

**Protective Forest Management after large-scale disturbances in Austria and Slovenia;**  
Workshop of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water management,  
the Slovenian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food and  
the Working Group Protective Forests in Mountain Watersheds within the WPMMW

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Villach/Beljak (Austria) and Mojstrana (Slovenia)

# THE PROTECTIVE FUNCTIONS OF FORESTS IN THE CONTEXT OF A EU LEGISLATION AND STRATEGIES

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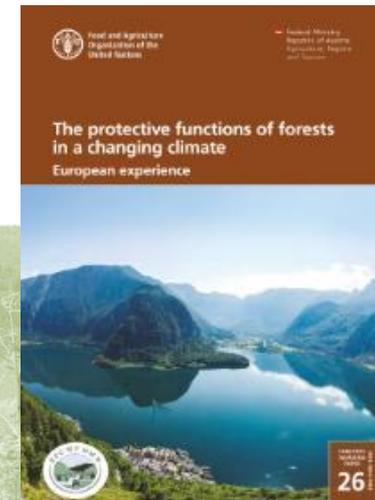


**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FORESTRY AND FOOD**

**Protective forests:** No common definition of protective forests in the alpine countries and regions: each one applies different regulations and definitions and therefore the area identified with protective functions differs meaningfully from country to country.

***The protective functions of forests in a changing climate - European experience;*** Publication presents the policy and management approach of each member country on its protective forests. This review of reports from 12 countries shows that especially mountain regions in Europe are facing common challenges and that different approaches can be learnt from each another.

Makino, Y. and Rudolf-Miklau, F. 2021. The protective functions of forests in a changing climate – European experience. Forestry Working Paper No. 26. Rome. FAO and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism.



The formulation of forest policies is, within the EU, the competence of the Member States with a clearly defined framework of established ownership rights and possibly with a long history of national and regional laws and regulations based on long term planning.

However,

there is a strong link between forests and environmental policy

- article 4 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union on shared competence between the Union and the Member States.

For this reason are EU measures, supporting forest-related activities, coordinated between European Commission and the Member States mainly through the Standing Forestry Committee, while legislative procedure runs through Working party on Forestry of the EU Council.

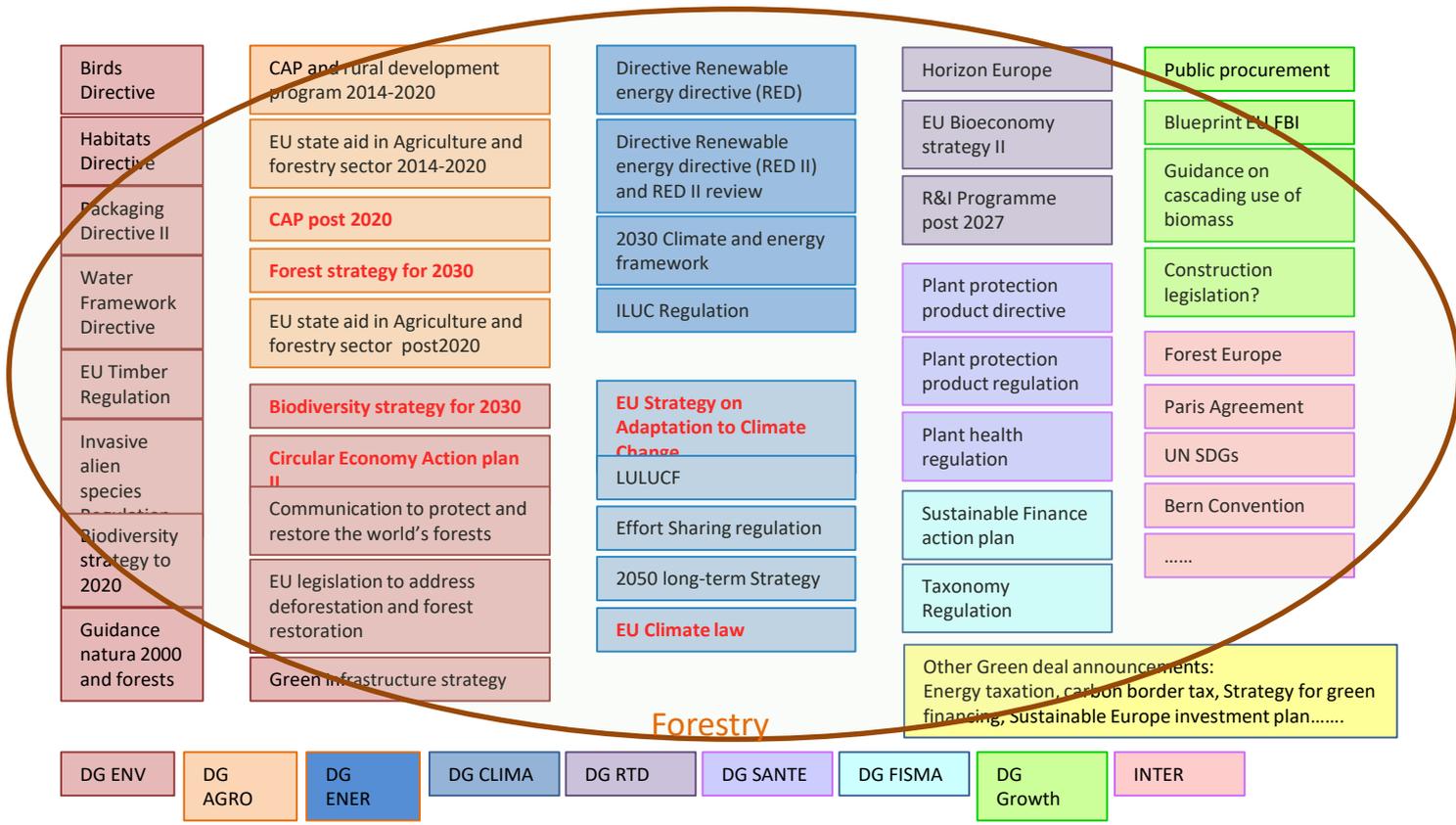
Some policies, connected to forests, are also discussed within subgroup of Working party on Environment, t.i. Forest&Nature

