

## **VALSAÍN DECLARATION**

### **Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**

**6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> April 2010**

**On the occasion of the Conference,**

- A. Remarking the broad participation to this Conference including representation from 22 countries and 9 organisations.
- B. Acknowledging that forests are of key importance for the social and economic development of the European continent as a whole, and they also represent highly valuable ecosystems displaying great biodiversity.
- C. Aware that forest lands and ecosystems host complex natural dynamics and generate multiple benefits.
- D. Bearing in mind the great variability of forest ecosystems at the European scale and the vast biological diversity that depends on them.
- E. Supporting the objectives of mitigating climate change and its effects<sup>1</sup> and acknowledging the participation of forest ecosystems and of forest products in capturing carbon in the long term.
- F. Acknowledging that European forest systems are threatened by both natural and human agents and that climate change can increase the destructive capacity of these agents, which increase the vulnerability of these ecosystems.
- G. Aware that climate change can alter the dynamic nature and adaptation of forest ecosystems, a process that can vary depending on the different types of European ecosystems. Likewise, it can have an effect on the increase of the recurrence period of extreme phenomena such as storms and fires and on their destructive intensity.
- H. Assuming the heterogeneity of the problems that affect European forests, as well as the need to increase and diversify efforts, not only by focusing on adapting to climate change but also on all challenges present in European forest areas.

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<sup>1</sup> "Adapting to Climate Change: towards a European Framework for action", COM (2009) 147.



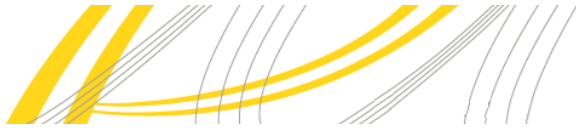
- I. Noting that related phenomena happen at a continental scale and, at least adopt a transnational scale, thus showing its effects in more than one State and encompassing vast extensions of the EU territory.
- J. Reasserting the importance of having a faithful knowledge of the state and evolution of changing factors that affect forest ecosystems and, acknowledging national and European efforts made towards gathering forest information, as well as the need for harmonisation, progress, improvement and globalization at the European level,
- K. Convinced that sustainable forest management can be positive for creating a more diverse and healthy forest structure, and fulfil multiple forest functions.
- L. Following global and continental commitments signed by Member States and the European Union<sup>2</sup>.
- M. Bearing in mind actions included in the Council Conclusions on Biodiversity post-2010 approved on March 15th, 2010 and the work done under Spanish Presidency on forest fire prevention that led to a draft Council Conclusions, now at the Coreper.
- N. Recognising the importance of the Pan-European cooperation on sustainable forest management, aiming at securing all forest functions, this Conference welcomes the work in preparing for the upcoming Forest Europe Ministerial Conference to be held in June 2011 in Oslo.
- O. Acknowledging the role of EU in combating deforestation, forest degradation, promoting Sustainable Forest Management and protecting forests inside and outside the EU including through frameworks like REDD+ and sustainable consumption patterns and using tools like GPP, FLEGT, etc.

***In this context, the Conference acknowledges the following action priorities for the protection of forests in Europe:***

- 1. Acknowledges the Green Paper on Forest Protection and Information presented by the European Commission and encourages the broadest participation in the ongoing consultation process.*
- 2. Supports the objective of making it possible for forests to continue to provide in the future the goods and services that they provide currently and to join forces to increase their quality and quantity. Protection of forest is a part of Sustainable Forest Management.*

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<sup>2</sup> In particular the "Rio forest principles ", (Río de Janeiro, 1992) Annex III, 2b), the UNFF and its NLBI, the Convention on Biological Diversity, the framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Strasbourg 1990, Helsinki 1993, Lisbon 1998, Vienna 2003 y Warsaw 2007).



3. *Aware that the ecosystem approach concept is consistent with sustainable forest management as was established within the framework of the Forest Europe process.*
4. *Considers further efforts and options for cooperation and coordination at the EU level within the framework of the EU Forest Strategy, with due regard to the subsidiarity principle.*
5. *Fosters the continuous assessment and monitoring of the state, dynamics and evolution of European forests, promoting that National Forest Inventory systems reflect their results, among others, through Pan-European criteria and indicators, streamline the collection at European level of information on forestry in order to contribute to other entities through existing European forest information systems.*