

PRESS RELEASE**Improved but not reworked: forest owners' concerns partially heard by the European Parliament**

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Whilst lawmakers tightly rejected the option to fully rework and rethink the Commission's approach to nature restoration (by a 12-votes majority, out of 648 MEPs), the votes on the amendments still allowed European Parliament to address some of the main concerns raised by European forest owners. These difficulties have been raised from the beginning of the process and were mostly not yet heard by policy makers.

"The changes adopted by the Parliament take into account ground reality of forest owners. Since the proposal was built on weak foundations, these improvements need to be secured and not weakened during the trialogue process." said H  l  ne Koch, Policy Advisor for CEPF.

Among others, the prioritisation of restoration measures on existing Natura 2000 sites, based on known conditions, would allow to focus on areas most in needs. Forest owners will be the ones implementing and maintaining restoration actions. Therefore, the call for development of nature restoration plans taking due account of the principle of their prior and informed consent, is a core positive outcome. However, several issues linked to practical implementation are still pending and will need to be clarified in the next steps of the process.

With the European Parliament endorsing significant parts of the Council's General Approach, and the European Commission working as neutral broker, trialogue negotiations will be eased. European forest owners trust that the changes adopted by the Parliament will contribute to a workable final text, addressing the views of those who will bear the responsibility of the implementation.

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