Community policies and initiatives arising from diverse EU sectoral policies; DG ENVI, DG CLIMA, DG AGRI, DG ENER, ... , different NGOs, ...

Forests have many functions and goals of their management can be found in several sectors. Common to everyone is aiming for sustainable management and ending deforestation, or enabling holistic and balanced approach towards active management, harmonizing environmental, social and ecological ambiance.

Forests are increasingly valued for their role as public amenities, biodiversity reservoirs, regulators of climate and local weather, sources of clean water, protection against natural disasters and renewable energy sources. For this reason are included in several objectives.

# Borrowed from the presentation of the European Commission:



**Protective** forests, as a more specific category, are most closely linked to:

- European Forestry Commission - FAO Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (**WPMMW**) and the Working Group Protective Forests in Mountain Watersheds
- **UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists** on Monitoring Sustainable Forest Management:
  - Indicator 5.1: Protective forests – soil, water and other ecosystem functions
  - Indicator 5.2: Protective forests – infrastructure and managed natural resources
- Forest Europe; Indicator C5: Protective Functions (Soil & Water); Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management (notably soil and water).
  - Bratislava resolution 2021: „Continue to raise public awareness of the vital role of sustainable forest management in protecting forests and strengthening their vitality, and increase efforts in the dialogue with society and forest owners.“

On a broader scope, there are strategies and legislation, which include protective forests;

- on the **EU level** :

- Working party on forestry; a preparatory body of the Council of the EU.
- Standing forestry committee; advisory and management committee of the European commission consulting on specific forestry measures.
- Forest&Nature

- 2010 Green paper On Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change
- EU forest strategy for 2030, EU Soil Strategy for 2030, EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030
- EU carbon farming initiative and a legislative proposal on carbon removal certification in 2022
- ....

- **Trans European level:** Forest Europe process, Alpine Convention, ...
- and **World wide** : UNECE, FAO, ...

## The Paris Agreement and the comprehensive National Energy and Climate Plans;

The Paris Agreement is an action plan to limit global warming, and the Comprehensive National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) is an action-strategic document that sets goals, policies and measures for the period up to 2030 (with a view to 2040). The NEPN is one of key steps towards a climate-neutral European Union by 2050. It defines energy and climate goals as well as policies and measures to achieve these goals by 2030 and forecasts for the next ten years.

## The European Green Deal and the Fit for 55% package;

In 2019, the European Commission presented the European Green Deal, which represents a new strategy for growth, the aim of which is to transform the European Union into a fair and prosperous society with a modern, competitive and resource-efficient economy, in which growth will be separated from the use of resources, and which in 2050 will generate no net greenhouse gas emissions. The milestone of the goal of climate neutrality is represented by the Fit for 55% package, a set of legislative proposals, or their amendments, to prepare the climate, energy, transport and tax policy of the European Union to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030 compared to the levels of 1990 in a fair, cost-effective and competitive manner.

Protective forests as a  
carbon sink

## Regulation on inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry into the 2030 climate and energy framework ... and the Renewable Energy Directive

Among the most important proposals for revision from the Fit for 55% package for forestry and protective forests as carbon dioxide sink are the Renewable Energy Directive and the Regulation on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals due to land use, land use change and forestry the so-called LULUCF sector; **Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry**.

### Renewable Energy Directive

The directive is important from the point of view of wood as a renewable energy source, which is connected to the achievement of the countries' goals regarding the share of renewable energy sources.

