

Summary
of the Expert Workshop
**“EU policy options for the protection of European
forests against harmful Impacts”**

Brussels, 7 – 8 May, 2009

as part of the tender:
Implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy: "How to protect EU Forests
against harmful Impacts?"
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1. Introduction

1.1. Political background

Europe's forests offer a plethora of ecosystem services for society, e.g., timber, recreation, biodiversity, and carbon storage. Sustainable forest management and conservation measures are applied to ensure the lasting deliverance of these services. Forests and forest management, however, face a variety of challenges due to ecological and socio-economic developments, such as climate change, globalisation and changing demands of societies. Those challenges result in a variety of potentially harmful impacts on forests, from abiotic sources such as droughts and emissions, of biotic origin such as alien and invasive species, and from directly human induced factors such as fragmentation or inadequate forest management.

Depending on the perspective, these impacts can be characterised as forest threats. Challenges, impacts and threats respectively are addressed by forest-, climate- and environmental policies at an international, EU- and national level. These policies reflect different perspectives and are subject to different governance modes. Altogether, they form a dense multilevel web of regulatory, economical, and informational measures that influence forest management and conservation.

The EU Forestry Strategy and the Forest Action Plan are the core of European forest policies. They are, however, mostly restricted to coordination and communication actions. At the same time, other EU policies, e.g., nature conservation policy (particularly Natura 2000) as well as the Common Agricultural Policy impact European forests and forest management.

In this context, the European Commission assigned the Institute of Forest and Environmental Policy, University of Freiburg, in cooperation with the Ecologic Institute, Berlin, to carry out the study: "Implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy: How to protect EU Forests against harmful Impacts?" in November 2008. The study shall contribute to the requests of the Council and the Commission by reviewing existing ways and means to facilitate coordination, communication and cooperation between different policies which have an influence on forests and forestry within the European Union.

On May 7 – 8, 2009 the expert workshop "EU policy options for the protection of European forests against harmful impacts" took place in the European Forestry House, Brussels. The workshop provided the opportunity to discuss crucial policy issues on forest protection with relevant experts from academia, administration and NGOs. It represented a significant contribution to the above mentioned study.

This paper summarizes the discussions and main results of the workshop. It does not aim to construct a coherent rationale of the workshop results, but rather to trace the course of the workshop discussion.

1.2. Workshop objectives

The main objectives of the workshop were to identify which specific environmental challenges would necessitate a Community approach to protect European forests and to assess options for a Community initiative on forest protection.

To achieve the objectives the discussion process was orientated around the following key questions:

- Which 'threats' are the most challenging for European forests?
- Which policy interventions & instruments are needed to adequately address these threats? Are existing policies sufficient/ coherent? Which need for action exists on EU policy level?
- Which policy options exist at the European Community level?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of different policy options? Which are the most appropriate?

The workshop alternated between plenum sessions (partly with keynote speakers) and small working groups in order to ensure maximum involvement of the different participants. Please find the agenda at the end of the document.

2. Workshop Contents & results

2.1. Welcome and introductory session

The workshop participants were welcomed by *Mr. Joost Van de Velde of the European Commission*, who stressed the role of this workshop in giving indications as to the directions that the study, but also the broader policy process, could take in the long run. He specifically pointed out that the Forest Action Plan indicates that effort is needed to improve forest protection, monitoring and information.

Afterwards *Mr. Georg Winkel (IFP Freiburg)* briefly presented the objectives and structure of the workshop as outlined above. He also placed the workshop in the context of the study on *Implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy: "How to protect EU Forests against harmful impacts?"* and presented its wider objectives and methodology.

A deeper insight on the workshop background was provided through two presentations.

The first presentation by *Mrs. Lydia Rosenkranz (IFP Freiburg)* covered the main ecological and socioeconomic trends that can be observed and respective future challenges faced by European forests. Biotic, abiotic and human induced impacts and resulting threats to the forests, based on the background paper that was prepared by IFP and Ecologic Institute, were presented.

A second presentation by *Mr. Timo Kaphengst (Ecologic Institute)* gave an overview of forest and forest related policies at different governance levels (EU, pan-European, international). Regarding policy coherence, he briefly outlined conflicts and synergies between the various corresponding policy fields that affect European forests.

