

MCPFE EXPERT LEVEL MEETING

12 – 14 February 2003, Vienna, Austria



4th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

VIENNA RESOLUTION 4

CONSERVING AND ENHANCING FOREST BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY IN EUROPE

*Final version as agreed at the MCPFE Expert Level Meeting
12-14 February 2003, Vienna, Austria*

1. Recognising the importance of forests for biological diversity and reaffirming that the conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in all types of forests is an essential element for their sustainable management,
2. building on the commitments of Resolution H2 “General Guidelines for the Conservation of the Biodiversity of European Forests”, the CBD¹, including its Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity, the IPF/IFF² Proposals for Action, the decisions of the UNFF³, as well as the Plan of Implementation of the WSSD⁴,
3. aiming to further maintain, conserve, restore and, as appropriate, enhance forest biological diversity,

the Signatory States and the European Community commit themselves to

4. strive for co-ordinated implementation of the Expanded Programme of Work on Forest Biological Diversity of the CBD and the Proposals for Action of the IPF/IFF at all levels,
5. address the maintenance, conservation, restoration and appropriate enhancement of forest biological diversity in national forest programmes and other relevant policies and programmes, and to set measures to achieve the coherence and mutual supportiveness of these policies,
6. assess the impact of relevant policies and programmes on forest biological diversity, collaborate in removing distortions and failures of policies resulting in loss of forest

¹ Convention on Biological Diversity

² Intergovernmental Panel on Forests / Intergovernmental Forum on Forests

³ United Nations Forum on Forests

⁴ World Summit on Sustainable Development

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biological diversity, and in promoting the compatibility of trade regulations with forest biodiversity related goals,

7. provide and analyse information about the impact and underlying causes of illegal harvesting of forest products and related trade on forest biological diversity; take effective measures to combat illegal harvesting of forest products and related trade, and build capacity to ensure effective forest law enforcement,
8. develop a regional understanding of the linkages between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management as defined by the MCPFE; share this understanding with the relevant bodies in the assessment of the relation between the ecosystem approach and sustainable forest management at the global level,
9. apply the MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe (Annex 2) and further develop them, when appropriate,
10. analyse and further develop protected forest networks, taking into account existing networks, in terms of their comprehensiveness, representativeness and adequacy relative to forest types and the effectiveness of their management with regard to the conservation goal,
11. prevent and mitigate losses of forest biological diversity due to fragmentation and conversion to other land uses and maintain and establish ecological connectivity, where appropriate,
12. promote, as appropriate, the restoration of forest biological diversity in degraded forests and forests established on former forestlands or other landscapes, including plantations, and enhance incentives to promote natural regeneration and regeneration with native tree species and provenances,
13. improve the assessment and monitoring of forest biological diversity in Europe, taking into account existing monitoring systems and contribute to harmonised international classification systems through developing a pan-European understanding on forest classification systems including forest types, naturalness and introduced forest species, in line with the Pan-European Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management,
14. contribute to the development of a pan-European strategy which prevents and mitigates the impacts of invasive alien species that threaten ecosystems, in accordance with the decisions of the CBD,
15. promote forest management planning and practices and landscape planning that is specifically suited to maintain, conserve, restore and enhance forest biological diversity, making use of the natural processes of forests,
16. promote the conservation of forest genetic resources as an integral part of sustainable forest management and continue the pan-European collaboration in this area,
17. encourage and support inter-disciplinary research in order to take knowledge-based decisions on sustainable forest management aiming at maintenance, conservation, restoration and enhancement of forest biological diversity

18. continue the fruitful collaboration with the ministerial process “Environment for Europe”/PEBLDS⁵, and put into action the “Framework for Co-operation” (Annex 1) by identifying common objectives and activities, especially through the co-operation of the MCPFE Liaison Unit and the Joint Secretariat of the PEBLDS,

and adopt

19. the “Framework for Co-operation” (Annex 1) between the MCPFE and the ministerial process “Environment for Europe”/PEBLDS,

20. the “MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe” (Annex 2) whilst proceeding to further co-operate with IUCN⁶ and its World Commission on Protected Areas to aim at full comparability with their Protected Area Management Categories.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Framework for Co-operation Between the MCPFE and Environment for Europe/PEBLDS

Annex 2: MCPFE Assessment Guidelines for Protected and Protective Forest and Other Wooded Land in Europe

⁵ Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy

⁶ IUCN The World Conservation Union