*Protective forests as a carbon sink*

*Protective forests as a wood source*

## EU Forest Strategy 2030

The desire for a comprehensive treatment of forest-related issues dates back at least to 1998, when the European Commission, on the initiative of the European Parliament, published the first EU Forest Strategy, followed in 2013 by a new one, designed for forests and the forestry sector. On 19 July 2021, latest EU Forest Strategy was published, replacing the 2013 Strategy. Published strategy supports a number of measures that have a significant impact on forests in the Union and beyond.

The purpose of the new EU Forest Strategy is to address the very challenges that forests face and to discover and preserve their potential for our future.

## EU Biodiversity Strategy and EU Climate Change Adaptation Strategy

Other European strategic documents include the EU Strategy for Adaptation to Climate Change, which mentions the importance of forest reproductive material and sustainable forest management for adaptation to climate change, the EU Strategy for Biodiversity until 2030, which advocates defining, recording, monitoring and strictly securing all remaining virgin forests and old forests in the EU, as well as increasing the area of forests and their health and resilience, its implementation, especially the adoption of an agreement on various definitions, such as the definition of virgin forests and old forests, requires good cooperation at the national level. **Important from the point of view of the exclusion of part of the forests from management is also the provision of strict protection of 10% of the territory of the EU.**

Protective forests for  
biodiversity

## Legislative proposal of the nature restoration plan

The directives on birds and habitats already set deadlines for the fulfilment of objectives and gave requirements to member states to restore ecosystems outside the Natura 2000 network. The reason for them was the decline in the number of many species of wild birds.

The goal of the conservation is the long-term protection and management of natural resources as an integral part of the heritage of European nations, while at the same time it is necessary to ensure the restoration or maintenance of a favourable state of natural habitats and species. The control of natural resources enables and regulates their use based on measures necessary to maintain and adjust the natural balance between species as far as is reasonably possible: 30 % of the land protected, out of which 10 % strictly.

*Protective forests for  
biodiversity*

## EU Regulation on deforestation-free products

In 2021 European Commission published a legislative proposal for a Regulation which will restrict products related to deforestation for agricultural purposes and forest degradation from entering the EU market (and for export).

Each economic entity will thus have to ensure that the products it places on the EU market or exports do not cause deforestation and forest degradation, regardless of whether they are produced in or outside the EU.

The current wording of the proposal does not allow deforestation for the needs of soybean, coffee, cocoa, beef, palm oil and wood products, or deforestation is possible if it is to cover the landowner's own needs.

*Protective forests as  
carbon sink*

## The Alpine Convention

An agreement between various countries for the protection and sustainable development of the Alpine Region (signed on November 7th, 1991). Based on a holistic policy approach, implemented by the Contracting Parties through existing **Protocols** -not all are ratified by all the Contracting Parties, one of many is:

### Mountain forests;

The purpose of this Protocol is to preserve the mountain forests as an near-natural habitat and, whenever necessary, to develop them or increase their extent and improve their stability. The necessary prerequisite for the effectiveness of the functions stated in the preamble consist of a mountain forest system that is managed in a careful, sustainable fashion, compliant with nature;

- natural reforestation
- the forests are well-structured and uneven in structure, with tree species adapted to their sites,
- the forest reproduction material used is indigenous
- erosion and compacting of the soil is avoided by ensuring methods of use and collection that comply with the needs of nature.

## Thematic Working Bodies

Mountain Agriculture and Mountain Forestry Working Group, Mountain Forests: The ecosystem services of Alpine forests.

The topic of future-oriented farming and forestry (nature protection, socio-economic and cultural aspects) is addressed in one of the subgroups of The EU-Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) Action Group 6.

### Also important to keep in mind are:

- Carpathian Convention, a subregional treaty to foster the sustainable development and the protection of the Carpathian region, signed in May 2003 by seven Carpathian States (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine).
- Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
- Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes

## Some of the many projects:

*RockTheAlps (Alpine Space Programme) - harmonized rockfall, natural risk and protection forest mapping in the Alpine Space (2016-2019).*

*Protective Forest Hub at the premises of the Austrian Forest Campus in Traunkirchen.*

*“Conservation of Natura 2000 sites Kočevsko” Life Kočevsko: Forest reserves and protective forests in the Kočevje Forest Management area (Slovenia).*

*GreenRisk4ALPs project- the EU Interreg Alpine Space program, aimed to develop decision support tools supporting risk-based protective forest management in the Alpine Space.*

*INTERREG IV-A Project 2012: Protection Forests Platforms and Forums in Tyrol and Bavaria. Application and evaluation of participation processes in mountain and protective forest management.*



## The Protective Functions of Forests in the context of a EU legislation and strategies

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION



**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
FORESTRY AND FOOD**

Celebrating in Slovenia in 2019:

**25 Years of Slovenia Forest Service**

**30 Years of Pro Silva**

**70 Years of Slovenian Forestry Institute**

**70 years of Biotechnical faculty, Department of Forestry and Renewable Forest Resources**

**100 Years of University of Ljubljana**

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