



Press Release
20 March 2015
Brussels

European Forest Owners, Managers and Professionals Welcome the International Day of Forests “Forests | Climate | Change”

“To build a sustainable, climate-resilient future for all, we must invest in our world's forests.”

– UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon

The European forest owners, managers and professionals represented by key stakeholders of the European forest sector, **EUSTAFOR**, **CEPF**, **Copa-Cogeca**, **ELO**, **FECOF**, **UEF** and **USSE**, welcome the declaration by the UN General Assembly of the International Day of Forests on 21 March which - in 2015 - has the theme “**Forests | Climate | Change.**”

Forests and trees are essential to life on Earth and human well-being. Forest ecosystems cover one third of the Earth's land mass. In Europe, forests represent over 44 % of the land area of the continent and, apart from the traditional production of wood and other forest-based products, they provide a multitude of benefits to European societies and the environment including clean air, clean water, a home for over 80% of terrestrial biodiversity, and a natural defence against a changing climate.

On the occasion of this year's International Day of Forests, we would like to emphasize the role of active forest management in ensuring the sustainability of our forests. Sustainably managed forests not only give us environmental benefits, they also maintain sustainable economic development and growth thanks to the climate friendly and renewable raw materials they produce and the green jobs they provide. Forests contribute to the livelihood of millions of private forest owners as well as to the budgets of both communes and states.

We actively promote the sustainable and multi-functional management of Europe's forests which contributes towards implementing the current flagship policy initiatives of the European Union such as the Europe 2020 Strategy “Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe”, the most recent 2030 Climate and Energy Package and the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2020.

A competitive forest sector helps to maintain the vitality of rural areas and prevent land abandonment and rural exodus. Therefore, we would like to stress that the successful implementation of Rural Development Programmes enables forest owners, managers and professionals to deliver sustainable and innovative products and services, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation.

We especially call for the efficient and effective implementation of the new **EU Forest Strategy**. We fully support the aim of the strategy to ensure that all EU forests are managed according to sustainable forest management principles and to strengthen the EU's contribution towards reducing deforestation at global level by 2020.

EUSTAFOR - European State Forest Association www.eustafor.eu
CEPF - Confederation of European Forest Owners www.cepf-eu.org
COPA-COGECA - European Farmers European Agri-Cooperatives www.copa-cogeca.be
ELO - European Landowners' Organization www.europeanlandowners.org
FECOF – European Federation of Municipal Woodowners www.fecof.eu
UEF – Union of European Foresters www.european-foresters.org
USSE - Union des sylviculteurs du Sud de l'Europe www.usse-eu.org



The "International Day of Forests" was first established by the decision of the United Nations General Assembly on 28 November 2012. It is celebrated every year on March 21st, uniting two international commemorations: the "World Forestry Day" and "Forest Day".