2.2. Keynote speeches: EU environmental and forest policy governance modes

Four keynote presentations were given to illustrate different governance modes, from coordination to regulation, in EU forest and forest-related policies. The presentations served as a useful basis to gain an overview of existing policies impacting forests and to initiate a discussion on possible policy options at Community level.

2.2.1. EU Forest Policy (*Metodi Sotirov, IFP Freiburg*)

The presentation began with stating that to date there has been **no specific EU Common Forest Policy** due to lacking provisions in the relevant EC/EU primary legal basis. However, it was shown that there has been a long history of forest-related Community supporting actions under established Community policies (e.g., agriculture, environment). Furthermore, the actual EU forest policy builds on several EU policy processes and decisions that build on one another. In particular, an EU Forestry Strategy was developed in 1998, followed by 2005 Council conclusions indicating the need for an EU Forest Action Plan (which was adopted in 2006) and further improvement of coordination, cooperation and communication.

In the central part of the presentation, the defining characteristics of the current mode of governance within the EU forest policy were discussed. They are reflected in **subsidiarity and shared responsibility** between Member States as well as the need for specific **regional approaches** and actions in light of different natural, socio-economic and cultural conditions. In addition, the EU forest policy defines sustainable forest management (SFM) and the multifunctional role of forests and forestry for society as being its key objectives. Moreover, concrete implementation mechanisms were precisely discussed around the questions of involved actors, defined competences, institutional framework for co-ordination and the different types of policy instruments.

In the closing portion, it was concluded that the nature of the current EU forest policy mode of governance can be assessed as being an **abstract and non-legally binding approach**; based on **national sovereignty and broader Community support**. In addition, the current EU forest policy is characterised by **complex interactions** with other (existing) Community policies & regulations and voluntary actions by Member States which are to a great extent free to choose from objectives and instruments that best serve national and/or regional needs.

2.2.2. Lessons to be drawn from the EU Water Framework Directive (Thomas Dworak, Ecologic Institute Vienna)

The Water Framework Directive (WFD), agreed on by the Member States in 2000, introduced a **holistic approach** to the management of water as a cross sectoral issue. The WFD's aim is to achieve a high status of **environmental protection of waters** (quality and quantity) by 2015, thus allowing for a wide range of measure to achieve this target. Its approach is unique, as management is initially developed and organised at the **river basin level** according to natural hydrological boundaries as opposed to the usual administrative management units such as provinces or communities.

Key points:

There are fundamental **differences but also similarities** between water and forest: the similarities relate to the high amount of **ecosystem services** provided by water bodies and forests, the increasing pressure on these ecosystems and their services and the linkages between ecosystems and the long term time scale for restoration. The main difference lies in the very clear **trans-boundary nature** of water issues (including upstream-downstream relations) and the human right quality of "**access to water**".

Implementation framework: a **Common Implementation Strategy (CIS)** was elaborated in order to address challenges in a co-operative and coordinated way, to limit the risks of bad application and subsequent disputes, and to support the Commission in delivering on its obligations for further policy development (e.g. Working group F on Floods). The major functions of the CIS are communication and information between Member States, to develop a common but flexible understanding and interpretation of the WFD and to give guidance on the implementation of complex and critical tasks. The CIS, nevertheless, produces a lot of information which sometimes results in a lack of consistency and transparency; also, it is not yet sure what its effect on implementation will be.

Lessons learned from the WFD (possibly in relation to future forest policies):

- Common EU approaches have the advantage of **sharing the burden** of developing suitable solutions
- **Stakeholder involvement** increases resources and can support implementation
- The organisation structure for implementation should be kept **simple**
- Other **sectors** should be involved right from the beginning
- A clearly defined **science –policy** link is a benefit
- **Consistency** between the different work flows must be ensured
- Agreement on basic definitions ensures **comparability**

2.2.3. Support for forests under the EU's rural development policy (Peter Wehrheim, DG Agriculture)

Measures for the general support of forests and for forest protection can be found under the second pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) which entails funding for a wide range of **rural development measures**. They are divided into four axes according to their priority area and the actors to be involved. In contrast to the first pillar covering market and income support measures, the rural development programmes are co-financed and implemented by Member States and/or communities. Forestry measures ranging from the **improvement of the economic value of forests, afforestation, Natura 2000 payments and restoration activities** are components of axis 1 and 2 of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Key points:

The resources from the EAFRD Member States available for forestry-specific (EUR 6.2 billion) and forestry-related measures (EUR 1-2 billion) add up to **approximately EUR 8 billion for the period of 2007-2013**) These amounts correspond to about 9 % of total EAFRD funding (not including Health Check and Recovery Package). The support for the second pillar has been strengthened by **Health Check programmes and the Recovery Package**, which provide additional funding through an increased modulation rate and direct support from the EU.

