

**1st International Meeting of Heads of
European National Forest Research Institutes
5th and 6th of July 2004, Vienna**

M I N U T E S

Venue: Austrian Federal Office and Research Centre for Forests (BFW)

Participants: see Annex I

The Internet-homepage of the meeting (http://bfw.ac.at/iyfw/imh_intro.html) provides the files used for presentations. In the minutes the availability of documents is stated for each presentation. The minutes consist of additional information that is not covered by these files.

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Annex II: EU-Biodiversity Stakeholders' Conference in Malahide (chapter Forestry on page 11)

Annex III: Background Paper

Item 1: Welcome, Goals of the Meeting, Opening

H. Mauser (Head of BFW, Austria) welcomes all participants and points out that National Forest Research Institutes (NFRI) from 20 countries and also 3 international organisations are represented in this event.

Mr. Van de Velde from DG Environment was not able to give his scheduled two presentations due to an accident some days before the meeting. For the topic Kyoto-Marrakesh process a substitute was available (Mr. Radunsky from the Austrian Federal Environment Agency). For the second presentation on the subject of EU-Biodiversity-Strategy it was not possible to find an appropriate substitute. But some current information from the last EU-meetings arrived during the meeting and are made available to all participants (see Annex II).

A back ground paper (see Annex III) with an overview on the situation of NFRIs, their problems and challenges was distributed to all registered participants. NFRIs are a special member of the forestry community and of the research community. They have common core tasks to fulfil (Longterm Forest Monitoring, Applied Forestry Research, Knowledge Transfer). In addition also other tasks are of various important in different countries (Policy Consulting, Top Level Forest and Landscape Research, Law Enforcement, Training and Education, Forest Management Planning). There are common problems like changing demands on forests and consequently on forest research, pressure on the multifunctionality of forests, serious cuts in resources or lack of collaboration between NFRIs. Special measures and activities are needed to ensure and develop the competences and positions of NFRIs in research, monitoring tasks and knowledge transfer. It is the hope of the organizers that this meeting is the beginning of closer cooperation between the participating institutes. The cooperation should support forest managers and forest policy makers in their efforts to meet the changing demands and obligations. For this, new approaches have to be found regarding common positions and strategies, exchange of information, improved management of NFRIs and collaboration in various activities.

EU Forestry Policy and Research - G. Mannsberger (Director General for Forestry, Austria)

Paper available

Many member states want a clear role and ideas on forest policy on EU-level in the near future and not a prolongation of the present situation. EU-Commission is carrying out a review on the EU Forestry Strategy. The member states should accept the invitation to deliver new ideas, otherwise there will be no changes.

Item 2: EU-Policy Fields related to Forest Research (Chair: R. Päivinen)

EU-Soil Strategy - L. Montanarella (JRC Ispra, Institute for Environment and Sustainability, Italy)

Presentation available

Protecting soil is different from protection of wood and air, as soil is not a renewable resource. In Europe, the soil resource in general is privately property. The local dimension and variability has to be respected. Soils are multifunctional. Soil protection has been shifted out of the agriculture department. A new aspect of the current EU-activities on the Soil Strategy is the involvement and participation of stakeholders from the beginning. All documents are available on a public website and a public mailbox. Of eight priorities those the EU-Commission wants to take action immediately on are erosion, decline in organic matter and soil contamination. The first phase of the process towards an EU-Soil Strategy will end now. By mid of May 2004 the final reports of the Working Groups were delivered and already presented to the Scientific Advisory Board. Now the comments are integrated. 3 GB of documents are available. A paper version with 5 volumes of 2000 pages will be worked out.

