



Council of European Foresters Statement of June 30, 2025

The Council of European Foresters,

- Reaffirming its commitment to the Paris Agreement, the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs 13, 15) and the Forest Europe (UNECE/FAO) Ministerial decisions on sustainable forest management and biodiversity protection;
- Recalling the European Green Deal, the EU Forest Strategy for 2030, the EU Climate Law and EUDR provisions that promote resilience, carbon sequestration and biodiversity in forest ecosystems;
- Acknowledging that climate change exacerbates risks (wildfire, pest outbreaks, drought), threatens forest health and undermines the multiple social, economic and environmental functions forests provide;
- Noting uneven implementation and enforcement of legal frameworks across Europe, gaps in transboundary cooperation, and limited integration of adaptive management and innovative finance in national legislation;
- Recognizing the critical role of forest owners, indigenous and local communities, sectoral stakeholders and civil society in co-designing and implementing policies that ensure ecosystem integrity, equitable benefit-sharing and long-term viability;
- Stressing the importance of transparent data, harmonized monitoring systems, digital traceability and performance dashboards to assess policy effectiveness, compliance and socio-ecological outcomes;
- Emphasizing the need for tailored, context-specific legal instruments that incentivize nature-based solutions, payment for ecosystem services (PES), bioeconomy development and Industry 5.0 innovation;
- Welcoming ongoing efforts by the European Commission, UNECE, FAO, Council of Europe and national governments to enhance policy coherence, capacity building and financing for resilient forest landscapes.

Hereby resolves to recommend that:

- 1. National and Regional Governments:**
 - a. Review and update forest legislation to explicitly integrate climate risk assessments, adaptive silvicultural guidelines and disaster-risk reduction provisions;**

b. Harmonize definitions, criteria and indicators for “sustainable forest management,” “forest resilience” and “forest-based bioeconomy” across borders to facilitate mutual recognition and trade;

c. Embed mandatory national forest governance reviews, stakeholder consultations and gender-sensitive participatory processes in all policy cycles;

d. Develop and approve a scientifically sound methodology for assessing damage caused by intentional, targeted damage, degradation, and destruction of forest ecosystems caused by fires, mining, pollution resulting from military aggression, illegal logging, and other forms of destructive human activity for the purpose of compensation.

2. European Union Institutions:

a. Accelerate adoption of the EU-wide Monitoring Framework for forests and ensure interoperability with national inventories, remote-sensing platforms and digital traceability systems;

b. Strengthen the EUDR compliance mechanism by linking it to adaptive management performance metrics and a clear roadmap for high-risk forest regions;

c. Expand EU-level funding instruments (LIFE, EMFAF, Horizon Europe) to prioritize cross-border pilot projects on PES for carbon, water, biodiversity and socio-cultural services.

3. Forest Sector and Private Stakeholders:

a. Commit to science-based adaptive forest management plans that include climate-smart species selection, assisted migration trials and diversified stand structures;

b. Adopt voluntary forest certification schemes (FSC, PEFC) with enhanced requirements for climate mitigation, social safeguards and traceability;

c. Develop public-private partnerships to mobilize green finance – green bonds, blended finance and carbon markets – to underwrite restoration, innovation and community-led initiatives.

4. Research, Academia and Technical Bodies:

a. Pool transnational research capacities to generate downscaled climate projections, early-warning systems and risk maps for forest managers;

b. Co-design decision-support tools and digital dashboards that integrate policy indicators, ecosystem service valuations and socio-economic data;

c. Facilitate knowledge exchange on best-practice governance models, traditional ecological knowledge and novel silvicultural approaches.

5. Civil Society and Local Communities:

a. Ensure meaningful engagement of smallholders and rural communities in legal-policy reform, benefit-sharing mechanisms and monitoring processes;

b. Promote forest education programmes that raise awareness of climate-forest interlinkages, rights-based approaches and green entrepreneurship.

6. International Cooperation:

a. Advocate for stronger synergies between EU, UNECE/FAO Forest Europe, UNFCCC and CBD processes to align reporting, financing and capacity-building priorities;

b. Support the establishment of a Europe-wide “Forest Resilience Knowledge Hub” hosted by the Council of European Foresters to coordinate policy dialogue, technical assistance and peer-learning networks.

7. Learning from Best Practices in the Region:

a. Establish a regional “Good Practices Repository” for sustainable forest management – building on initiatives such as the GoProFor LIFE database, which documents nearly 300 scientifically validated, replicable actions across biodiversity, invasive-species control, climate adaptation, governance and planning;

b. Convene annual peer-learning exchanges – study tours, thematic field workshops and virtual round-tables – bringing together national forest authorities, local communities, academia and private stakeholders to observe, discuss and adapt exemplary measures under varied ecological and socio-economic contexts;

c. Integrate lessons learned from cross-border pilots into national forest policy reviews, adaptive-management guidelines and performance dashboards, ensuring legislative frameworks remain dynamic and grounded in on-the-ground experience;

d. Commission modular training curricula for forest schools and extension services based on documented good practices;

e. Incentivize translation and localization of case studies into national languages;

f. Secure EU co-funding (e.g., LIFE, Horizon Europe) to maintain and expand the repository and peer-learning events;

g. Track uptake by monitoring citations of repository examples in national management plans and legislation.

This C.E.F. Statement together with the C.E.F. Resolution were adopted at Council of European Foresters – Round Table on “Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Legal and Policy Frameworks for Sustainable Forest Management in a Changing Climate” organized by Council of European Foresters and National Forestry University of Ukraine, in Lviv (Ukraine), June 30, 2025.

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C.E.F. President

