Information on the outcomes of the FOREST EUROPE Expert Level Meetings related to a legally binding agreement
3. At an appropriate time and at latest by 2020, will explore possible ways to find common ground on the Legally Binding Agreement.
A round-table meeting shall be called concerning all options for the procedural follow-up of the Madrid Extraordinary Ministerial Decision.
Discussed possible procedural options for resuming negotiations on a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe:

A. Finalizing negotiations under the Madrid mandate

B. New mandate and restart of negotiations under FOREST EUROPE by (re-)establishing INC

C. New mandate and restart of negotiations under the UN system

D. New mandate and restart of negotiations under another international organisation/process
Participants discussed options for procedural follow-up of the Madrid Ministerial Decision. ELM decided to follow the procedural option C “New mandate and restart of negotiation under the UN system”.

ELM discussed and adopted the text of a Draft of the Ministerial Decision on Resuming the Negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe

Procedural steps:

- The ELM decided that the Draft Ministerial Decision was to be submitted by the Slovak minister to the ministers responsible for forests.
- The endorsement procedure was to take the form of a silent written procedure with a 3-month deadline for possible reactions.
- The Slovak minister was mandated to transmit the endorsed decision to UNECE and FAO to facilitate further negotiations on a legally binding agreement.
• Draft Ministerial Decision was sent to the ministers responsible for forests on 19 December 2019 for endorsement in the form of silent procedure

• The deadline for possible reactions - 19 March 2019

• The silent procedure has been broken and discussions on resuming the negotiations on a legally binding agreement remains open until the next ELM.
The Eight FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe will be held in Bratislava, the Slovak Republic on 28-29 October 2020.
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