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European forest owners and managers call for major clarifications on the new EU Forest Strategy

“The new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 needs clear objectives and feasible coherent actions” was the message of forest owners and managers to the EU policy makers from the European Forest Owners’ Conference. The conference, organised on 4 October 2021 in Vienna, brought together European and national forest owners’ organisations, state forest organisations and MEPs to discuss and exchange on the new EU Forest Strategy. During the conference CEPF, EUSTAfor, Copa-Cogeca, ELO, USSE and FECOF presented a joint position on the new strategy which echoes the concerns raised in Vienna.

Substantial concerns were voiced by the conference participants as the new strategy undermines the current balance of social, environmental and economic pillars of sustainable and multifunctional forestry in the EU. European forest owners and managers were among the most active and supportive of a new strategy and convinced that it was needed to better address the challenges and opportunities of the sector and to achieve new Green Deal objectives through a consistent and well-coordinated framework at EU level. However, these hopes have been dashed with the new strategy.

The [joint position paper](#) presented at the conference explains main reasons why European forest owners and managers are highly worried about the strategy and deem it inadequate. The paper also raises some key questions and remarks with regards to the implementation of the strategy. It highlights four actions that were announced in the strategy and are in need of major clarifications and explanations prior to further development of these initiatives:

1. New EU indicators, thresholds, and ranges on sustainable forest management
2. New EU voluntary closer-to-nature forest management certification scheme
3. Development of payment for ecosystem services
4. New legislative proposal on EU Forest Observation, Reporting and Data Collection

European forest owners and managers acknowledge the importance of reaching EU objectives and are determined to deliver their part. However, if EU policies related to forests continue to lack coherence and disregard the input and concerns of those who are managing them and will be given the ultimate responsibility of implementing these policies, there is a strong risk of infeasibility. Forest owners and managers have a lot at stake in their forests. To remain motivated and contribute to the long-term viability of rural areas and EU economy, they are in need of constructive signals from European policymakers.

ANNEX – The New EU Forest Strategy for 2030 - Position of European Forest Owners and Managers