2.2.4. Natura 2000 network – Forest component (Mariam Sanchez Guisandez, DG Environment)

The Natura 2000 network, enacted by the **Birds and the Habitats Directive**, established a network of protected areas throughout the EU. Currently the process of site designation is almost finished and the management and implementation phase has begun. The scientific bases of the Natura 2000 network lies in site selection criteria, the definition of objectives and the listing of habitats and species of Community interest. The in-the-field implementation of the network falls under **Member States competences**.

Key points:

Management of Natura 2000: Human activities and economic development are not *per se* prohibited in Natura 2000 protected areas. In some cases certain economic activities can even be essential or characteristic of the protected habitats. In other cases a compromise between economic and conservation interests has to be sought. In this aim the Habitats Directive foresees a **procedure to evaluate projects affecting the protected site** according to (1) the nature of their impact on the site, (2) a “Nature impact assessment”, (3) existing alternatives, (4) and the public and priority interest of the project. Only if this procedure has been applied a project can be implemented. Compensation measures have to be developed if the impact cannot be avoided and serves public interests.

EU funding for the Natura 2000 network is built upon two separate sources: the **LIFE funding programmes** and the national **Rural Development Programmes** under EAFRD. Funding through rural development measures is dependent on the selection of specific Natura 2000 related measures by the Member States, and farmers’ application for these measures.

During the discussion after the presentation, the current LIFE+ funding available for the management of Natura 2000 sites was described as being insufficient by several workshop participants.

2.3. Working groups on threats

After the presentations, two working groups were formed to discuss the main factors currently threatening European forests. The differentiation of threats between biotic (pests, diseases, browsing), abiotic (e.g., storms, fires), and directly human induced that had been suggested by the organisers was eventually dropped to provide for a broader discussion in the working groups.

The working groups aimed for defining and prioritising ‘threats’ to EU forests, discussing the need for action at the Community level and finally developing options for response to the identified threats. Summaries and conclusions of the working group discussions were presented to the plenary.

2.3.1. Definition of threats to EU forests

Key arguments in the discussion on the definition of threats:

- **Threats are often strongly related to national and regional contexts** resulting in different management strategies according to regional conditions. For example, risk from forest fires is a core issue for southern-European countries. Many differences also exist in the perception of threats across Europe according to natural and socio-economic conditions. Grazing in the south and browsing in the north are threats that are widely neglected in monitoring and current policies.
- Many threats are tightly connected to each other and can only be understood when looking at **long term interactions** in forest ecosystems. For instance, storms can render trees more susceptible to insect pests.
- The differentiation between a **‘commodity’ and an ‘amenity’ perspective** on threats, which was elaborated in the background paper, was mostly considered to be helpful for an informed discussion about perceptions and the acceptance of possible steps towards better forest protection. It also helps to understand the often observed lack of forest policy coherence within EU policies and between Member States.

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- It was noted that threats are often only **assessed by the direct (economic) damage** they cause, which is rather related to the 'commodity' perspective on forests. In contrast, some perceived threats also bear rather positive socio-economic side-effects, e.g. climate change can increase the productivity of forest ecosystems through the effects of carbon fertilisation and rising temperature in Northern countries.
 - The significance of threats is also characterised by its **perception by the public**. However, many (ecosystem) services provided by forests and their social benefits lack attention. Consequently, direct and indirect effects of these threats on the environment have to be highlighted and communicated in a comprehensible way.
 - Instead of being a threat itself **climate change** has been characterised as a **mega-trend**; exacerbating the effects and frequency of threats such as pests, fires and floods. Besides direct adaptation activities such as adjusting tree species compositions in forests, it was stated that, over time, forests also adapt themselves to changing climate conditions through natural processes. Long life spans of forest trees and long lasting processes within forest ecosystems are likely to make climate change particularly challenging for forest management. Consequently, there is a need for interpreting the effects of climate change on forests from a long time-scale perspective when adaptation measures are developed. The remaining problem with adaptation to climate change, however, lies in the **uncertainty** about the degree of the effects' severity and its factual regional distribution.
 - In contrast to climate change, the threats resulting from **alien invasive species (AIS)** are more difficult to convey to the public due to the prior knowledge needed to distinguish between native and invasive species. Apart from this difficulty of perception, AIS create a great and broadly underestimated threat to forest ecosystems, both from the 'amenity' and 'commodity' perspective.
 - Another threat which could rather be categorised as a mega-trend is the **expansion of biomass production** for the generation of energy which increasingly impacts forest ecosystems. Increasing wood extraction (including deadwood and residues) notably alters the character of forest ecosystems and leads to a loss of forest habitats and related forest biodiversity.

