be measured against the quantified enhancement targets for the conservation status of species and habitats of EU interest in Target 1 and the restoration of degraded ecosystems under target 2. (**) For smaller forest holdings, Member States may provide additional incentives to encourage the adoption of Management Plans or equivalent instruments that are in line with SFM.

Action 11: Encourage forest holders to protect and enhance forest biodiversity

11a) Member States and the Commission will encourage the adoption of Management Plans, inter alia through use of rural development measures³² and the LIFE+ programme.

11 b) Member States and the Commission will foster innovative mechanisms (e.g. Payments for Ecosystem Services) to finance the maintenance and restoration of ecosystem services provided by multifunctional forests.

Action 12: Integrate biodiversity measures in forest management plans

12) Member States will ensure that forest management plans or equivalent instruments include as many of the following measures as possible:

- maintain optimal levels of deadwood, taking into account regional variations such as fire risk or potential insect outbreaks;
- preserve wilderness areas;
- ecosystem-based measures to increase the resilience of forests against fires as part of forest fire prevention schemes, in line with activities carried out in the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS);
- specific measures developed for Natura 2000 forest sites;
- ensuring that afforestation is carried out in accordance with the Pan-European Operational Level Guidelines for SFM, in particular as regards the diversity of species, and climate change adaptation needs.

The definition of SFM used in the new EU Biodiversity Strategy is taken from the Annex to the EU Forest Action (2006) 7482:

“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”.

Some members of the European Habitats Forum of NGOs, of which Eurosite is a member, presented their position on the EU Biodiversity Strategy to the EU Nature Directors meeting in Hungary in June. The EHF members welcomed the new target on forests especially as it addresses the need for sustainable forest management plans. However, they considered that the level of ambition is still too low, because forestry management plans in themselves are often not designed to ensure biodiversity protection. They therefore requested a change to Action 12 so as to ensure that forest management plans or equivalent instruments include biodiversity-relevant measures on an obligatory basis – taking into account existing Natura 2000 management needs and obligations. Furthermore, the EHF considered that the definition of SFM used in the strategy needs further clarification and indicators in order to reliably benefit biodiversity. They also expressed concern that new funding sources are needed for forest management, and therefore welcome action 11b in relation to fostering innovative financing mechanisms as long as biodiversity protection is included within “payments for ecosystem services”.

4. European Activities

4.1 FOREST Europe Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe

FOREST EUROPE (The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) is a pan-European body for the sustainable management of the continent's forests, covering 46 countries. Some of the most important issues it is concerned with include: climate change mitigation; water; forest biodiversity; and forest products. Several non-European countries and international, non-governmental and private sector organisations participate as observers. FOREST Europe organised a Ministerial Conference from the 14th – 16th June in Norway, focused on preserving forests and safeguarding their economic, environmental and social benefits. During this conference, Ministers made the decision to launch negotiations for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe. More information is available on the website at: www.foresteurope.org/

4.2 Collaborative Partnership on Southern Mediterranean Forests

The Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests was established in 2010 to tackle the impacts of climate change on southern Mediterranean forests in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. The partnership was set up by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) with a number of other organizations, to accelerate the implementation of SFM and the protection of forest-based ecosystem services under climate change. More information is available at: www.fao.org/forestry/silvamed/66624/en/

4.3 Forest Governance Programme in EU Neighbour Countries

IUCN and WWF are partners in an EU funded programme, “Improving Forest Law Enforcement and Governance in the European Neighbourhood Policy East Countries and Russia” to support governments, civil society, and the private sector in participating countries in the development of sound and sustainable forest management practices, including reducing the incidence of illegal forestry activities. The countries involved include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. More information is available at: www.enpi-fleg.org/

4.4 Government Proposals to Sell off Forests

The financial crisis has led to dramatic cuts in public spending in many European countries, which has led to drastic reductions in government spending on nature conservation. In some countries this has opened the door to discussions on the possible sale of state-owned land that is important for nature, including forests. This option is, for example, under discussion in the Netherlands as the public body Staatsbosbeheer is facing major budget cuts and as a consequence may have to consider selling off some of the land it manages.

