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## **CEPF position on the Green Paper on forest protection and information**

European forest owners welcome the Green Paper on forest protection and information adopted by the Commission on 1st of March 2010. The Green Paper aims at opening an EU-wide debate if and how the EU policy should evolve to prepare forest for climate change. Although the implication of development of this initiative to the forest sector is yet unrevealed, the paper undoubtedly opens a new political pathway in the EU forest policy.

The Green Paper on options for European approaches to forest protection and information is a step forward in the right direction to integrate sustainable forest management into other EU legislation and processes. Although the competence for forest policy lies with the member states a number of substantial EU developments influence forestry significantly. The forest sector needs stronger political recognition and integrity within the EU. Recognition of the concept of sustainable forest management as such, could give guidance to other forest related policies and processes, such as United Nations conventions on climate change and biological diversity.

60 % of the forested area of Europe is owned by family forest owners. These owners are faced with many challenges, especially since they have no economies of scale. In the global race against the climate change and along with the consistent flow of new demands and strategies the forest owners must meet guaranteed fair conditions.

CEPF supports that the Commission is focusing on forests protection. We share the desire to maintain healthy and resilience forests because they are key to maintaining integrity of biodiversity, carbon sequestration and productive capacity, on which the livelihood of forest owners depends.

The family forest owners in Europe insists on a comprehensive approach addressing in a balanced way multiply and interrelated social, economic and environmental functions. The subsidiary principle should be respected when considering new policy approaches. Furthermore, a potential instrument should enable to address the national differences in respect of forestry.

Family forest owners' has a long standing commitment to sustainable forest management to pursue the proper balance between economic, ecologic and social considerations. It is clear that further work on the Green Paper can not happen without the presence of the people with a direct connection to forests.

A need for a comprehensive harmonized approach as well as increased cooperation and strengthened institutional capacity of the forestry sector at both EU and national levels has become more apparent. A debate on a legal frame on forests in the pan-European region launched by the intergovernmental process the MCPFE/Forest Europe should also be considered in further course of action. And competence of the member states as well as national forest policies should remain as the basis of further development.