2.3.2. Needs for action at the Community level

Key arguments in the discussion on the need for action at the Community level:

- The need for action at Community level is based on public and national priorities in regard to threats. It might be evaluated differently depending on the perceived character of a threat and related regional as well as interest shaped perspectives. The need for action at Community level should therefore be decided and defined in an **intensive public discussion process** between all involved stakeholders and the public. On the other hand the current threats and needs are difficult to evaluate for non-experts, and contradictions between 'commodity' and 'amenity' perspectives could persist in the expressed public needs. In consequence, the provision of coherent, comprehensive and homogenous **data on forests** to estimate threats, evaluate progress and inform the public can build the basis to derive needs for action at Community level.
- Almost unanimously a need for **better coordination and improved monitoring activities** has been identified. Appropriate structures are already in place (e.g., ICP forests, Forest Focus (now integrated in LIFE+) and activities under MCPFE), but information gaps and problems of data inconsistencies remain; especially for new threats. At the aggregated level this often results in too general information (e.g. MCPFE). Improved monitoring and coordination is also a basis for credibility in international debates and negotiations on forest protection (e.g. on deforestation or illegal logging). Various specific needs have been formulated, such as for a **binding financial support mechanism** or a platform **for data sharing among EU Member States**. The current lack of financial and human resources has been highlighted as a restrictive factor.

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- The important **role of forests owners** as central actors in the management of forests has been recognised and leaves room for improvement and coordination. Forest owners should increasingly be the target of **capacity building and education activities**. In this manner, **internalising positive externalities** of forests (financing public goods) was described as an important need for action at the Community level in order to harmonize individual profit seeking of forest owners and public expectations and demands on forests.

2.3.3. Options for response to the identified threats

Following the definition and identification of the main threats for European forests, potential approaches for an adequate response to these threats and needs were briefly outlined. **Main foci** were:

- Forest protection should increasingly find better access to the political agenda. Broad discussions on future threats to European forests are a prerequisite for the acceptability of public payments for forest benefits. **Awareness-raising** could be achieved through demonstrating the benefits of forests to the citizens more clearly not only in terms of products but also of (ecosystems) services. In this context, the concept of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) could serve as an efficient tool. Moreover, certification schemes have to be more transparent in order to increase the consumer's sense of influence.
- The concept of **Sustainable Forest Management** (SFM) was controversially discussed in different contexts. While some argued that SFM is the proper basis for a common response to existing and new threats others called it an "empty concept" that should be replaced or reinvigorated. Main arguments included:
 - **Pro:** In the European context SFM is closely linked to forest protection through its integration of economic, social, and environmental functions. It is an elaborated, accepted and almost institutionalised concept.
 - **Contra:** The concept of SFM is complex and remains too general. Although the different perspectives on and functions of forests have been integrated into the concept the conflicts between them have not been resolved in many cases.
- As an example of an integrative response to existing forest information problems, **forest monitoring** was intensively discussed (cf. chapter 2.4.1). Moreover, some participants proposed the idea of a **forest (protection) framework directive** (cf. chapter 2.4.2), while others underlined the need to **continue and improve the existing approach** to EU forest (protection) policy (cf. chapter 2.4.3).
- There is a potential for analogy between a possible Forest Protection instrument and the Rural Development policy and Water Framework Directive approach to consider regional conditions in policy implementation. Binding objectives are set on EU level, whereas Member States can decide how they reach the objectives by choosing or selecting suitable measures and programmes. Such an approach could also be used as a basis for a common approach in forest policy.
- The impact assessment of the current Natura 2000 legislation (Art. 6.3/4 Habitats Directive) can serve as an example of how to deal with future activities impacting forest ecosystems in general. A respective system could follow the same procedure as the compensation mechanism presented by Ms. Sanchez Guisandez (see 2.2.4 above) accompanied by an obligation to monitor and report.

