



## **JOINT PRESS RELEASE**

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### **How “Close-to-Nature” Is the Management of European Forests?**

**To contribute to the ambitious EU climate- and biodiversity-related objectives, the Commission is developing a guidance on “closer-to-nature” forestry. The ongoing debate around the topic is very polarized. To pursue a more balanced discussion, the representatives of European forest managers and owners organised an expert webinar to discuss the question: “How “close-to-nature” is the management of European forests?” The key aims of the event were to clarify what could be meant by “close(r)-to-nature” forest management and what the best strategy could be for the future of EU forests: active protection or passive conservation.**

The event gathered high-level research experts, from a broad range of European regions, together with over 200 participants.

The invited experts provided data on the current state of European forests and discussed the future opportunities and actions needed to ensure their long-term health and resilience. The great diversity of forest types found throughout Europe makes it necessary to include a variety of approaches and measures, at both EU and national levels.

Today, sustainable forest management in Europe offers a great diversity of silvicultural approaches which imitate natural processes. Therefore, it is crucial to better explain the forest management practices that are currently applied in Europe in order to be able to assess them when comparing them to what can be defined as “close(r)-to-nature” forestry in each and every local condition. Strengthening good practices could be a feasible way forward, provided that no one-size-fits-all rule is applied and a balance between environmental, social and economic pillars is ensured.

European forest owners and managers understand the importance of reaching EU objectives and are open to further collaboration and finding synergies with policymakers and other concerned actors. We offer the rich field experience of our members as a contribution to the EU forest-related policy discussions. We hope this webinar will serve as a stepping stone in the further debate on “close(r)-to-nature” forestry.

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**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](http://www.eustafor.eu)

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**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](http://www.cepf.eu.org)