

To the ICP Forests Task Force and the National Focal Centres

Resolution of the UN-ECE/ICP-Forests Expert Panel (EP) “Foliar and Litterfall”

In the last EP Foliar and Litterfall meeting in Madrid, Spain the Members of the EP were informed about the very latest development of the LIFE+ programme. LIFE+ is foreseen not only to include activities of the expired Forest Focus-regulation¹, but also to promote harmonisation and effectiveness of forest monitoring activities and data collection systems and to make use of synergies by creating links between monitoring mechanisms established at regional, national, European and global level. The Members of the EP are deeply concerned about the fact that LIFE+ appears now² to be unsuitable for this purpose at operational level. Several operational aspects of LIFE+, as they are communicated and interpreted by the Commission, e.g. annual calls and limited budgeting for transnational projects, are not in line with preconditions of harmonised long-term monitoring activities at pan-European level.

Furthermore, the efforts to build the European Forest Monitoring System (EFMS) carried out by DG Joint Research Centre, UNECE/FAO, ICP Forests, European National Forest Inventory Network, MCPFE and several Member States under the co-ordination of DG Environment and the Austrian, Finnish and German presidencies, are now at risk. As EFMS was foreseen to satisfy the forest-related information needs for political commitments of both, the Member States and the Commission (e.g. CBD, Kyoto protocol, UN-ECE/FAO Forest Resources Assessment, the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air-Pollution and MCPFE process), the Members of the EP find the recent development in LIFE+ problematic and ineffective.

Therefore the Members of the EP want to express their full support for the “Göttingen Resolution” of ICP Forests (see annex) and to remind the EU Member States and the European Parliament about their commitments announced in the Forest Action Plan (Key action 8: Work towards a European Forest Monitoring System). The EP urges ICP Forests Task Force as well as the National Focal Centres of the EU Member States to be aware of the recent development and its possible consequences and to strengthen their political efforts for building up the EFMS within the framework of LIFE+ without losing the continuity of the harmonised long-term observations.

Members of EP Foliar and Litterfall
In Madrid 15th of April 2007

Annexes: Göttingen Resolution and the accompanying letter by Prof. J. Eichhorn

¹ Regulation (EC) No 2152/2003 of the European Parliament and the Council concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus) expired 31st of December 2006

² As the final political agreement on LIFE+ has been communicated by the European Commission, DG Environment in informal Forest Focus meeting on 30th of March 2007 in Brussels