

Notes of Forestry and Cork CDG, Brussels 24/6/15

Attended by Gerry Lawson, EURAF Vice President.

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[2. Strategic Agenda for Forestry and CDG.](#)

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1. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of meeting on 17/12 approved (see official [minutes](#) & EURAF [notes](#)).

2. Strategic Agenda for Forestry and CDG.

[Strategic agenda](#) was approved ☐☐. Mauro POINELLI, new head of [H4](#) Environment, Forestry and Climate Change Unit, indicated that the Commission will be issuing important proposals in the next month on forestry and climate change and wishes to involve the CDG for Forestry and Cork.

3. European Classification of Skills/Competences (ESCO).

This is a [multilingual classification](#) of European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations, [available](#) from an online portal. It will be used in future for classification of job vacancies in all EU countries. Help was asked from the CDG in evaluating the occupations, skills and qualifications related to forestry.

4. Implementation of the EU Forest Strategy

Oral presentations were given by DG-AGRI H4 staff on documents which only a few of the audience had seen (via contacts on the Standing Forestry Committee):

- a. Standing Forestry Committee working group on Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management, whose final meeting was held the day after this CDG meeting.
- b. The Multi Year Implementation Plan of the Forest Strategy.

Criteria & Indicators for SFM. The [Strategy](#) calls for an ambitious, objective and demonstrable set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of forests, stressing that these criteria should be aligned with the requirements of Forest Europe (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe). The [Council conclusions](#) (para 22) also mention the indicators developed by [Forest Europe](#), and called for broad participation of MS and relevant stakeholders. Parliament's report on the

Forest Strategy also call (paras 41-42) for pan-European basis for uniform reporting on sustainable forest management and a basis for sustainability certification, taking into account the diversity of forest types across Europe. The working group has 20 experts including the industry, commission, research and NGOs. It aims to develop SFM indicators to apply to all EU policies relating to SFM with 3 steps: a) existing legislation, b) existing C&I, c) different levels and approaches in MS. Questionnaires have apparently been circulated but, not necessarily to all members of the Forest CDG. The report will be finalised by the end of June and go to the SFC in September and also the next CDG in December.

The discussion mainly took place between those who had had access to the draft report, and was unsatisfactory because of this. It was confirmed: a) the report will not contain targets and thresholds (challenged by some NGOs), b) it is currently an extensive list of indicators with little work on the criteria, c) Europe has a good story to tell and should welcome the process, d) PEFC is also revising its C&Is and there are synergies between processes, e) bioenergy needed to be assessed using the same C&Is, f) it will be published as a staff working paper and won't have any legislative proposals, g) stakeholders are "key players in the implementation process", h) a followup and monitoring system is needed.

The next version of the multi-year implementation plan is still undergoing internal scrutiny. It is not a formal Forest Action Plan like the [version adopted in 2006](#), and will be a rolling multi-year plan. Parliament stressed that the "EU's forest strategy should be a multiannual coordinated process in which the views of Parliament should be taken into account and that the strategy should be implemented efficiently, coherently and with minimal red tape". With a strengthened role for the SFC in implementing the Strategy, and greater efforts to prioritize activities. The Implementation Plan will also be a Staff Working Document from the Commission. Actions should be fully agreed in content and whether they will take place. The emphasis is on cooperation and coordination. It will focus on actions in each of the 8 areas in the Strategy, and will be published after summer, with an annual work plan, but no binding commitments. A review of the Strategy is scheduled for 2018. The Chair emphasised the role of the CDG in contributing to the Implementation Plan.

EURAF mentioned the importance given to agroforestry in [Parliament's report](#) on the Strategy (para 13 of Environment Committee and Paras 24, 26 of Agriculture Committee) and the Commission (Steve Smith) undertook to ensure that the paragraphs concerned were reflected in the Implementation Plan.

The following resolution was approved:

At its meeting of 24 June 2015, the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork unanimously expressed its wish for a focus on a limited number of effective actions for implementing the 2015-2017 priorities as identified in the multi-annual implementation plan. This has to take into account that the European forestry and forest sector needs a consistent and coherent approach between the various Commission services and their initiatives to ensure a successful implementation of the EU Forest Strategy. The Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork therefore urges the Commission to secure a regular and detailed discussion among the relevant Directorate Generals, as well as with the members of the Standing Forest Committee and Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork on how the priorities and concrete actions needed can be achieved.

5. Assessing greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture and LULUCF

Michael Buck (DG-CLIMA A2) [introduced](#) the DG-CLIMA consultation on [addressing greenhouse emissions from agriculture and LULUCF in the context of the 2030 EU climate and energy framework](#). The consultation has been removed from the DG CLIMA site but the [EURAF submission](#) shows both our answers and the background guidance.

