

THE STATEMENT OF THE SOCIOECONOMIC ORGANIZATIONS GROUP
for the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference
Madrid, 21 October 2015

As president of the Council of European Foresters I have the honour to give the statement on behalf of the FOREST EUROPE observer organizations included in the Socioeconomic Organizations Group:

- Association Internationale Forêts Méditerranéennes (AIFM)
- Union of European Foresters (UEF)
- Forest Management Board, Kosovo (FMB)
- Council of European Foresters (CEF)

The Extraordinary Ministerial Conference is a very important event for the European forestry sector.

We hoped that a convention on European forests, open to interested countries outside Europe, could have been signed during this conference. We are very interested by the development of protocols to that convention, with geographical or thematic purposes.

The Socioeconomic Organizations Group proposes to the Forest Europe Extraordinary Ministerial Conference, to the national and international institutions and authorities to ensure sustainable forest management to

- all the forests and
- to consider equally the ecological, social and economic functions of forests and
- to take into account, when developing forest strategies and forest policies at national and international level, the expertise of the foresters, stakeholders, and representatives of the civil society from the forestry sector, of the regional, national or international foresters' organizations.

Forestry sector, through sustainable regional adapted forest management, can provide jobs for all socio-economic categories who work in this sector, helping to improve the income situation of the population.

Education and forestry research should be strengthened through forest strategy at national and international level, given their contribution to the future of forests, forest economy and the life. Research, development and education need to be regional adapted and transdisciplinary integrating the existing regional and practical knowledge to ensure a direct and regional adapted impact to forest management, forest policies and forest economy. This will accelerate new areas for green jobs and improve environmental living conditions.

The Socioeconomic Organizations Group appreciates the achievements of the FOREST EUROPE process and considers the FOREST EUROPE process an assurance of the future of the European forests. We appreciate that the Ministerial Decision states that FOREST EUROPE will explore possible ways to find common ground on the LBA at latest by 2020.

The 25 years of FOREST EUROPE activity is an acknowledgment of the role and importance of forests in Europe and this process should continue, with the aim of adopting a convention on European forests and geographical or thematic protocols to that convention.