2.4. Working groups on options for forest protection at Community level

On the second day, the workshop participants decided to split up in three working groups to discuss three options for forest protection at Community level that were seen as an outcome of the working group discussions of the first day:

- forest monitoring
- a forest (protection) framework directive
- a continuation and improvement of the current approach to forest protection

In addition, the last working group was asked to discuss whether the open method of coordination might be a further option for action at the Community level with regard to forest protection.

2.4.1. Forest monitoring

Although monitoring is not a policy option in itself, it appears to be a **fundamental basis for developing further policy options** for forest protection. Policy-makers and foresters need to have precise, comparable and reliable data on the state of forests. For instance, if forests were to enter plans for climate change mitigation, appropriate information on carbon storage capacities of forest ecosystems would be necessary to produce real equivalents. Everyone agreed that the focus of forest monitoring and national inventories currently differs among Member States and between Member States and the EU and that a more **harmonised monitoring approach** should be aimed for. Moreover, certain impacts on forests and changes of forest ecosystems (e.g., related to forest biodiversity and carbon) are not yet adequately covered by monitoring systems, at least not in a coherent manner. However, it seemed difficult to reach an agreement on the specific needs for a more harmonised forest monitoring. Therefore, the needs must be properly defined among relevant stakeholder taking into account, for instance, that the monitored aspects must be relevant regarding current policy challenges (referring, e.g., to international obligations or issues to be addressed by environmental and forest protection policy).

A first step towards identifying and filling relevant data gaps would be to conduct a **review of existing forest monitoring systems**.

- Forest Focus was considered to be a good basis for a harmonised monitoring system.
- The MCPFE approach appeared like a sound tool for sustainability indicators that could be extended and linked to other policy processes.
- Natura 2000 (particularly Art 6 of the Habitats Directive) seemed to provide a good example for assessing impacts on forest ecosystems.

Participants recognised the need for and suggested ways of implementing a harmonised EU-monitoring system. Using synergies between EU and Member States and **improving coordination between responsible departments** appeared to be essential for sharing the monitoring burden and making it more efficient. Subsequently, a **set of common European objectives for forest protection** has to be created which could serve as the basis for a set of common criteria and indicators to be monitored. National forest observatories could adapt common monitoring practices to specific regional needs and demands.

Permanent and stable structures for forest monitoring built on a legal basis at the EU level were seen as prerequisites for an efficient monitoring system. In this context, the current coverage of Forest Focus activities by LIFE+ was criticised as it is based on project applications and might thus not sufficiently secure funding for permanent monitoring. Some argued that the existence of a common financial support scheme for consistent monitoring would automatically result in the provision of better small scale data to work with.

The establishment of a **flexible system of monitoring** should be based on a twofold aim: the enforcement of a consistent **network of long-term observation measurements**, and the possibility to **react to acute and new threats** by providing first hand information. To enable and especially control such a system, a **common independent agency** could be set up.

2.4.2. Forest (protection) framework directive

Drawing on the general structure of the Water Framework Directive some specific elements and options for a 'Framework Directive on Forest Protection' were roughly outlined and discussed. Before creating such a framework directive it was seen as essential to analyse which of the current objectives for forest protection could not be achieved with current policy approaches (such as the Biodiversity Action Plan). Threats caused by climate change and the loss of biodiversity were discussed as potential rationales which might necessitate a framework directive approach. Objectives for forest protection have to envisage **all three dimensions of sustainability**, that is ecological, social and economic. Covering all dimensions SFM could serve as a basis for outlining relevant objectives. However, lacking prioritisations, different understandings and contradicting aims within SFM have to be considered and possibly enriched by other concepts such as the multifunctionality of forests as well as by existing objectives in international conventions (e.g., CDB, UNFCCC and UNFF). Following the structure of the WFD, objectives would be set on the EU level while measures to achieve them would be up to Member States. However, it was seen as essential that targets are binding and accompanied by common benchmarks for specific criteria in forest protection. Otherwise, targets could be watered down by Member States or interpreted in a very different way as has happened with the loose requirements for SFM. For the whole process a strong involvement of relevant stakeholders could provide for better acceptance and meaningful implementation of respective objectives.

