



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE

WEEKLY

UNECE

9 - 13 December 2013

557

Forests

UNECE, FAO and partners celebrate forests at Metsä2013 & European Forest Week



A joint session of the UNECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI) and the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC) will take place on 9-13 December 2013 in Rovaniemi, Finland. The event is called Metsä2013, inspired by the Finnish word for forest, "metsä". The second European Forest Week will take place in parallel to Metsä2013. The week will focus on the contribution of forests and forest products to a green economy and aims to provide a communication and outreach opportunity to raise the visibility of the forest sector and the multiple services wood provides to our daily lives. The week will bring together a variety of stakeholders from forest and non-forest sectors. Side and Parallel Events will be organized as part of the celebrations of the European Forest Week in Rovaniemi.

The UNECE region is home to 40% of the world's forests and forests account for 36% of the region's land area. There is a remarkable variety of forest types in the region. Forest cover has increased over the past few decades, as a result of afforestation programmes and due to natural regeneration on marginal lands. Forests are one of Europe's most important renewable resources and provide multiple benefits to society and the economy. They are also one of Europe's main sources of biodiversity. The "forest sector", defined as forest management, the wood industry (sawnwood and panels) and the pulp and paper industry, accounts for about 1% of GDP in Europe and North America, and 0.8% in Russia. The value added by the UNECE region forest sector is about \$285 billion.

Metsä2013 includes a high-level segment, which will be opened by Sven Alkalaj, UNECE Executive Secretary of UNECE and Eduardo Rojas, Assistant Director-General and Head of the Forestry Department of FAO, a whole day with market discussions and round tables and panels engaging the private sector. The contribution of the forest sector to a green economy will be debated as well as sustainable forest management. Further discussions will be held on topics relevant to the FAO EFC and the UNECE COFFI including the outcome of UNFF10. The joint session is expected to adopt an Action Plan for the Forest Sector in a Green Economy.

The objectives of the European Forest Week are: to raise awareness on the good health of forests in Europe; to promote the role of the forest sector in "greening" the economy by improving human well-being and social equity, while reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities; to raise awareness that forestry is at the core of the sustainability concept, to increase the visibility of the forest-based sector and its current and potential contributions to a sustainable economy and to engage other sectors in a participatory dialogue on forest-related issues. Numerous events are organized all over Europe to celebrate the European Forest Week.

A video spot produced by UNECE and FAO and featuring Santa Claus, the 1st citizen of host town Rovaniemi and European Forest Week Ambassador, will be aired at the conference on 9 December. In the spot, Santa explains to children the importance of maintaining forests in good shape. □

For more information on Metsä2013, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/forests/metsa2013.html>

For more information on the European Forest Week, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/forests/efw2013.html>.



Trade

Following the Bali Agreement on Trade Facilitation, UNECE offers implementation solutions

Congratulating the World Trade Organization on the Trade Facilitation Agreement concluded as part of the "Bali Package", UNECE Executive Secretary Sven Alkalaj said today that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe would provide its full support to countries to help them apply the agreed measures.

"From now on, we must focus on implementation," he said. "UNECE will place all its trade facilitation tools at the disposal of its member States. One very valuable tool we can offer is our [Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide](#), which we launched at the WTO earlier this year".

UNECE developed this comprehensive Guide in collaboration with other key international organizations in trade facilitation such as the World Customs Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). A web-based interactive tool, it also includes a direct [linkage](#) between the WTO trade facilitation measures in the Agreement and the support that international organizations can offer. In other words, it's a one-stop shop where policymakers and implementers can find the most essential trade facilitation information.

TRADE FACILITATION IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



Alkalaj said that the large number of recommendations and standards drawn up by the UNECE's Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business ([UN/CEFACT](#)) will play a significant role in global trade facilitation.

UNECE, jointly with UNESCAP, is already supporting policymakers and experts in designing integrated national and regional strategies for facilitating trade. Through the Network of Experts for Paperless Trade ([UNNExT](#)), UNECE provides a unique platform where policymakers from Europe, Central Asia and Asia-Pacific exchange expertise and gain competence in planning and applying advanced trade facilitation measures. During 2014 and 2015, the five regional commissions of the United Nations will provide UNNExT guides and training to policymakers and traders worldwide.

UNECE has been developing trade facilitation recommendations and tools for over 50 years. Trade facilitation can bring huge benefits to countries in terms of: reduced costs both for governments and for trade; increased efficiency and predictability; and enhanced transparency. For example, implementation of the Single Window for Trade (UNECE Recommendation 33) in Thailand, along with various other trade facilitation measures, has brought about estimated annual savings of US\$ 1.5 billion.

Further, the [Greek Trade Facilitation Strategy](#), developed with support from UNECE, is expected to reduce time to export by 50% and costs by 20% by 2015, thus leading to a 10% increase in the value of exports, and 80,000 new jobs. □

For further information, please contact Tom Butterly at: tom.butterly@unece.org.

Water

Public participation and water resources management: where do we stand in international law?

Public participation has been recognized as playing a vital role in the decision making process for a better management of water resources.

Academics, lawyers, government representatives, water practitioners from river basin organizations, NGOs representatives and students will analyze current trends and innovative thinking for the involvement of non-state actors in the management of freshwater resources. They will discuss good practices to ensure public participation in decision-making for freshwater resources management and access to justice.

The conference, co-organized by UNECE and the Platform for International Water Law of the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva with the financial support of the Swiss National Science Foundation, will be held on 13 December in Geneva. □

For more information, please visit: http://www.unece.org/env/water/public_participation_water.html.

Ageing

UNECE Working Group on Ageing decides priorities of work until 2017

On 25 and 26 November, members of the UNECE Working Group on Ageing gathered for their 6th annual meeting and set an ambitious agenda for implementing the commitments of the Regional Implementation Strategy of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (RIS/MIPAA) until 2017. The goals of RIS/MIPAA had been reconfirmed by the 2012 Vienna Ministerial Declaration, which put a special emphasis on four priority areas – longer working lives, social inclusion, health and independence, and intergenerational solidarity.

Four discussion groups will each focus on one of these areas in more detail. The work in smaller groups – endorsed by the meeting - is a new element designed to complement the established components in the programme of work. The appreciated Policy Brief series with good practice examples will continue with one issue per year, the two next topics being innovative and empowering strategies addressing care and dementia.

The development of two road maps on Ageing is foreseen until 2017, providing concrete recommendations on implementing MIPAA/RIS at the country-level. Work has recently started on a road map for Georgia, the report being expected towards the end of 2014. The Active Ageing Index, prepared in cooperation with the European Commission in 2012, will be taken to the next level. The index, now available for the 27 EU countries will be extended to the new member, Croatia. Pilot studies will be carried out to identify new potential countries in the UNECE for calculation of the index. It is also planned to compute the retrospective index values to identify trends over time.

To enhance the knowledge base for policy-making, the Generations and Gender Programme, a regional data collection effort, will be promoted to additional countries and data users. New members, Poland and Turkey, have been welcomed to the Bureau, while previous members Austria, Belgium, Germany, Georgia, Malta and Spain ensure continuity. Two observers - EURAG from the NGO community and the European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research Vienna, a research institute- will provide additional expertise to support the work of the Bureau during the next two years. □

For more information, please visit: <http://www.unece.org/pau/welcome.html>.

Not an official record - For information only