

# **Symposium: „Forests in a changing environment“**

Göttingen, 25 – 28 October 2006

## **Resolution**

The many scientific presentations given at the meeting confirmed that long term monitoring under both the extensive (Level 1) and the intensive (Level 2) networks are essential tools in helping to understand environmental issues in Europe today. The participants acknowledge the role played by the European Commission in helping to fund this monitoring work in the past. The group notes that the European Commission plans to transfer the forest monitoring programme from the Regulation Forest Focus to Life+ and is concerned that these proposed future changes could threaten the continuity of the forest monitoring.

They therefore agree on the following points to be forwarded to the European Commission, GD ENV, to the presidency of the EU, Finland, to the WG on Effects of CLRTAP and to the national coordinators of the Forest Monitoring programme of ICP Forests.

1. The participants consider that the existing monitoring system makes a major contribution to the information needs of the CLRTAP and, by adapting its systems, is also increasingly meeting the information needs of other political processes dealing with climate change, carbon sequestration, biodiversity and sustainable forest management.
2. The group urges that Member States (members of the Standing Forestry Committee) ensure that Life+ funds are available in order to carry out future forest monitoring. If the negotiation process of the Life+ Regulation is delayed then the European Commission is urged to find a way to extend the Forest Focus Regulation for another year.
3. The main strength of the Pan European programme lies in its Level I and II databases. The information generated by the programme is open to all clients (e.g. forest managers, scientists, environmental groups, EU and National data reporting for international conventions and commitments). ICP Forests is a main data contributor to the MCPFE indicators and has the potential to contribute data for future reporting needs (e.g. the Kyoto Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)). The continuous time series of the Pan-European programme is an essential tool for addressing future challenges and threats to the sustainability of forest ecosystems across Europe.

4. The participants support the existing monitoring concept with its structured monitoring levels, comprehensive infrastructure and European wide cooperation as a cost effective and scientifically robust basis for future activities. There is a danger that, under the co-funding procedure under Life+, the programme could fragment into a series of unharmonised networks losing the European added value.
5. The participants are in favour of developing cooperation between the Level I programme and the National Forest Inventories in order to gain efficiencies in the data collection processes, to improve the vertical and horizontal integration of the information, and to improve the potential of the monitoring activities to service the needs of Kyoto and CBD. This presupposes a transition phase in order to solve current differences between the two systems (e.g. timing, representativity).
6. The participants take note that the development of the future structure and aims of the Level II plot network is currently under discussion at the national and European level. An in-depth analysis of the Level II network will identify those plots which are of particular relevance from the European perspective. Specific attention should be paid towards the requirements set by climate change, carbon stocks and fluxes, sustainable forest management and maintaining biodiversity, while ensuring that the original mandate concerning air pollution continues to be fulfilled. Therefore the content of the Level II programme (e.g. plot design, attributes, parameters, assessment frequency) must be developed towards a targeted oriented, cost-effective approach while still delivering reliable ecosystem information. More flexibility is needed in order to answer questions which are relevant only to certain regions in Europe.
7. The outcome of the above evaluations is urgently needed in order to formulate a core European programme for forest monitoring.

The symposium "Forests in a changing Environment" was attended by 120 delegates from more than 30 countries. In the symposium results of 20 years ICP Forests monitoring were presented.

Responsible organizers were:

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