The decline of organic matter in soil is also relevant to global commitments of the EU (Climate Convention, Convention on Biodiversity, Convention on Desertification). There was a big debate on the role of soils in CO₂-cycles. There are big difficulties to estimate the pool of organic matter in soils, there is a lack of data for a good estimation. A combination with a modelling approach was used, integrating landuse data from the EU-CORINE project, the European Soil Information System (constructed over the past ten years) and climate data. The result is an estimation on organic carbon content in 0-30 cm soil. No measured data were used, because at the moment they are not sufficiently harmonized. Validation was necessary for input to policy, it brought good results but also some problems. The estimation of trends (of dynamics) is important. For this, monitoring is necessary. There are some examples for longterm monitoring in agriculture. A lot of work was done within ICP-Forests for forest soil monitoring. Information is needed more on land use changes than on specific land users, for example with the help of LUCAS that looks into land use changes in Europe every two years. In the

future all activities will be integrated with special datasets for policy relevant information. An integrated approach with different layers is necessary. There is an initiative for a common data infrastructure. A second initiative is within Forest Focus. There is a scientific coordination body dealing with the integration of forest soil monitoring in a general monitoring. There will be a manual with common procedures.

Kyoto-Marrakesh-Process - K. Radunsky (Federal Environment Agency, Austria)

Presentation available

Ongoing research strives for better data and reduced residuals of figures. Net sinks are probably more in the northern hemisphere. Landuse change and forestry in developing countries is a dominating sink. Article 3.3 of the Kyoto Protocol is obligatory for all parties. They will have to report to changes in carbon stocks since 1990 (1990 is zero, the changes since then have to be reported for the period of 2008-2012). In the northern hemisphere forest growth is too slow compared with deforestation of old stock forests, therefore Art. 3.3 will probably result in a source of carbon. Article 3.4 is not obligatory. The Clean Development Mechanism offers very cheap carbon with a predicted cost of about 1\$ per tonne of carbon. Environmental and landuse development (including use of GMOs) will be covered in the accounting rules. The reporting requirements have been updated after availability of the IPCC Good Practice Guidance. All landuse change activities are covered, including reporting of harvested wood products under the Convention. The reporting requirements under the Kyoto Protocol should be finalised at SBSTA 21 in December. Quality assurance of data is required. For factoring out direct from indirect human induced changes in carbon stocks no general methodology is available at the moment. A new project of the Potsdam Institute deals with a projection of vulnerability of European forests to climate changes. Forests may become a source by 2050 because of temperature increase. A study in France revealed that in every second year summer temperatures will be higher than last summer.

Ad hoc discussion:

- In Norway small biomass powerplants combined with CO₂ storage in this plants are used.

Research and Monitoring Requirements within MCPFE – R. Michalak (Liaison Unit of MCPFE, Poland)

Presentation available

Among other research requirements the MCPFE process results in challenges for research especially in regard to criteria and indicators as tools for monitoring, assessment and reporting. Despite the general opinion of well monitored European forests, the real situation is different. On the status (ST) of forests reliable information is available for 23 of 35 indicators, but for trends (TR) only for 5 indicators. There are problems with harmonization of national data. The next Ministerial Conference will be in 2007 in Poland, just before the beginning of Commitment Period of the Kyoto-Protocol.

Ad hoc discussion:

- Long term monitoring on forests is mainly carried out by NFRI. The participants of this meeting are the group of people responsible for forest monitoring in Europe. This special group should be addressed with monitoring tasks within MCPFE and other international processes. Many NFRIs cooperate within the European National Forest Inventory Network (ENFIN), that strives for harmonization and development of national forest inventory systems to better meet international monitoring and reporting needs.
- The communication between MCPFE and research institutions can be improved, therefore the next Ministerial Conference should focus more on research. MCPFE wants to build on existing structures. It is intended to use the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Resources Assessment as a platform for further development in monitoring. But countries are only limited represented in this team. Some working groups under MCPFE deal with research issues. One of these WGs should map research needs for the future.

Developments and Needs in International Forest Research - P. Mayer (IUFRO-Headquarters, Austria)

Presentation available

The presentation is mainly based on a paper dealing with perspectives of forest research that IUFRO coordinated for the UNFF4 meeting in Geneva in May 2004. More than 110 years ago also a group of heads of national forest research institutes convened in Vienna and created the idea to found IUFRO.

Ad hoc discussion:

- Improvement of the science-policy interface is the goal of a IUFRO-Task Force. Communication with policy makers, civil society and stakeholders is very important.

