

JOINT STATEMENT
Eighth FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference
The Future We Want: The Forests We Need
14-15 April 2021

Ministerial Roundtable: Sustainable forest management – our joint answer to the vision of sustainable development

- On behalf of, European private forest owners and farmers and agri-cooperatives, we would like to thank you for giving us the opportunity to present our views today.
- Societal expectations towards forests have been rising over the last decades. Forests are expected to provide key solutions for mitigating climate change, enhancing biodiversity and contributing to economic and social recovery.
- The Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) definition, criteria and indicators that have been agreed by all of you at Pan-European level are the foundation of European forest management practices. We consider crucial to continue improving and possibly revisiting this later to ensure that they respond to current and future challenges and opportunities.
- State of the art SFM is the holistic and integrative answer to the complexity of dynamic forest-development.
- Forest management decisions are not easy and straight forward, are not free of charge and entail some risks. Flexibility is needed when it comes to management choices. This is even more true today in a context of growing natural disturbances.
- Forest management practices encompass biodiversity preservation as well as carbon sequestration. These aspects are equally important as the many other services that forests provide, including the provision of renewable raw material to the society, recreational services, or environmental benefits other than biodiversity.
- It is also important to stress that wood supply is the main ecosystem service that generates revenue for forest owners allowing to finance forest management operations and investments. The other benefits provided to society are to date rarely economically valued and rewarded.

- In a context where there are more and more questions and concerns regarding the future of our forests, explaining SFM challenges and opportunities to the society is crucial. CEPF, COPA-COGECA and ELO have recently launched a campaign entitled "[*Welcome to my forest*](#)". We invite all of you to watch these short video clips where forest owners from all over Europe explain in a few words what being a forest owner means.
- As a conclusion, we should trust and support the approach to sustainable forest management that has been implemented for decades in a dynamic and evolving way. This does not mean remaining static and not facing the existing challenges. On the contrary, it means that forest owners and managers will continue to adapt, learn, and innovate as they work with nature to maintain forests and respond to societal expectations.
- We hope that our views will be considered in the further discussions and will continue to support Forest's Europe activities.