

## BORDEAUX DECLARATION

Bordeos, 29 de septiembre de 2022

The Atlantic axis of southern Europe, from Nouvelle Aquitaine to Portugal, articulates one of the most dynamic and interesting forestry regions in the European Union. Its temperate climate, the diversity of its forest ecosystems, the predominance of private forests distributed among thousands of foresters, the coexistence between agriculture and industry and the presence of a highly diversified forest-wood chain with a great weight in rural employment and regional GDP are the most relevant features of this enormous massif of more than 10.5 million hectares that extends along a coastal strip of great beauty and great ecological interest, secularly united around the Pilgrims' Route to Santiago de Compostela.

For more than two centuries, natural forests have coexisted with cultivated commercial forests in our forests, whose resources are of the utmost strategic interest as European society moves towards a decarbonised economy. *Pinus pinaster*, radiata pine, stone pine, Scots pine, cork oak, eucalyptus, chestnut, beech and poplar are the main species present that provide the sustainable resources that our forestry chain requires and that sustain more than 150,000 jobs in rural areas.

We are currently experiencing environmental changes and an increase in extreme climatic events that increase the risks that threaten our forests and that are the trigger for serious forest pathologies and often lead to natural disasters. Record temperatures, minimal rainfall, dry rivers and burning forests. This summer's events show the extent to which global warming is affecting our environment and our lives. Damage to forests from fires, drought, pests and diseases is of particular concern and all the basic components of resilient forest ecosystems, including biodiversity of fauna and flora, are under increasing pressure.

As we are witnessing in southern Europe, insufficient forest management is causing more fuel load in the form of forest biomass to accumulate in the forest, favouring the spread of fires and making fire-fighting increasingly difficult. With the environmental characteristics and the virulence of these fires, we have seen that the weight of our response cannot only be on extinction, but also on prevention, and for this we need a managed territory, actively involving private and public foresters.

Forestry and sustainable forest management, as well as a more active use of our forests, will be key in order to face the increasing risks that threaten forests, in particular fires, which year after year result in the loss of human lives, landscape and biodiversity. However, these prevention practices need to be complemented by properly planned and implemented preparedness and response measures, adapted to the local conditions of forest ecosystems and to the specificities of forest owners responsible for implementing solutions and ensuring their persistence. Governments therefore need to work in partnership with sectoral actors to implement national and regional strategies that respond to these challenges and at the same time incentivise the

circular bioeconomy that will allow our society to move towards an economy based on renewable resources.

In terms of firefighting, pre-positioning aerial assets as close as possible to forest areas seems to be the best response. In our regions, where there are many fire outbreaks, the strategy is based on an early aerial attack on fires. The aim is to provide the countries of southern Europe with a sufficient number of operational hydraulic bomber aircraft.

Aware of the challenges facing the forests of Southern Europe, the regional forest authorities of Galicia, Navarre, Nouvelle Aquitaine, the Basque Country and Portugal, together with forest owners' organisations and scientific and professional organisations gathered in Bordeaux, express our firm commitment to work towards increasing the resilience of our forests and strengthening the respective forest and timber chains, and in that sense

WE DECLARE:

- Forests and sustainable forest management need to be central and prominent, not only in these national and regional strategies but also in the initiatives being developed in the European Commission in order to continue to count on forests as providers of multiple services such as carbon sequestration, substitution of fossil fuel products and the promotion of biodiversity, among many other benefits they provide.
- In order to contribute to the generational change in forest management and to be able to continue with the mobilisation of timber, we believe it is essential to promote the creation of forest owners' groups. We consider all efforts aimed at the creation of these groups to be a priority, necessary and urgent. It is important to try to unite management and cohesion in the territory in the face of a property that is disintegrating and, in some places, is being abandoned with a greater lack of knowledge and disengagement from the territory by the heirs who form the new generations of owners.
- It is strategic to increase public-private cooperation in southern Europe by supporting initiatives and increasing R&D resources aimed at improving the resilience of southern European forest ecosystems, especially in the development of improved reproductive materials, health prevention and control, and the provision of tools for observing and monitoring the behaviour of forests in the face of climate change.
- The existence of trans-regional structures for cooperation and the exchange of experience between actors in the forestry and timber chain should be promoted and encouraged in order to achieve significant progress in forestry and in the industrial sectors involved.
- Incentive taxation and public aid designed in accordance with the profiles of forest owners and the current demands of society are effective instruments for boosting forest management and reducing the risks to which our forests are subject.