General discussion on Item 2

- A new Forestry Unit within DG Environment has been established.

- Repetition of the European forest soil monitoring has to wait until a common approach across different landuse types is possible. This is a political decision referring to the fact that soil is a cross cutting issue. The Forest Soil sector was very successful with harmonisation. But a common language with other landuse sectors is necessary, that needs to be developed by scientists. Also quality and use of data has to be discussed. There are many networks for collecting data, but the quality is not good. The goals for data collecting have to be scrutinized.
- There is a need to report on carbon stock changes in soil. The guidelines from 1996 are under revision and should be finalized by 2006. Harmonization of forest soil and other sectors is needed. Participants of this meeting should engage into the review process. This will define the next 10-15 years in soil inventory. Coherence between different monitoring systems is important. A clear understanding on the carbon cycle is necessary, for this concentration on intensively monitoring sites is more helpful than to spread on the whole area.
- SFM is often substituted by sustainable landscape management as a holistic approach analogue to EU-approach to Soil Strategy.
- Present temperature increase can not be influenced up to 2050. After this date an influence is possible if the emission of greenhouse gas is reduced.
- Definitions are related to the issue of monitoring and reporting. There should be effort to reach common definitions as a basis for activities in other processes. IUFRO has a carbon related terminology web site.
- Slovakia sees a weak reaction in other EU-policy fields to MCPFE-activities. New member states bring in big forest areas and forest knowledge. A more important position of forests within EU than at the moment is expected. Financing of forest research is a problem. EU is promoting competition in research which may be not the proper approach in forest research. Biodiversity research is often not focused on forests.
- Romania had only small problems in forestry to integrate their national policy into the EU-policy. Other sectors had much more to do for harmonization. National monitoring is used to solve political questions or for defining new research. As there is a lack of money for research it will be necessary to catch money from other programmes.
- In the state forest organisation of Poland there are many pessimistic expectations concerning support to forests and forestry. EU-Regulations do not differ much from national regulations. The new members are not as intensively integrated as they should be. More information on economy and non productive functions of forests are needed. Economy is very important for forestry in Poland, but the general importance of forests decreased. In the final statement of this meeting some words on economic aspects of forest should be spent.
- In Turkey a new government tries to reduce the number of ministries. The ministries for Forestry and Environment merged. Some forestry services gained more importance. The international dialog is very important. For the harmonization of national regulations with those from EU the EU-Forest Strategy as well as MCPFE was very helpful. Within the Turkish National Forest Program 150 actions are defined, 50 of them are related to forest research mainly to social aspects of forests. At present 200 forest researchers are active, most of them deal with natural sciences. But it is intended to train this staff more on social issues of forests.

Item 3: Future Challenges for Forest Research in Europe (Chair: K. von Teuffel)

Future Forest Research in Europe - R. Päivinen (Director of European Forest Institute, Finland)

Presentation available

An investigation of research capacity in 1983-92 revealed that since 1990's the number of staff decreased in many countries. The amount of forest researchers in total research is very small. As an average only 6% of the total funding of the largest forest research institutes is EU-funding. Within the 6th Framework Programme even the 4th call may give no opportunity for a Network of Excellence for Forest Management. More lobbying for forest research will be necessary. In the 7th FP there will be Technology Platforms (TP) with their own research agenda. One initiative of the European paper and wood industry (CEPI, CEI-Bois, CEPF) for a TP is on the way. Whereas in 5th FP annually about 15 Mio € per year were available for forest research, in the 6th only about 5 Mio € per year may be available. Longterm networking for the insurance of knowledge transfer is necessary. The status of EFI will change from a finish institution to an international organisation. 4 countries have already ratified the Convention, 8 are necessary.

Ad hoc discussion:

- Massive opportunities to foster cooperation between NFRIs exist and is requested, but cooperation with other sectors will be necessary. As some kind of forestry research is carried out and funded in

other institutions (not traditional NFRI) funding for forest research probably has not dramatically decreased.

