

## PRESS RELEASE

### Full potential of forestry to contribute to Rural Development Policy still not recognized

The European forest owners welcome some of the proposed amendments to the CAP Rural Development Policy (RDP), as presented by MEP Capoulas Santos in the European Parliament today. However, the current RDP proposal does not yet overcome the elemental shortfalls of the previous RDP.

“The economic prosperity of forestry is a prerequisite for the sustainable development of the environmental and social functions of forestry in Europe’s rural areas. Therefore we support the proposed inclusion of the competitiveness of forestry into the objectives and priorities of the new Rural Development Policy. However, unattractive payment levels for forest-related measures and the failure to capture funds for Pillar II, still will lead to a poor achievement of the new Rural Development Policy targets, particularly in terms of strengthening and maintaining the economic viability of the rural sector and the provision of multiple ecosystem services”, stresses Thierry de l’Escaille, Secretary General of the European Landowners’ Organization (ELO).

“Due to complex bureaucratic requirements and low payment levels the uptake until today of available forestry related funds in the CAP period (2007–2013) has been exceptional low. The new Rural Development Policy should overcome this shortfall by simplifying the implementation requirements and improving the attractiveness of measures by increasing their payment level. The positive effect of a higher uptake of e.g. Natura 2000 measure would help the EU to reach its biodiversity targets. Furthermore, support to the grouping of small forest owners into cooperatives and producer groups needs to be further improved, e.g. support should be provided for adequate time spans which better reflect the long-term processes in forests and forest management”, emphasizes Aljoscha Requardt, Secretary General of the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF).

“As Europe’s forests are increasingly threatened by climate-change induced catastrophes such as forest fires, storms and pests or globalization induced impacts like invasive species, the new Rural Development Policy must take into account the importance of risk management in forestry. The proposed support to the prevention measure must be overhauled”, underlines Inazio Martinez de Arano, Executive Director of the Union of Foresters of Southern Europe (USSE).

For further information, see attached joint position paper, or contact:

CEPF – Confederation of European Forest Owners ([wendelin.gravenreuth@cepf-eu.org](mailto:wendelin.gravenreuth@cepf-eu.org))

ELO – European Landowners’ Organization ([forest@elo.org](mailto:forest@elo.org))

USSE – Union of Southern European Forest Owners ([imarano@usse.es](mailto:imarano@usse.es))

Forests cover about 40% of Europe’s territory. About 60% are owned privately by approximately 16 million, mainly small-scaled forest owners. Forests play a crucial multifunctional role in rural areas. While providing around 3.5 million jobs and a sustainable source of timber, Europe’s forests deliver multiple goods and ecosystem services such as biodiversity, clean air and water, soil protection and recreation areas.