**Meeting of the**

**Bureau of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI)**

22 June 2016, Geneva, Switzerland

REPORT

The COFFI Bureau met on 22 June 2016, 12:00 - 18:00 at the Palais des Nations office at Geneva, Switzerland.

This report presents the decisions taken by the Bureau, which was attended by the following members of the Bureau:

* Mr Christoph Duerr, (Switzerland), COFFI Chair
* Mr Heikki Granholm (Finland), COFFI Vice-Chair
* Mr Guy Robertson (USA), COFFI Vice-Chair (via Skype call from 14:00 to 16:30)

Ms Marta Gaworska (Poland), COFFI Vice-Chair was not able to participate due to tight schedule.

Mr Jeff Prestemon, Chair of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics Economics and Management attended the meeting via Skype call from 14:00 to 16:30.

From the joint secretariat were present:

* Mr Roman Michalak, Officer-in-charge, Forests, Land and Housing Division, Acting Chief. UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, COFFI Secretary
* Mr Ekrem Yazici, Deputy Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, EFC Secretary
* Mr Florian Steierer, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section
* Ms Alicja Kacprzak, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section (item 4)

Ms Anastasia Zakharova, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, was taking notes during the meeting

Mr Jürgen Blaser (University of Bern) and Ms Astrid von Zabel (University of Bern) were invited to present the first draft of the UNECE evaluation to assess the relevance of the 2014-2017 Integrated Programme of Work. Ms. von Zabel attended the Bureau’s meeting, while Mr Blaser was not able to participate due to health issues.

The Bureau’s meeting was chaired by Mr Christoph Duerr.