- In the 3rd week of October 2004 a preparatory meeting for the science-policy interface within MCPFE will take place.

Crisis and Changes for State Forest Research Institutes in a Difficult Surrounding - M. Broggi (Director of WSL, Switzerland)

Presentation available

In Germany fundamental changes in state forest services are on the way with many reorganisations and mergers, resources are reduced sharply. Some institutes will not survive. A Northwest-Germany Research Institute will be established, consisting of three formerly independent state forest research institutes. In Switzerland the forestry department of ETH vanished, federal research institutes should merge, e.g. WSL and EAWAG (Swiss Water Research Institute). All concerned institutions are government facilities with a shortage of money. J. Burley sees as one reason for this situation the bad public image (dirty booth chain saw image of foresters). Forest studies are not regarded as academic education like others. Many women believe forestry as domain of men. Many students of forestry confirm these images. Public reception of forestry needs improving on national and international level. Ideologies always had a dominant role in silviculture. One ideology is the remark, that forests will collapse without silviculture. This dogma was useful to recur the devastated forests in the 19th century. Foresters in German-speaking countries never engaged in other disciplines as it happened in Anglo-American regions. Other forest functions were not allowed to hinder the production function. Forest researchers lost control during the debate on forest decay (Waldsterben), they lost also scientific reputation. Forest research lacks scientific excellence. Forests should be considered as a part of the whole landscape. Foresters should act also outside the forests. Non timber products have to be declared as public goods. An evolution is necessary from forests to sustainable land use, from silviculture to interdisciplinary scientific thinking. Sabbatical of researches in other institutions, the adaptation of modern marketing tools and an active seek out to customers are necessary.

Within the ETH-domain WSL has to be one of the best, otherwise it would not exist. There are 200 persons who work for forests within the total staff of 550, but they must be competitive. The former WSL-departments of Forests and Landscape are changing to Ecology and Landuse. Research in the future has to be more process oriented than branch oriented, more cooperation with the neighbour is necessary. For internal promotion within WSL of this new approach seed money is used.

Ad hoc discussion:

- The presented changes are not restricted to German speaking countries.
- Foresters and forest research attaches another importance to themselves than the general public. Only 20% of the general public understand sustainability. The understanding of SFM is even lower. Better communication is necessary to change the image of foresters.
- More and more forest research is driven by policy issues. There is a big crisis in research related to forests and a diminishing role of forestry to the national economy. On the wood market problems in the future are expected.
- In the past forestry produced raw material, now customers want other products and benefits. For them, more collaborative partnerships are necessary with other institutions and disciplines like medical sciences. But forest research should not be marginalized and scattered, otherwise it would be lost to nowhere. Forest research has to be connected to a real object, the forests.
- There is no tradition of paying for nonwood goods from forests. Passive nature protection is like a museum.

Meeting European Challenges for Forest Research in France – F. Houllier (Head of Department, INRA, France)

Presentation available

Many aspects M. Broggi addressed also fit for agriculture research. Forest research in INRA is carried out by a network of more than 20 units from mainly 3 departments. Discipline oriented units must be excellent. More than half of the units are joint research units with other organisations. In France there is a fragmented institutional research landscape, consisting of many joint and associated research units as well as scientific or public interest groups (GIS). Joint research programmes are favourable to meet the common trends in forest research. Within networks the needed resources can be jointly developed and shared.

Ad hoc discussion:

- In France the increase in forest research staff in 2002 aimed at a selective strengthening of specific fields and tasks. At that time forestry was an important political issue, the storm damage occurred after the basic decisions were made.
- France was successful in opening up forest research to other disciplines.

- Periodically review of research is necessary. If a research group is more visible, than it is more attractive. Scientific assessment was the key for development in INRA.

Well-being through Products and Energy from Renewable Forest Resources – H. Raitio (Director of METLA, Finland)

For 2020 products from renewable sources will be the dominant source, alternatives to fossil sources are necessary.