Council tasked the Commission on October 24, 2014 ([EUCO 169-14](#)) with:

... examining the best means of encouraging the sustainable intensification of food production, while optimising the sector's contribution to greenhouse gas mitigation and sequestration, including through afforestation. Policy on how to include Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry into the 2030 greenhouse gas mitigation framework will be established as soon as technical conditions allow and in any case before 2020.

There were 9 questions in the consultation but the main choice was between 3 options to include LULUCF in EU emissions accounting post 2020:

- Option 1 — LULUCF pillar, maintain non-CO2 agricultural emissions in a potential future Effort Sharing Decision and further develop a LULUCF sector policy approach separately
- Option 2 — land use sector pillar, merging the LULUCF and agriculture sector non-CO2 emissions in one new and independent pillar of the EU's climate policy
- Option 3 — effort sharing, include the LULUCF sector in a potential future Effort Sharing Decision.

There were 150 responses to the consultation, including 15 from Member States. It is not clear how many delegates to the Forestry CDG made submissions, but those who spoke from the industry (CEPF) and NGOs (FERN) were in favour of Option 1. EURAF supported Option 2 (AFOLU Pillar), stressing the potential use of the Land Parcel Identification System (LPIS) for emissions reporting at a farm-scale. AFOLU is also the IPCC recommendation and the current UNFCCC requirement, and was the recommendation of ICRAF in the consultation. It is possible to understand why the forest industry would prefer Option 1, where agriculture (net emitter) and forestry (net sink) would continue to be reported separately, but it is hard to understand why this should also be the position of many NGOs. The Chair wished the Forestry and Cork CDG to make a statement supporting Option 1, but EURAF requested that all all bodies on the CDG who had made a submission should circulate these before any statement is considered.

EURAF has also suggested a *technical review* of options to include forestry and agroforestry *consortium* projects within the EU ETS: focusing on Permanence, Leakage and Additionality, and options for reducing the administrative burden using regional consortia to undertake the additional monitoring. Forestry projects are in almost every other emissions trading scheme worldwide. Inclusion in the ETS was rejected by the Commission in 2009 ([Q&A para 21](#)), but at the time they promised a future review of the decision, which has not yet taken place.

6. Forestry Measures in Rural Development Programmes (2014-20)

Tamas Szedlak (DG AGRI H4). Gave an excellent [presentation](#), although the area is still in flux. Full detail is given on legal basis for rural development, the required budgetary allocations, and the Articles which directly or indirectly relate to forestry, including relating to producer groups, a new measure in this RDP. A total of 118 RDPs have been submitted. 51 programmes have been adopted in Dec (7), Feb (18), May (24), leaving 67 to go (of which 13 are awaiting adoption). Investments in the forest area (Measure 8) currently represent 4.5% of RDR funding. The number (**from the full 118**) of programmes which contain each “Forestry measure” is shown below ‘ with the equivalent number in the previous programme in italics (based on only 88 programmes):

- Article 21 (M8) covering the following submeasures:
- Article 22 (M8.1) Afforestation and creation of woodland: **52, was 66**
- Article 23 (M8.2) Establishment of agroforestry systems: **36, was 17**
- Article 24 (M8.3) Prevention of damage to forests from forest fires and natural disasters and catastrophic events **65 was 60**
- Article 24 (M8.4) Restoration of damage to forests from forest fires and natural disasters and catastrophic events: **67**
- Article 25 (M8.5) Investments improving the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems **86 was 71**
- Article 26 (M8.6) Investments in forestry technologies and in processing, mobilising and marketing of forest products **79 was 50**
- Article 30 (M12) N2000-: **25 was 15**
- Article 34 (M15) Forest environmental and climate services and forest conservation

Questions focused on: a) the fact that a measure being included in a Rural Development Programme doesn't mean that it will be allocated any funding (e.g. 17 RDPs included new agroforestry last time, but only 5 funded the measure), b) funding is routinely transferred between measures, or even left unspent, usually because of the difficulty of obtaining matching funds, c) great lack of knowledge at all levels in MS of the measures available (there is a need here for roadshows of best practice and dissemination via the European Network of Rural Development), d) the need for mapping at the sub-measure level of spend on the 6 Thematic Priority areas, e) producer groups are new, how can they be encouraged?. A study of implementation of forestry measures will be commissioned in 2016.