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| **Agenda item** | **Information provided** | **Decisions taken** | **Action required** |
| **1. Adoption of the agenda** | The COFFI Chair opened the meeting and welcomed the Bureau. He introduced the agenda which was adopted by the Bureau members (Attachment 1) |  | No action required |
| **2. Review of the developments and plans of relevance to the IPoW, that had place since the last session of the joint Bureau (information and discussion)** | - progress of work on the [UNFF Strategic Plan](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/) (HG)  Heikki Granholm briefed the Bureau about the progress of work related to United Nations Forum on Forests, in particular the progress of work on the Strategic Plan and Programme of Work. Mr Granholm informed the Bureau on:   * first meeting of the UNFF12 in UNHQ on 25 April 2016, and the election of a new UNFF bureau at (Canada and the Czech Republic represent countries of the ECE region) * first meeting of the [Ad hoc Expert Group (AHEG1) held on 25-27 April 2016, UNHQ](http://www.un.org/esa/forests/forum/aheg/iaf-strategic-plan-1/index.html)   The development of Strategic Plan and Programme of Work will continue; the meeting of the Working Group is scheduled for October 2016 in Thailand, whereas the substantive meetings of UNFF12 will be held in 2017.  In the following discussion the Bureau members underlined the importance of providing regional input to work of UNFF. The ECE/FAO study provided to the UNFF11 was mentioned as a valuable example of such contribution.  Secretariat informed the Bureau that the new project (funded by Germany), which is at the final stage of preparation, will also focus on forest governance in the context of achieving the SDGs and implementing the UNFF decisions. The main objective will be to improve capacity building and monitoring at the national level. The related work is planned in communication and cooperation with the UNFF secretariat. | Bureau invited Secretariat to consider options for providing input to the next UNFF meeting. | Secretariat will prepare a proposal for contribution to the next UNFF session 2017. |
| * outcome from the [30th session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe, 4-6 May 2016, Antalya, Turkey](http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/erc30/en/)   Christoph Duerr briefed the Bureau about the outcomes of the 30th session of the FAO Regional Conference for Europe (RCE) that took place from 4 to 6 of May 2016, Antalya, Turkey. He informed that for the first time forest related issues were presented as an official agenda item with official document (report of Silva2015) and acknowledged the excellent presentation of the results of Silva2015 made by Kenan Kilic, the Chair of EFC. He underlined the decision of the meeting for the EFC to provide the input to the agenda of the next Regional Conference will take place in Kazakhstan 2018.  Ekrem Yazici (EFC Secretary) informed that the report from Silva2015 was the official document of the RCE and mentioned that the input to the next REC can be also discussed as a separate item of the next EFC session in 2017. |  | No action required |
| * outcome from and follow up the [Forest Europe Expert Level Meeting, 11-12 May 2016, Bratislava, Slovakia (ChD)](http://www.foresteurope.org/content/expert-level-meetings-2016)   Christoph Duerr briefed the Bureau about the results of the Forest Europe Expert Level Meeting that took place from 11 to 12 May in Bratislava, Slovakia. The main outcome was the adoption of the Work Programme. He informed that the new Forest Europe Work Programme contains several areas similar to these covered by the IPoW. He highlighted that the positive approach and openness of the Forest Europe and its Liaison Unit towards increased cooperation between the two processes. Christoph Duerr raised the question of the possibility of invitation of Forest Europe representatives (GCC or Liaison Unit) to the next Bureau meetings.  The Secretariat shared Christoph Duerr’s assessment of the results and atmosphere of the Bratislava meeting. Further he asked the Bureau for comments and recommendation regarding the plans for cooperation presented in the attached table (Attachment 2) as well as on the examples of the recent (JWP, Batumi) and planned (COFO23) activities in cooperation with the Liaison Unit. Bureau members supported the proposal for cooperation and encouraged the Secretariat to continue the work with the LUB on the finalisation of the Forest Europe Work Programme and related cooperation with the Joint ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section. | Bureau members welcome the idea of inviting Forest Europe representatives to the next joint Bureaux’ meeting as observers. It will be limited to those parts of the meeting identified appropriate for collaboration.  Bureau encouraged the Secretariat to liaise with the LUB on the finalization of the Forest Europe Work Programme and work on specific activities. | Secretariat should organize the necessary communication with the involvement of the FAO EFC Executive Committee, and, if the idea for invitation to the next joint meeting is supported by both Bureaux, will invite the representatives of Forest Europe to the next joint Bureaux’ meeting. It could be merged with the invitation to the next session of the COFFI. |
| * side event at the [Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference on 09 June 2016 in Batumi, Georgia](http://www.unece.org/info/media/news/forestry-and-timber/2016/rovaniemi-action-plan-for-the-forest-sector-in-a-green-economy-can-trigger-cross-sectoral-initiatives-in-the-context-of-the-paris-agreement/doc.html)   Christoph Duerr briefed the Bureau about the outcome of the side event at the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference on 9 June 2016, Batumi and emphasized the excellent organization and quality of the meeting. Heikki Granhlom added that he received very positive feedback from his colleagues who attended this event and expressed the gratitude to the Secretariat for organizing this event. Secretariat informed that the work would be continued, for example a Section’s expert will participate in the meeting on green economy in June, Kyrgyzstan. |  | No action required |