General discussion on Item 3

- 5-6 Technology Platforms will be funded under the 7th FP, each about 100 Mio €. Forest research should make more use of the ERA-Net programme. A proposal for an ERA-Net on Mountain Forestry is under way coordinated by the Austrian Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.
- There is expertise in the existing NFRIs that could be used to address new issues. But most NFRIs are "silvacentred". Forestry research lacks of links to social sciences. Beside the quality of work the profiles of institutes are important. Successful research is also a matter of size: minimum critical size is important, but good networking is important too.

European State Forest Organisations – H. Mauser (Head of BFW, Austria)

In June 2004 the heads of European state forest organisations convened in Aulanko, Finland for their 5th annual conference. Among others the following topics were discussed:

- Common position to EU-Forest Strategy (on request of EU-Commission)
- New representatives in the Advisory Group to EU-Commission on Forestry and Cork were suggested. There are 3 persons representing the state forest organisations, one is representing forest research. The State Forest Organisations recommended that the European Forest Institute nominates the representative for forest research.
- There is an increasing demand for improved assessment of social sustainability and external welfare benefits of forests. Forest research should support state forest organisations and other forest owners to assess and price these effects.

More information on the conference and on participants is available via Internet:

<http://www.metsa.fi/english/aulanko2004/>

Item 4: New Approaches to Organise National Forest Research Institutions (Chair: J. Lynch)

Merger with University – N. E. Koch (Head of DFLRI, Denmark)

Presentation available

Integration on the national level (horizontal and vertical) and international level is the only way to survive. International integration means global, not only European integration. 4 different institutions merged to Forest and Landscape Denmark. The Board has 14 members and is chaired by a former minister of industry who is educated forester. There are 9 departments for education, research and extension service. 12 researchers deal with Christmas trees. For some Internet, consultancy and continuing education services Forest&Landscape earns about 1 Million € per year.

Ad hoc discussion:

- The initiative for the merger came from insight the institutions. Researchers are also active as teachers at the university. Independency of the new institution is important.

Regional Co-operation in the Nordic Countries – K. Fretheim (Head of NFRI, Norway)

Presentation available

The challenge is to maximise scientific gains and to minimise additional costs of cooperation. Within virtual Centres of Advanced Research (CARs) researches do the planning themselves, funding comes primarily from the participants. The Nordic Council of Ministers will fund the additional management tasks. CARs work with money that is already there, therefore they need little administration. In contrast, an Integrated Project of the 6th FP needs a lot of administration for the co-financing.

Ad hoc discussion:

- CARs are a tool of continuation of existing research together with partners. IUFRO Task Forces are more engaged with coordination, whereas CARs are more engaged in research.
- The most expensive part of forest research often is measurement and collecting data. Many NFRIs do the same work, there could be more division of labour. The Nordic countries have already joined forces for longterm monitoring sites.

- All institutions represented in this meeting have a big amount of data. These data sources should be opened to other institutions for their research. UK opened all data sources for the whole spectrum of sciences.

Transnational Internet Platform – K. von Teuffel (Head of FVA Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany)

Presentation available

The platform is a knowledge transfer project. One comparable initiative was found in Sweden and USA, but no German speaking platform exists so far. If the system is established it will be open for other institutions to join. The forest language should be kept.

Ad hoc discussion:

- So far this service is for free as the participating institutions see knowledge transfer as one of their duties. If the product is good, it will be possible to get money from customers that are ready to pay for it.
- Standardized description of contents is a crucial issue, meta data is very important.
- This platform will establish links to other similar systems. This initiative is target group oriented to German speaking foresters who usually don't speak English.

Forest Research in Slovakia and Possibilities for Co-operation in the Central European Region – J. Novotny (Vice-Director of FRI, Slovakia)

Presentation available

In Slovakia there are 4 different institutions for forest research. For surviving collaboration is necessary. The NFRI in Zvolen completely changed its activities 2 years ago. Main funding comes now for ecological, biodiversity and climate change research issues. In the Visegrad Group Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia cooperate. The Visegrad Memorandum, already signed by four countries, can be sided by other countries. Competition inside the forestry group has to be prevented, otherwise this sector will be dramatically weakened and cannot compete with other sectors.

