

PRESS RELEASE**Multifunctional forests hold the key to reaching the EU's climate and biodiversity objectives**

Brussels, 21 January 2020 – EU Forest representatives, including CEPF, Copa-Cogeca, ELO and EUSTAFOR, teamed up today to organise the event entitled “Seeing the forest for the trees – the multifunctional role of EU forests” in the European Parliament (EP). The event, hosted by MEP Petri Sarvamaa, rapporteur for the EP’s initiative report on the EU Forest Strategy, aimed to address the significant contribution of multifunctional forests to the EU’s climate and biodiversity objectives.

While more than one third of Europe is covered by forests which provide European citizens with economic, environmental and social benefits, the multifunctional role of forests is all too often overlooked. This is mainly due to the spread of generalised messages, such as the degradation of EU forests, the purely commercial use of forests, etc. Such messages underestimate the continuous efforts undertaken by forest owners and managers to ensure sustainable forest development and to maximise their potential to serve people, the climate and nature. In fact, EU forest owners and managers have a long tradition of and hands-on experience in sustainable management of multifunctional forests. This was showcased by three practical examples: the management of wetlands in Sweden, tools to enhance the multifunctionality of forests in Croatia and agroforestry in Portugal.

In addition, it was also highlighted that collaboration between policy-makers and the forest sector is central to optimising the multiple benefits provided by forests. This is particularly relevant within the context of climate change and emerging societal expectations in Europe.

MEP Petri Sarvamaa underlined that, "*A self-standing and robust EU Forest Strategy is the most appropriate tool to enable multifunctional EU forests to tackle the challenges of our time.*"

Actors in the forestry sector believe that a balanced approach to all forest functions is key to ensuring consistency between forest-related policies. This is especially true when taking into consideration the scope of the European Green Deal. The future EU Forest Strategy should establish a framework for all relevant initiatives within the European Green Deal. These include the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the EU Climate Law – achieving climate neutrality by 2050, the EU bio-based circular economy, the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and other policies.

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About EUSTAFOR

The European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR) represents state forest

companies, enterprises and agencies that have sustainable forest management and sustainable wood production as major concerns. www.eustafor.eu

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About COPA-COGECA

Copa-Cogeca is the united voice of farmers and their cooperatives in the European Union. Its mission is to defend the general interests of the EU's agriculture and to promote its role in our society. www.copa-cogeca.eu

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About CEPF

The Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) is the umbrella association of national forest owner organisations in Europe. Representing family forestry in Europe, CEPF promotes the values of sustainable forest management, private property ownership and the economic viability of the forest sector. www.cepfeu.org

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About ELO

ELO represents the collective voice of landowners, managers and farmers across Europe. Their business and private properties are the core for a sustainable and prosperous countryside. ELO addresses issues that affect European rural areas, which represent over 80% of the EU's territory and are home to around half its population. www.europeanlandowners.org