Questions concerning initial funding of the Framework Directive and its implementation have to be clarified from the start. A high(er) share of EU funds would provide for higher legitimacy of control mechanisms for the implementation of objectives. Governance structures of the Directive should also involve **reward mechanisms** for forest owners and other actors who apply forest protection measures or enhance the ecological value of forests. **Payment schemes for ecosystems services (PES)** and **certification schemes** as a possible tool were mentioned in this context.

The main **strengths** of such a framework approach are as follows:

- One unified approach could prevent inconsistent and ineffective spread of approaches across different policies and Member States.
- Both the commodity and amenity side could benefit from the approach, given that all dimensions of sustainability are considered.
- If Member States can choose measures it might be easier to get national funding/co-funding.
- Public perception on forest issues would rise with a common approach.

The following **weaknesses** were identified:

- With 27 Member States and their very different forest ecosystems the framework would have to be very broad. As a result, the set objectives might be too general.
- Acceptance of forest owners is presumably low as the concern about further regulation narrowed down to biodiversity will not necessarily outweigh positive expectations towards the approach.

2.4.3. Continue and improve the current approach

Currently different EU policies and instruments affect forest protection. The resulting **lack of transparency** in this policy field has been identified as a major problem. In this context **Natura 2000** has been recognised as the most adequate policy concept. However, its practical implementation regarding forest protection is seen as being impeded in a twofold way. On the one hand its financing is split up across funding for rural development measures and the LIFE + financial instrument; on the other hand it was seen simply insufficient and not specific enough to achieve important forest protection objectives.

The other major problem that was identified is the **lack of coherence and coordination** between various committees and working groups related to forests on EU level. Coordination of forest related policies and instruments was stressed as a more appropriate strategy than to increase coherence, due to the intrinsic differences of objectives between various policy instruments effecting forests. For instance, the coordination of forest related funding mechanisms such as Interreg, LIFE+, rural development programmes and regional funds was suggested as a good starting point in view of **increasing the transparency and user-friendliness of EU-funding** for potential applicants.

Two possible paths for improving coordination of the current approach emerged:

First, based on the regional disparities coexisting in the EU and in terms of natural contexts and policy needs, a more **regionalised approach** could be adopted. Various regional forest strategies could be coordinated and merged into a single common document in order to pursue different but complementary forest protection objectives across the EU. This vision would be based on the specialisation of regions in the production of certain forest goods and the provision of the most adequate services adapted to the regional context and strengths.

Second, the main recognised coordination need lies in the activities and multilateral communication between the different forest related institutions and committees (e.g., Standing Forestry Committee, Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork, Inter-Service Group on Forestry etc.) and with the European Commission and the Member States. To this end a new **special intersectoral working group/technical working group** under the Standing Forestry Committee could be established with a mandate to generate and coordinate information and organise temporary working groups of external experts on the relevant topics.

2.4.4. Open Method of Coordination

Finally, an efficient tool for increased coordination that was addressed by the working group on the continuation and improvement of the current approach is a process similar to the **Open Method of Coordination (OMC)**. Within the working group, this approach was outlined as an iterative process consisting first of the identification and verification of common objectives, measures and indicators through national reporting, followed by the development of best practice examples by the Commission (and hence “naming and blaming” practices). This process eventually results in an ongoing coordination and standardisation process in which the Commission plays a mediating role.

Strengths of this coordination method could be:

- The triggering of a **learning process** based on the exchange of information and best practices in the face of similar challenges.
- This approach does not need a specific legal basis or competence to be applied.
- It could give some level of **political backing to common action** in the forest policy field.
- On the practical side, it would be **easy to implement**. Information to draft the national plans is readily available and easily mobilised.

Due to time constraints, this approach was not further discussed within the working group.

3. Conclusion and outlook

To sum up, the workshop showed that further actions for forest protection in Europe are needed to meet upcoming challenges. While different options for policy action were proposed, discussed and outlined in the workshop, no common agreement could be reached among the participants either on the most challenging forests threats to be dealt with, on priorities for action on the Community level, nor on specific measures that should be implemented to enhance forest protection. The differentiation between the commodity and amenity perspective on forests which was elaborated on in the background paper also evidently appeared within the discussions. For instance, one group of participants pointed out the continuing loss of biodiversity and threats to forest biodiversity resulting from intensified forest management with regard to an increasing demand for biomass (wood) for energy and industrial use. Others underlined the need to enhance rural development by applying sustainable forest management and to focus on forest owners and the specific needs in a forest protection policy (e.g., by increasing funds for public services of forestry). While climate change was seen as a challenge by all participants, different perspectives on its potential impacts and its character as a ‘threat’ to forests became obvious.

