

**VIRGINIJUS SINKEVIČIUS**  
Commissioner for Environment  
Oceans and Fisheries



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Mr Marian Stoicescu  
President  
Council of European Foresters  
Bulevardul Gen. Gh. Magheru, 31  
Bucharest, Sector 1  
ROMANIA

Dear Mr. Stoicescu,

Thank you for your letter of 12 May 2022 to President von der Leyen, who has asked me to reply on her behalf.

I warmly welcome your support for the European Green Deal and especially your proposal for stronger ambition on our pledge to plant at least 3 billion additional trees by 2030.

To tackle the climate and biodiversity crises, the European Commission has proposed several new pieces of new legislation and initiatives under the umbrella of the European Green Deal. Increasing the amount of forests in the EU, in full respect of the ecological principles favourable to biodiversity, is a key policy priority and is one of the main objectives of the New EU Forest Strategy for 2030. The Commission estimates that, between 2010 and 2015, almost 300 million additional trees have grown in the EU each year. The pledge of planting at least 3 billion trees aims to roughly double the forest expansion rate in the EU over the period 2005-2020, and have 3 billion additional trees planted by 2030.

This is an ambitious, yet feasible target. Witnessing the passion of many Europeans for nature in general and tree planting in particular, I am actually hopeful that we can overtake that objective. Regarding opportunities for financing tree planting, there are several EU funds that can be used for that purpose, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, cohesion funding as well as the LIFE Programme. The Commission intends to publish later this year guidelines on biodiversity friendly afforestation, reforestation and tree planting, which will also include information on available EU funding.

Yours sincerely,