PRESS RELEASE [1]
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EUSTAFOR Publishes Position Paper on the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitats Directives and Their Implementation in State Forests

The EU Birds and Habitats Directives are important and powerful tools to effectively preserve populations of wild species and to maintain or restore natural habitats of community interest while at the same time allowing to maintain the economic, social and cultural aspects of the forests in which they have been designated.

30 % of EU forests are managed by State Forest Management Organizations (SFMOs), which are highly committed to sustainable and multifunctional forest management. Members of EUSTAFOR satisfy the needs of European society by providing a multitude of goods and ecosystem services, including biodiversity. Out of 49 million hectares of managed land, more than 8 million hectares are protected by national nature conservation laws and another almost 8 million hectares have been designated as Natura 2000 sites.

As a policy framework, the EU Nature Directives provide a suitable level of detail when addressing the conservation requirements and measures and this part of the EU's legislation should not be re-opened for any changes. Instead, EUSTAFOR and its members strongly advocate for an improvement in the implementation of the two Nature Directives on both national and local levels. This must be done by ensuring a proper role for forest owners and managers, among others, in designing the implementation strategies and conservation measures included in Natura 2000 management plans. Forest managers have a profound knowledge about the forests they work in. Their knowledge and experience provide a valuable basis for finding the best areas to which the Natura 2000 network can be extended, for the development of management plans and for establishing site conservation measures.

EUSTAFOR and its members also advocate a sound EU financing instrument, which enables compensation for the extra costs connected to the implementation of Natura 2000 measures and/or the income foregone due to restrictions on forest management.

[1] Any statement in this document is to be considered as a reflection of the best available professional expertise and does not necessarily reflect the political commitments of individual member organizations.

As a result of decades of experience in sustainable forest management, SFMOs have been able to contribute to Natura 2000 from the very start and will continue to contribute and integrate Natura 2000 objectives into their daily operations and management planning, helping the network to become an even greater success story!

For more complete information on the "**EUSTAFOR Position Paper on the Fitness Check of the Birds and Habitat Directives and Their Implementation in State Forests**" please click here.

EUSTAFOR's 30 members (state forest organizations managing state forests) represent around one third of the EU forest area. They are committed to sustainable forest management and work with the existing forest certification schemes. The total harvest of EUSTAFOR members is about 120 million m3 of round timber per annum and together they employ more than 100 000 individuals.

For further information please contact the EUSTAFOR office (office@eustafor.eu) or consult our website at www.eustafor.eu.