Different views were also apparent as concerns the need for action at Community level. Roughly spoken, participants sharing the commodity perspective expressed scepticism towards policy approaches that would lead to more regulation and a stronger role of the EC in forest policy. Others, more tied to the amenity perspective, rather highlighted the advantages of stronger integration of

forest protection measures in EU policies. Although the controversy between keeping and slightly adapting current forest policies and establishing a new EU common approach as represented by a 'Framework Directive on Forest Protection' could not be resolved, pro and cons for both options had been elaborated on, thus providing valuable input for the upcoming working steps in the project. Interestingly, a certain consensus in the general need for strengthening and streamlining monitoring activities in the EU in order to create a reliable and consistent basis for further policy activities could be observed.

Appendix:

I) Agenda of the workshop:

7 May 2009 – Day I

Time	Activity
1:00 pm	Welcome addresses and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome address (<i>J. Van De Velde, DG Environment</i>)• “Implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy: <i>How to protect EU Forests against harmful Impacts</i>”: Study & Workshop objectives, tasks and structure (<i>Georg Winkel, IFP Freiburg</i>)
1:30	Presentations on workshop background (<i>IFP Freiburg, Ecologic Institute</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• European forests: Challenges, impacts, and threats (<i>Lydia Rosenkranz, IFP Freiburg</i>)• Policy framework in the context of EU forests (<i>Timo Kaphengst, Ecologic Institute Berlin</i>)
2:00	Key note speeches: From Coordination towards regulation. EU environmental and forest policy governance modes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• EU Forest Policy (<i>Metodi Sotirov, IFP Freiburg</i>)• EU Water Framework Directive (<i>Thomas Dvorak, Ecologic Institute Vienna</i>)• EU Common Agricultural Policy (<i>Peter Wehrheim, DG Agriculture</i>)• EU Nature Conservation Policy (<i>Mariam Sanchez Guisandez, DG Environment</i>)
3:00	Coffee break
3:30	Working groups on abiotic, biotic, and directly human induced forest threats part I <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definition of threats• Need for action at Community level
4:40	Plenary: Presentation and discussion of results
5:40	Working groups on abiotic, biotic, and directly human induced forest threats part II <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing options for a response at Community level
7:00	End of day I
7:30	Dinner (optional)

8 May 2009 – Day II

Time	Activity
8:00 am	Introduction day II (<i>IFP Freiburg, Ecologic Institute, DG Environment</i>)
8:15	Plenary: Presentations and discussion of results on threat related options for a Community response (Working groups day I)
9:30	Coffee break
9:45	Wrap up: Different options for EU approach on forest protection (<i>IFP Freiburg,</i>

	<i>Ecologic Institute)</i>
10:00	Working groups on options for forest protection at Community level <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outlining different options for a response for forest protection • Strengths and weaknesses of options • Steps for implementation
11:30	Coffee break and snacks
12:00	Plenary: Presentation and discussion of results
13:00	Final discussion: EU policy options for the protection of European forests against harmful Impacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Main workshop results/ key messages • Open questions/contradictions • Take home messages • Outlook on the project/compilation and evaluation process of report
14:00	End of the workshop

II) List of participants

Name	First Name	Organisation
Beck	Roland	European Commission, DG Agriculture
Bucki	Michael	European Commission, DG Environment
Carvalho Mendes	Américo	Portuguese Catholic University, Faculty of Economics and Management
Dossche	Veerle	FERN - the Forests and the European Union Resource Network
Dworak	Thomas	Ecologic Institute, Vienna
Herbert	Sophie	Ecologic Institute, Berlin
Humphreys	David	The Open University, Faculty of Social Sciences
Kaphengst	Timo	Ecologic Institute, Berlin
Larsson	Tor-Bjorn	Swedish University of Agricultural Science, Department of Forest Resource Management
Parviainen	Jari	Finnish Forest Research Institute Joensuu
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