



PRESS RELEASE

Hotspots of biodiversity: The role of sustainable forest management in Europe

Brussels, 9 September 2020 – How to prevent the loss of biodiversity remains one of the hot policy issues in the EU and globally. Healthy and green livelihoods are also among society’s main expectations. European forests have a crucial role to play in answering these concerns and demands. The European State Forest Association (EUSTAfor) and the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) co-organised the virtual conference titled “European Forests: Hotspots of Biodiversity”. Co-hosted by MEPs Jessica Polfjärd and Adam Jarubas of the European Parliament’s Committee on Environment, the conference offered insights into the role of sustainable forest management practices in environmental conservation and how these practices can support the EU in meeting its long-term biodiversity and climate objectives.

The event gathered high-level speakers, ranging from EU officials to forest owners and managers and researchers, together with around 200 participants from all corners of the forest-based sector and beyond.

Opening the conference, **MEP Jarubas** stated that, “*We need healthy and resilient forest ecosystems to reach the goals of the European Green Deal. Adequate financing is needed to make sustainable forest management economically sound and to ensure that environmental and socio-cultural benefits continue to be provided to the society at large. The future European legal framework must take into account the opinions of those who will ultimately be responsible for its implementation*”.

Reinhardt Neft, CEO of the Bavarian State Forest Enterprise and President of EUSTAfor, stressed that, “*Management practices applied in European state forestry clearly show that the ecological functions of forest ecosystems and biodiversity can be maintained in managed forests along with all other functions*”.

During two panel discussions, the speakers discussed their views and provided practical examples concerning the way in which daily forest management practices currently support forest biodiversity. Future opportunities and actions to ensure that European forests remain hotspots of biodiversity were also explored. The wide range of forest types which can be found throughout the different regions of Europe, makes it necessary to include a variety of approaches and measures, at both EU and national levels, when planning Europe’s common effort to maintain and enhance forest biodiversity.

In her closing remarks, **MEP Polfjärd** emphasized that, “*In times when it is of great importance that we reach our climate goals, we cannot afford not to utilise forests and the climate benefits that sustainable forest management entails, but this has to be combined with work that also aims to maintain forest biodiversity*”.

Sven-Erik Hammar, Board Member of CEPF, closed the event by saying, *“Sustainable forest management is the ABC of biodiversity conservation. Forest owners are custodians of forests’ future and their focus is to maintain productive, healthy and vital ecosystems in their forests”*.

European forest owners and managers are looking forward to further collaboration and synergies with EU policymakers and partners as well as contributing to the next policy developments related to forests and biodiversity.

For more information, please contact:

Diem Tran

Communications Officer, EUSTAFOR
diem.tran@eustafor.eu

Susanna Kallio

Office Manager, CEPF
susanna.kallio@cepf-eu.org

About EUSTAFOR

The European State Forest Association represents the voice of European state forest management organisations who have sustainable forest management and the production of wood as major concerns. www.eustafor.eu

About CEPF

The Confederation of European Forest Owners is the umbrella association of private forest owner organisations in Europe. CEPF promotes the values of sustainable forest management, private property ownership and the economic viability of the forest sector. www.cepf-eu.org