General discussion on item 4

- Forest sciences have something to offer for the whole scientific community, but steps are needed to bring in other disciplines as they often see forest sciences as only junior partners. Forest research should focus on things that cannot be done by others and has to change the way research priorities are defined. Foresters should set up subgroups that make visible what they can offer for international or European processes (e.g. Global Monitoring for Environment and Security GMES). The improvement of the well-being of people is the main goal, for example security and human health will be important issues.
- Regional cooperation is expected as an upcoming trend. Activities are necessary to constructively establish cooperation and maximize the potential of NFRIs. For that it would be useful to know more about the activities of the single NFRIs and their expertises. Pooling databases and cataloguing data is helpful but not sufficient.
- Present demands on forest research are very divers: expand scientific collaboration, closer cooperation with international bodies (EU, FAO, OECD), influence what is happening in EU in monitoring, intensify knowledge transfer. It will be difficult to cover everything.
- Although EU is a funding source for and a regulator of research, there are two other influential bodies: FAO and OECD. Those agencies offer a much wider perspective. Actions should be established towards OECD and FAO to strengthen the visibility of forestry and forest research.

Item 5: Managing State Forest Research Institutions (Chair: N. E. Koch)

Continuous Education of Research Staff – J. Fryk (Head of Skogforsk, Sweden)

Paper available

A strategy for competence is needed, defining inhouse competence for longterm needs and addressing adequate funding and time. General awareness of importance of competence has to be raised. Individual development plans are necessary.

Ad hoc discussion:

- The strategy of Skogforsk was to increase the number of scientifically educated staff. The own staff was encouraged to sign up for doctoral studies. Recruiting was prioritised on doctoral degrees. There are also incentives in salary. The number of doctors increased by 50% within the last 4 years.
- Experiences at Skogforsk show the parameters to assess progress in competence development and the time needed varies according to the subject and to the educational level. The sum of all activities is easier to measure than the individual progress.

- For staff exchange Skogforst acts as host for doctor students from the university, within the ERASMUS-Programme or for test researches from other countries. One problem can be the language for young staff in communication with practice.
- The Forest Commission in UK awards 80 fellowships for personal exchange for 6 months including travel and living costs for people from OECD-countries. This month new regulations will be established.
- In Poland good experiences with international cooperation exists. Post gradual doctoral studies are organized that are partially paid by the state forests. There is the PROFOREST-Programme to develop research capacity and competence in Central Europe.
- Every organization has its main strategy from that the educational plan derives. At METLA everyone has a personal plan for 3-4 years for competence development derived from METLA's main strategy. Its possible for researchers to work abroad for some time. There is interest in personal exchange with other institutes. Recruiting at METLA should be open on the European level. Guest researcher have good effects to the hosting institute, therefore METLA would like to start such kind of cooperation.
- In Ireland exchange of experience is very important, therefore specific funding is available. The Irish NFRI has little staff and buys needed competence, based on the 5 year working programme that is agreed on with the forest sector. There are contracts with companies and institutions for carrying out research. There are different schemes to send scientists abroad (for example 6 months).
- As all NFRIs have permanent staff a change of persons holding permanent positions without additional funding should be possible. There is a great interest in competence development and staff exchange between the NFRIs. Information on open posts should be exchanged, e.g. by linking up of homepages together or mailing list. Skogforst for example could announce free positions very quickly so all other institutes could be made very easily aware of open positions.

Benchmarking in Forest Research Institutions – M. Broggi (Director of WSL, Switzerland)

Presentation and paper available

High selection criteria for good researchers are needed. Sabbaticals are very helpful to send out people to the world to get new ideas. At WSL 100-120 PhD students are active, also guest researchers are invited. Networking is very important. Beside participating in international processes also organizing of events at the own institute is necessary (at WSL at least 3 per year). WSL has a close cooperation with Russia, Ukraine and Aserbajdschan.

