Climate change and forest fires in Europe

Polish State Forests

Brussels, 20.03.2019
The significance of the Polish forests

- Forest area in Poland: 9.4 mln ha
- Under the management of the SF: 7.4 mln ha
- Forest cover: ca 30% of the total land area
- Growing stock of the Polish forests 269 m3/ha
- Biomass of Polish forests contains 822 million tonnes of carbon

**FOREST COVER**
- 40%
- 29.5%
- 20.8%
- 33%*

**OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE**
- 77% administrated by the State Forests
- 18% individual ownership
- 2% national parks
- 0.9% comune owned
- 0.9% other state-owned
- 2% other privately owned
The organization of the Polish State Forests was founded in 1924.

**Employees of the State Forests**

**Workers in outsourced forest services, working in timber harvesting, planting.**

**Employees of sawmills, papermills, furniture industry and building materials**
Climate Change is an issue!

- “Effective and progressive response to the urgent threat of climate change”
- Global temperature rise this century “well below” 2 °C above pre-industrial levels (+ efforts for 1.5 °C).
- “Achieve a balance between anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century”

Paris Agreement (2016)
We plant 500 mln trees per year

We are enhancing the importance of natural renewals – their share in the last six years is 13.8%.

The nurseries produce annually 759 million of seedlings (53 million seedlings are being produced in container nurseries).

The average forest age is over 60 years

Stands representing age classes III and IV prevail in the forest structure and cover 24.9% and 19.4% of the forest area.
Fire prevention and suppression integrated into SFM - 1/2

- Fire risk categorization
- Forecasting and early detection

666 lookout towers (257 with cameras)
Fire prevention and suppression integrated into SFM – 2/2

- Alarm and dispatch communication network
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Prevention: information and educational activities

"Aware of the threat" campaign by State Forests
Small retention in lowland & mountain areas 2016-2022

- Renaturalization of wetlands, streams, bank-side reservoirs
- Construction, reconstruction or restoration of 2300 small retention reservoirs and other hydrotechnical facilities
- Storage of additional 2.5 million m³ of flood or rain water
- The total cost of 120 million USD from the State Forests and EU
Prevention, counteracting and reduction of threats related to forest fires 2016-2019

- Construction and modernization of 70 fire observation posts
- Advanced equipment to locate and detect fires and upgrading alarm & command points
- Construction of 11 meteorological stations
- New 67 patrol and firefighting vehicles
- Total cost of 11 million USD from the State Forests and EU
Conclusions

- Forests have a central role in Climate Change mitigation but adaptation, prevention and preparedness are a key issues!

- Only Sustainable Forest Management can bring long-term climate benefits from healthy and resilient forests

- EU policies need to be coherent:
  - CAP
  - LULUCF
  - Bioeconomy & Circular Economy
  - Landscape planning
  - Biodiversity & Natura 2000

EU forests are a growing resource but must be resilient
Thank you!

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