In the UK, the government even opened a consultation on the possible sale of up to half of the 258,000 hectares of the UK's state-owned forest and woodland. However, the plans were unpopular with the public and several organisations launched opposition campaigns. Following the public outcry, in February 2011, David Cameron, the UK Prime Minister requested that: the consultation on the proposed sale was ended; an independent panel be established on reforms to improve access and biodiversity in forests; and to drop clauses in the public bodies' bill that would allow the government to sell off all of England's forest (under current laws only 15% of forests can be sold). To read the press release by the UK Environment Ministry, go to: www.defra.gov.uk/news/2011/02/17/futureforestry/



Picture courtesy of Carlijn Poiters

5. New Research Reports

5.1 State of the World's Forests Report

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) published its ninth State of the World's Forests Report at the beginning of the International Year of Forests. The report is divided into four chapters covering: the state of forest resources; developing sustainable forest industries; the role of forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation; and the local value of forests. It can be downloaded at: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/013/i2000e/i2000e00.htm>

5.2 Scientific Research on National Forest Programmes

National Forest Programmes (NFPs) have been established in many European countries and aim to incorporate the views of a wide range of stakeholders into the management of national forests. However, a new scientific analysis of NFPs in Bulgaria and Germany found that though they involved a wide range of stakeholders in an inclusive policy process, they had limited impact on forest policy and did not lead to change. The researchers therefore recommend that future analyses of NFPs and other participatory forms of government should consider the broader political role they can play, rather than focussing exclusively on how to increase participation. The research was undertaken by Winkel and Sotirov and was published this year in the journal 'Forest Policy and Economics', volume 13.

6. List of IYF Events in Europe



Picture courtesy of Staatsbosbeheer

| List of IYF Events in Europe | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------------|--|
| (N.B. Taken from the official list of events at: http://www.un.org/en/events/iyof2011/events.shtml) | | | |
| Date | Event name | Organiser | Location |
| May 7- October 2 | Trees in Focus Photograph Exhibition | Bertil Hagberg | Graphic Museum in Fredriksdal Museums, Helsingborg, Sweden |
| June 20- July 17 | A short-lived artistic installation | The City of Paris | In front of the city hall of Paris, France |
| June 23-24 | Present and future role of forest resources in the socio-economic development of rural areas European Congress. | MIPAAF-NRN, INEA-FO | Rome, Italy |
| June 26 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Parque Natural Sierra de Huétor | Granada, Spain |
| June 27- July 1 | Make a twig whisk Craft Workshop | Fredriksdal Museums | Helsingborg, Sweden |
| July 4-8 | Make a Stick Animal Craft Workshop | Fredriksdal Museums | Helsingborg, Sweden |
| July 9-18 | Artforêt Exhibit | ALAF | Mézin (Aquitaine), France |

| Date | Event name | Organiser | Location |
|-----------------|---|---|--|
| July 11-15 | Make your own bark boat Craft Workshop | Fredriksdal Museums | Helsingborg, Sweden |
| July 26 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Deva San Antonio | Gijón, Spain |
| August | Opera-Walk 'Bête de scènes: 17 performances | UNRIC - Centre régional d'information des Nations Unies pour l'Europe occidentale | 8 Villages in Franche- Comté Region, France |
| September | Global Forest Conference for Children Environment Online | (ENO) | Joensuu, Finland |
| September 13-17 | Act Now! Forests For Future - a global conference on forests for children and youth | Environment Online-ENO | Joensuu, Finland |
| September 15-16 | Forest Pedagogic and Environmental Education – The PAWS-MED experience | The team of the EU project PAWS-MED and hosted by the Italian State Forest Service | Sabaudia, Italy |
| September 18 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Aliaga | Teruel, Spain |
| September 21-23 | CarboForest Conference | Forest Research Institute, Poland | Forest Research Institute in Sękocin Stary, Poland |
| September 21-25 | 65th Annual Conference of the German Forestry Society | | Aachen, Germany |
| September 24 | Back to the Trees | UNRIC - Centre régional d'information des Nations Unies pour l'Europe occidentale | Forêt de Chailluz (Doubs), France |
| September 24-25 | Special Weekend of Trees and Gardens | The City of Paris | Paris, France |
| September 25 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Calasparra | Murcia, Spain |
| September 30 | FSC Friday | Forest Stewardship Council | Llanidloes, Powys, United Kingdom |
| October 4-7 | Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy | The UNFF Secretariat and FAO | Bonn, Germany |
| October 9 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Pancorbo | Burgos, Spain |
| October 9-16 | Week of the Forests | Vereniging voor Bos in Vlaanderen in cooperation with Flemish Agency for Nature and Forests | Flanders, Belgium |
| October 12-16 | Science Festival "La Science se met au vert" | UNRIC, D.E.F.I. Bois, and Pasteur Institutions | Mouchard, Arbois, Dôle Salins-les-Bains (Jura) and Arc-et-Senans (Doubs), France |
| October 14-17 | Mushrooms and Forests Exhibition | The City of Paris | Parc Floral de Paris, France |
| October 16 | World Food Day | FAO | Worldwide |
| October 18-19 | The Wood Ant Symposium | The James Hutton Institute | Aberdeen, United Kingdom |
| October 23 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Ribadavia | Ourense, Spain |
| October 24 | "Regala un Bosque" (Give a Forest) | Los Navalucillos | Toledo, Spain |
| November | European Union Forest Directors - General Meeting | | Poland |
| December 11 | International Mountain Day | FAO | Poland |

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