

## PRESS RELEASE

# #WelcomeToMyForest – To make the voices of those who take care of forests heard

Brussels, 30 March 2021 – *“Forests are decreasing in Europe.” “Our forests are in bad, bad shape.” “Deforestation is also a challenge in Europe.” “Forest owners care more about money than biodiversity.”*... here are some of the arguments that can commonly be heard in EU level discussions regarding forests. However, the ones making them often seem to lack understanding concerning the reality on the ground. **Who has ever seen a forest management plan? Who knows how and why a thinning operation is conducted? Who knows about the costs of forest management before any revenue can be made? Thus, increasing the knowledge among the public and policy-makers regarding European forests and forest owners is highly needed, and what would be a better way to do it than by giving the floor to the people who have dedicated their lives to taking care of forests?**

Today, the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), Copa-Cogeca and the European Landowners' Organisation (ELO) launched an information campaign called “Welcome to my forest” on social media. In a series of video clips, forest owners from multiple Member States invite viewers to their forests to hear about what being a forest owner is like, what are the challenges they face, what are their objectives when it comes to forest management and what keeps them motivated. A reality far from the polemics and generalisations that are prominent in the media.

After viewing the first ten testimonials, it is clear that forest owners are not a homogeneous group and there are as many different forests as there are forest owners. However, all forest owners have one thing in common — they all want to take the best possible care of their forests so that they can continue to exist and provide their many benefits to society today and for future generations. They also deliver an important message, often forgotten in the mainstream media: in the face of climate change, sustainable management of our forest resources is key, and we need to maintain a vibrant sector if we want to keep our forests healthy.

Therefore, the campaign partners invite everyone to follow #WelcomeToMyForest on social media and to listen to the forest owners — the people who by taking care of their forests are also taking care of our future.

**-END-**

### Note to the editors:

Here is a list of the videos from the first phase of the campaign:

[Meet Clara Castelló in her forest in Spain](#)

[Meet Märt Linnamägi in his forest in Estonia](#)



Via the following link you can find the campaign webpage when it's live tomorrow at 9:30:

<https://www.cepf-eu.org/page/welcometomyforest>

Here are some statistics from the [State of Europe's Forests 2020](#) report:

- European forests are expanding, storing carbon, and supplying wood on a sustainable basis
- The area of forests in Europe has increased by 9% over the last 30 years. At 227 million ha of forests, more than one-third of Europe's land surface is forested.
- Growing stock has increased by 50% since 1990, although this trend is slowing down. The total growing stock of European forests adds up to 34 900 million m<sup>3</sup>, of which about 84% is located in forests available for wood supply. On average, there are 169 m<sup>3</sup> of growing stock per ha, which is 40 m<sup>3</sup> per ha more than thirty years ago.
- The volume of wood and the weight of carbon stored in the biomass of European forests have grown by 50% over the last 30 years as forest area expanded and only a part of the increment has been harvested.
- About three-quarters of the net annual wood increment is felled. Every year in Europe, forests sequester in their biomass about a tenth of the carbon dioxide emissions produced in other sectors. Carbon stored in harvested wood products also contributes to the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- The volume of wood supply has grown, reaching 550 million m<sup>3</sup>, which is 40% more than in 1990.
- The area of forests designated for biodiversity conservation has increased by 65% in 20 years, and the area designated for landscape conservation by 8%.
- Between 2010 and 2020, the average annual sequestration of carbon in forest biomass reached 155 million tonnes in the European region. In the EU-28, sequestration corresponds to around 10% of gross greenhouse gas emissions. In the 1990-2015 period, the carbon stock in harvested wood products increased from 2.5 to 2.8 tonnes of carbon per capita, thus contributing to CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions.
- 66% of the total forest area in Europe was regenerated naturally or resulted from natural expansion, and the share of these forms of establishment is slightly increasing. In 2020, plantations covered only 3.8%; forests undisturbed by man cover 2.2% of the European forest area.

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