| * the latest developments in other organizations and processes   Christoph Duerr informed the Bureau about an [e-consultation on the draft report on Sustainable Forestry for Food and Nutrition](http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/cfs-hlpe/Sustainable-Forestry-V0) (deadline until 18 of July 2016).  Heikki Granholm informed the Bureau about the ongoing review of [EFI Strategy](http://www.efi.int/portal/) and asked Secretariat to pay attention to this process. |  | Update on the relevant EFI developments will be included in the programme of COFFI74. |
| **3. Discussion of the preliminary results of the UNECE evaluation to assess the relevance of the 2014-2017 Integrated Programme of Work (information and discussion)** | Astrid von Zabel appreciated the opportunity to carry out the evaluation and briefed the Bureau on the first draft of the UNECE evaluation to assess the relevance of the 2014-2017 Integrated Programme of Work. She described the used methodology of the Evaluation, number of responses (61) and gave an overview on findings and recommendations. The main findings of the Evaluation were:   * respondents find that the work is relevant; * ToSes were assessed as very useful; * conferences are very important platform for communication, but there is a lack of finance for the Eastern European participants; * topics of the discussions are slightly moved to the Western European issues, therefore they are less interesting to the other parts of the UNECE region. Topics should be more balanced.   In the second part Astrid von Zabel highlighted the main recommendations (see the Attachment 3 to this report).  Bureau members welcomed the presentation; they found the outcomes as relevant and useful and provided the consultant with detailed comments and observations that will be considered in the final version. Secretariat informed that the final report will be published in the UNECE website and have an open access. The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the next steps of the Evaluation, which are to:   * finalise the report * prepare the management response by UNECE * deliver the report to the UNECE EXCOM, * present the results of the Evaluation to the next session of the COFFI in 2016 * use the recommendations of this Evaluation in the elaboration of the next IPoW. | Bureau members are invited to provide detailed comment to the consultant | Secretariat/COFFI chair will share the updated report with the members of the joint Bureaux for commenting. |
| **4. Review of the preparatory process and the provisional annotated agenda of the 74th session of ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry** | The Bureau was presented with the provisional agenda of the 74th session of ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry and the Programme of workshop on Measuring the value of forests in a green economy and were asked to provide feedback on their content.  The Bureau welcomed the presented document (Attachment 4) and provided several comments regarding content, terminology and formatting of the Agenda and organization of the next session. It was proposed adding additional sub-item under Item 4 (d), “Other developments”.  Bureau members encouraged Secretariat to keep the UNECE Housing and Land Management unit updated on preparatory work for COFFI 2016 and establish cross-sectoral cooperation for the future meetings.  Bureau members found the Programme of workshop on Measuring the value of forests in a green economy interesting and relevant, asking the Secretariat for better reflection of the workshop`s objectives and envisaged outputs in the workshop’s announcement (Attachment 5).  Secretariat informed the Bureau members on the plans for the exhibitions that will be organized on the occasion of the next COFFI session (Woodbox and BotArt) and presented concept notes on exhibition of the BotArt. The Bureau members welcomed this proposal and expressed their support. The U.S. participants expressed readiness to work with the Secretariat on the organization of the exhibition. | Bureau appreciated the proposed agenda. | Secretariat will amend the agenda and the programme of the workshop according to the received comments.  Secretariat will continue the preparatory work in communication with the U.S. delegates. |
| **5. Update on the current work, planned activities and resources for 2016** | The secretariat presented the overview of the current and planned activities (Attachment 6), which included the status of work as well as existing and sought support.  Till the next joint Bureaux meeting, this will remain an internal document, also to be used for fund raising for the activities. | Bureau welcomed the overview and asked Secretariat to continue this work also for the future meetings. | Secretariat will prepare the updated overview for the next meeting of the joint Bureaux. |
| 6. Discussion on the place and dates for the next Bureau meetings in 2016 (information and discussion) | Bureau confirmed the dates and places for the next joint Bureaux meetings proposed in the Agenda, reflecting the previous decisions in the joint Bureaux. |  | No action required. |
| 7. Any other Business | Christoph Duerr will be on leave from the 11 July to the 11 September 2016 and Marta Gaworska will be in charge for COFFI Bureau matters during his absence.  Bureau members expressed their concern regarding a prolonging period of the recruitment of a director of the Forests, Land and Housing Division and uttered their worry on the possible impact of this situation on the staff and the work of the Section.  Secretariat and the Bureau discussed further work on preparation of the COFFI 2017 and celebration of 70th years of UNECE and FAO cooperation on forests and the forest sector in the region. | Secretariat was asked to send a final report from this meeting to members of the Executive Committee of the EFC.  Secretariat was asked to share the report of the Bureau meeting with the Executive Secretary o the UNECE.  Secretariat was asked to search for all the material on history of the cooperation in archives and present a draft concept note on celebrations in the next joint Bureaux meeting. | Secretariat will prepare a proposal of possible activities for 2017 to commemorate and celebrate the 70th anniversary of the cooperation. |

**Attachments:**

1. Agenda of the COFFI Bureau meeting
2. FOREST EUROPE Work Programme – list of activities and partners
3. UNECE Evaluation – draft report
4. COFFI74 – draft annotated agenda (with the amendments based on the feedback of the bureau members) 
5. Concept of the workshop on forests and green economy ( with the amendments based on the feedback of the bureau members) 
6. List of current and planned activities
7. ToR Strategic Review (document for information only – was not discussed in the meeting) 