7. Birds and Habitats Directive: the public consultation and next steps.

Ian Jardine (DG ENV) [gave a presentation](#) on the current consultation or “[Fitness Check](#)” on Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive, with the consultation open till 24-7-15. It is intended to evaluate how the Nature Directives have performed in relation to the objectives for which they were designed. It will assess the effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, relevance and EU added value of the Nature Directives. Many groups have responded to the consultation, with ¼ million response (often duplicate responses). A key input is the State of Nature in the EU Report. Questionnaires have also been sent to 4 groups in each member state (competent nature authority, other public bodies, environmental NGOs, private sector). 10 member states (EE, ES, FR, DE, MT,NL, PL, SK, SW, UK) have undertaken more in-depth analyses. CDG members felt that the lessons learned from application in

different MS would be of most use, since some countries tend to be overly-bureaucratic and some less so, with forest owners sometimes criminalised for trying to do their best. The consultation is one part of the fitness check. looks at infraction cases, rulings, research, national visits. A stakeholder conference will be held to explore results on October 23rd (part of green week). The report will be finished in the first quarter of 2016.

7. Implementation of the EU Timber Regulation

Clemens von Doderer from the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) [presented findings](#) on implementation of the EUTR from a member survey. Most expect an impact on the domestic timber market:

- Increase of bureaucracy and administrative costs
- No significant changes in value and sales of domestic
- EUTR not fully understood across member states
- Existing forest governance and trading schemes fulfill EUTR requirements only in some MS
- The interpretation of “due diligence” different between member states.
- Third party forest certification (PEFC, FSC) is not acknowledged as an asset demonstrating compliance with national legislation
- Only few CAs started to undertake checks on operators (No negative assessment on PFOs reported)
- Penalties in a few cases are too high and not proportionate.

Svetla Atanasova, gave a consultation (closes 3-7-15) and review of the [EU Timber Regulation](#).

Infringement procedures have started against 3 of the member states (Spain, Hungary, Greece) and possibly 2 more will be added. additional infringements. External consultants will report by end July on Ñ a) effectiveness (met objectives or not), efficiency, relevance, added value (could the same objective have been obtained at national level), coherence (well integrated with other policy or legislative frameworks). Evidence base is report on implementation by member states.

Consultations will target specific SMEs at national level. Feedback hoped for from stakeholders less active in Brussels. Will look at possible changes in trade patterns. Independent market monitoring. Final outcome will be staff working document. CEPI confirmed that most paper companies had not found the EUTR a great effort, since their procurement regimes are usually in order, although staff training is needed. They call for inclusion of HS49 (printed products) in the EUTR, since massive quantities are being imported which do not meet the high EU standards. Questions arose on tax evasion (yes, scope of regulation covers tax and other legislation).

8. European Network for Rural Development (ENRD / EIP)

Clemens von Doderer (CEPF) gave a presentation on the smart, sustainable and inclusive rural economy, and the work of the ENRD and the European Innovation Partnership. The ENRD and the EIP network for agricultural productivity and sustainability were established following Articles 52 and 53 of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013. The ENRD aims at networking of national networks, organisations, and administrations active in the field of rural development at Union level. The EIP

network was put in place to support the [EIP for agricultural productivity and sustainability](#) by enabling the networking of operational groups, advisory services and researchers. The ENRD Assembly has 125 members and provides a strategic framework for both networks, with links to the CDG on Rural Development. Steering Group, represented in clusters. It has 4 meetings per year. Ten priorities for this year, although there is no focus group on forestry or forest related issues.

9. The European Environment: state and outlook 2015.

SCHULTE, Ernst (DG Environment) gave a [presentation](#) based on the EEA report on the State of the European Environment ([SOER](#)) published in February. This report is linked to the 7th Environmental Action Programme Report happens every 5 years. Input to SOER comes from 33 member countries and 2 cooperating countries, Key messages and the assessment of global megatrends are well known. But the presentation stimulated a lot of negative comment from large and small forest owner groups regarding its assessment of the problems faced in forestry. The [graphic](#) showing that 80% of forest habitat assessment have an unfavourable conservation status, and that this was 100% in the case of the boreal forest was felt not to reflect the efforts being made by foresters at all levels to ensure forest conservation. It was also at odds with statistics such as that of the UN Economic Commission for Europe report on "[Forests in the ECE Region](#)", which gave a more favourable assessment of conservation of biodiversity on an increasing forest area, saying for example:

Integrated forest management approaches, emphasizing the biodiversity component, have expanded in the whole ECE Region during the last 20 years. The benefits for biodiversity can already be seen in the recorded increase of the dead wood component in commercially managed semi-natural forests. The area of forests protected for biodiversity has increased continually during the 20 years period in the whole ECE Region, to about 12% in 2015. In some ECE countries the international commitments on biodiversity, notably the Aichi biodiversity targets, are being implemented, although there is no authoritative progress report yet. In others, however, much remains to be done.

10. Circular Economy

I had to leave before this presentation but it is available [HERE](#).