**Informal Meeting of EU Forest Directors**
21 October, 2026, Dublin, Ireland

# Joint Statement of CEPF and Copa-Cogeca
# Supporting sustainable and resilient forest management

European forest owners firmly believe that sustainable forest management, as defined by Forest Europe[1], is the proven and credible route to further resilient European forests.

Europe has large forest genetic resources, with substantial diversity within and among species. This diversity gives forests an important capacity to adapt, evolve, and withstand pressures such as drought, pests, and diseases. Genetic diversity should therefore be considered at all scales, from individual stands and landscapes to national and European levels, as an important element of a broader toolbox for building resilient forests. In this context, the Forest Reproductive Material legislation should enable access to high-quality genetic material across borders.

However, genetic resources alone will not be enough. Better knowledge of the scope and scale of climate change impacts on forests, combined with active and well-adapted forest management, will be essential. Faster diagnosis of vulnerabilities and the development and uptake of new solutions will help forest owners respond more effectively to emerging challenges.

To this aim, forest owners access to up-to-date research, long-term data, innovation, best practices and practical, user-friendly tools, together with education and training, will be essential for informed decision-making. Strong, accessible and high-quality advisory services have a particularly important role to play in translating scientific knowledge into practical options that forest owners can apply in their own forests.

Resilience building must also be economically viable, so that forest owners have the capacity to invest in forest management and therefore support the provision of all forest ecosystem services. For this, support to active sustainable forest management is key.

The adaptation of forest management practices must be embedded within a coherent approach to the adaptation of the forest and forest-based value chain. Locally adapted, long-term functioning value chains, accompanied by appropriate incentives, investments and innovations, are key for the continued sustainable production of renewable resources.

[1] Resolution H1 of the Helsinki Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, 1993, https://foresteurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/MC_helsinki_resolutionH1.pdf

Regarding the EU policy framework, it should set clear and coherent objectives with enabling conditions. It should focus on common long-term objectives rather than detailed short-term prescriptions to give forest owners the confidence to invest over the long term. Given the diversity of European forests, ownership structures, and management objectives, it is essential to give owners enough flexibility to choose practices suited to their local circumstances.

The only certainty forest owners have is that their forests will change in ways that are hard to predict. Strengthening the resilience of European forests therefore depends on close cooperation between forest owners, policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders, and on a framework that supports owners' long-term commitment and investment.

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