

PRESS RELEASE

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Sustainably managed and multifunctional European forests provide solutions for recovery and well-being

The European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR) welcomes the International Day of Forests 2021, under the headline "Forest restoration: A path to recovery and well-being."

State Forest Management Organizations look after Europe's forests and practice multifunctional and sustainable forest management of the highest standards for the benefit and well-being of all. More than 1/3 of Europe is covered by forests, providing a wealth of natural resources, delivering important economic, environmental, and social values for the benefit of all Europeans. Up to 1/3 of Europe's forests are owned by states, which means that they belong to the citizens of Europe!

Europe has a good deal of experience to share in restoring forests

Over the past century, Europe's forests have increased significantly, reversing the previous negative trends due to, among others, industrialization and the expansion of agriculture. Supported by the political commitment of European governments in the early 1990s, followed by necessary changes in legislation and silvicultural practices, European forests continue to expand at an unprecedented rate of approximately 17.5 million hectares over the last 25 years. Silvicultural practices continue to be developed and improved to this day by skilled and experienced forest professionals based on the most recent evidence provided by forest science and research.

"Effective and thoroughly planned afforestation, reforestation and restoration practices applied in European state forests have proven to provide a solution for the long-term development of healthy and productive forests," states Piotr Borkowski, Executive Director of EUSTAFOR. The lessons learned in Europe about forest sustainability and multifunctionality as well as those from successfully restoring many of Europe's forests over the past decades are worthy of being shared on a global level.

Tackling the effects of change: A challenge for the 21st century

Today, forests all over the world are facing many challenges, with the biggest impact coming from climate change. Forest ecosystems are becoming increasingly prone to various climate change-induced biotic and abiotic pressures, such as fires, droughts and storms as well as pest and disease outbreaks. To effectively and efficiently tackle these issues, forests need to be professionally and responsibly managed.

European State Forest Management Organizations are coping with these challenges through [a variety of silvicultural practices and measures](#), not only restoring damaged forests but also making them better adapted for the future. They continually seek to provide holistic solutions to multiple, and at times diverging, interests and constraints.

While sustainably managed forests provide a home for thousands of bird, mammal, insect, and plant species, they also enable the bio-based circular economy, providing a wide range of livelihoods, especially in rural and per-urban areas.

European state forests welcome all citizens to come and enjoy a visit to their forests!

For further information, please contact:

Sophie Hugon

EUSTAFOR Communications Officer – [@eustafor.eu">sophie.hugon \(@\) eustafor.eu](mailto:sophie.hugon)