



Brussels, 30th October 2013

Joint statement

**by ELO, Copa-Cogeca, CEPF and FACE on behalf of the Natura 2000 Users' Forum,
Alpine Biogeographical seminar , Graz- 25th -26th November 2013**

The member organisations of the Natura 2000 Users' Forum are highly concerned about including non-intervention management in Natura 2000 discussions that are currently being held on alpine and boreal biogeographical processes.

We are extremely worried about the consequences of putting the 'non-intervention' concept into practice. European forests have been managed for centuries. Excluding the possibility to manage forests would seriously restrict the multifunctional nature of forests and limit their ability to provide the broad range of benefits, as also highlighted in the new EU Forest Strategy.

'Non-intervention management' is a in itself contradiction and not clearly defined term which can be misunderstood and interpreted in multiple ways. Any form of management practice implies some form of intervention.

Without sustainable management forests are more likely to be at risk, with regards to e.g. climate change adaptation, the control and prevent of pests (e.g. invasive alien species) and diseases or the breakout of forest fires. While such risk prevention can be controlled at reasonable costs in the framework of sustainable forest management, it becomes unaffordable and unfeasible under the non-intervention approach. In addition it needs be noted that sustainable forest management significantly contributes and safeguards biodiversity.

Furthermore, non-intervention management significantly affects the ownership rights of private forest owners.

The introduction of wilderness and non-intervention management (new terminology for the setting aside of land) is a completely new dimension in the discussion of implementing the Habitats Directive. Until now an integrative and dynamic understanding of nature conservation was stipulated. This concept calls for a segregated approach, which does not take into account the social, economic and ecological requirements of forests under Natura 2000, and therefore contradicts the formulations of Article 2 of the Habitats Directive. The approach of segregating different forest functions does not fit into the culture of managing forests in Europe. This is clearly not the message to send out after 20 years of Natura 2000.

Therefore we strongly oppose to include non-intervention management as an option for the management of Natura 2000 forest habitats at biogeographical and national level.

We urge the European Commission to withdraw the concept of non-intervention, which restricts forest management and which is inappropriate at a time when the demands for all forest products and ecosystem services are increasing. A sustainable and domestic production of wood should be guaranteed and promoted.

Yours sincerely,

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