

PRESS RELEASE

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Brussels

General Assembly appoints Juha Niemelä from Metsähallitus, Finland, as new President of EUSTAFOR

Mr Juha S. Niemelä, Director General of Metsähallitus, Finland, has been elected as the new President of EUSTAFOR by the Annual General Assembly of EUSTAFOR. In addition, EUSTAFOR's General Assembly, held on 7 March 2023 in Brussels, elected Vice-President Mr Georg Schöppl (Österreichische Bundesforste) and eight other members of the Executive Committee.



From left to right: Juha Niemelä, new elected President - Piotr Borkowski, Executive Director of EUSTAFOR - Reinhardt Neft, former President

“On behalf of EUSTAFOR, I would like to thank Reinhardt Neft for his great effort to support and guide EUSTAFOR over 8 years, first as Vice-President for 4 years and then as the President from 2019 to 2023. In my opinion, over these years, EUSTAFOR became an important platform for its members to transfer knowledge and to speak with a united state forestry voice in the EU and pan-European policymaking” says Juha S. Niemelä.

Moreover, one important strategic objective will be to enhance communication to EU policymakers and to a broad public on how responsibly managed European state forests may serve societal needs by balancing economic, environmental and social roles of forestry public assets.

At the same meeting, EUSTAFOR welcomed the State Specialized Forest Enterprise "Forests of Ukraine" as its 37th member.

EUSTAFOR's members – dynamic and capable entities managing state forests in 26 European countries – regularly come together to exchange their knowledge and know-how, not only with each other, but also with other stakeholders from the forestry sector and EU decision makers. They base their positions on the successful and verified expert practices they have put in place in approximately 1/3 of the European Union's forest area. Their consultative approach allows them to provide relevant, valuable and reliable input to the EU policy development processes.

Mr Juha S. Niemelä replaces Mr Reinhardt Neft, Managing Director of Bayerische Staatsforsten AöR.). Mr. Neft stepped down from EUSTAFOR's presidency, which he held for the last four years, but will continue to serve on the Executive Committee. Further members of the Executive Committee, elected for a term of 2 years, include Österreichische Bundesforste (Vice-President - Austria), Lesy České Republiky s.p. (Czech Republic), Office National des Forêts (France), Coillte (Ireland), Lasy Państwowe (Poland), ROMSILVA (Romania), Riigimetsa Majandamise Keskus (Estonia), Sveaskog (Sweden) and ANARF (Italy).

For further information, please contact:

Juha S. Niemelä, President of EUSTAFOR, office@eustafor.eu, tel. [+358 \(0\)50 500 3681](tel:+3580505003681)

Piotr Borkowski, EUSTAFOR's Executive Director, piotr.borkowski@eustafor.eu, tel. +32 219 23 00

For more information on our association:

Please visit our website at www.eustafor.eu and follow [@EUSTAfor](https://twitter.com/EUSTAfor) on Twitter.

EUSTAFOR was established in 2006. Its members are state forest management organizations from 26 European countries. These organizations practice sustainable forest management in approximately 1/3 of the EU's forest area, including more than 16 million hectares of designated Natura 2000 sites and other forests protected by law. They harvest approximately 145 million m³ of round timber annually and, together, employ close to 130 000 people.