Some disciplines are not well represented in the ISI-citation index. The forest customers don't read scientific papers. There is a ranking in Switzerland for ISI-papers, WSL is 27th in 40 but needs to be within the best 15 to survive. For transdisciplinarity or extension service there are no appropriate indicators. More adapted indicators are needed. At WSL every 4 years each department is reviewed (Do we the right things? Do we things right?). Benchmarking is a bilateral process. As WSL wants to enter benchmarking this year, institutes in Finland, Denmark and Northwestcoast America will be visited by a member of the directorate.

General discussion on item 5

- Use of ISI is problematic for forestry research. Two indexes are used: one for individual papers and one for journals (impact factor). For forestry journals the impact factors are low and have to be risen. There is a massive job to do to give this message. For example it is difficult to keep the Swiss Forest Journal because the researches do not want to publish there. To enter in boards of journals with good reputation could help. Quality of science that is published is important.
- The relevance of citation indexes depends on the core tasks of NFRIs and of the issues they get money for from superior authorities. It is not necessarily important to publish in high level journals. Many NFRIs strive for both: first publication in an English scientific journal, after that a second publication in another journal oriented to the practice.
- Scientific impact is only one part of the work of NFRIs. The impact to the real society, on industry and policy making is much more important. Benchmarking is not only for research, but also for extension service. Adapted methods are needed.
- Benchmarking, evaluation and performance measurement are different tasks. Benchmarking is not an anonymous process with many partners but only between two partners for comparing on clear defined fields.
- Benchmarking is important, although it is difficult for NFRIs at the moment. There was an IUFRO workshop in Canada 1998 on benchmarking, proceedings are available. The work programme was to ambitious.
- There exists a well established set of procedures for benchmarking of scientific work, but not for knowledge transfer, monitoring and other tasks of NFRIs. This offers a chance for NFRIs to develop benchmarking procedures well adapted to their tasks. Impact on industry and forestry is more

complicate to benchmark or to measure, the conditions vary seriously between countries. Customer surveys are also helpful, especially when carried out systematically and repeatedly.

- Benchmarking could help to reduce the costs for regularly evaluation of institutes. It is helpful inside an institute and also in the discussion with superior authorities. Benchmark processes must be simply arranged. One can learn a lot from benchmarking in other sectors.
- The main aim of benchmarking is to improve the processes, but depends on the selection of indicators. Staff could try to improve the selected indicators and leave aside all the other tasks.

Next steps

The heads agreed on the following actions:

- Benchmarking is up to bilateral agreements between interested NFRIs. A report on the experiences should be presented on the next meeting, where this topic should be discussed by the heads based on some case studies.
- All interested NFRIs send to Mauser (BFW) information on performance indicators already used. Mauser will compile these documents and deliver it to all heads that stated their interest to participate in a working group on performance measurement.
- The working group will elaborate a draft on processes and criteria for performance measurement of NFRIs. If necessary further information from other NFRIs will be surveyed by a questionnaire.
- IUFRO will provide the information on the former workshop on benchmarking.
- Depending on the progress of the working group further steps will be planned. Another IUFRO-meeting on performance measurement may be helpful.
- To promote staff exchange between NFRIs information on open posts will be shared.

Item 6: Meeting of Heads in the Future (Chair: H. Mauser)

Based on the presentations and discussions on item 1 to 5 decisions on the follow up and on future meetings of this group were discussed. An appropriate integration of forest research in the 7th Framework Program of EU was assessed as the most important task for the next future. Latvia and France offered to host the next two meetings of this group.

General discussion on item 6

- Heads of NFRIs share internal and external matters of common interest. Future meetings of this group will help to increase the efficiency of NFRIs. This kind of meeting should improve networking, facilitate the exchange of experiences and information, help to establish a common view on the present situation and expected trends. If there is an interesting agenda the number of participants will not decrease.
- Topics of interest for future meetings beside the 7th FP are: trends in forest research, quality improvement of longterm monitoring, use of longterm monitoring data, integration of forestry and landscape, integration of sectoral approaches, quality management, performance measurement, benchmarking, SWOT-analysis.
- The upcoming 7th Framework Programme of EU is an important topic that needs close cooperation of European NFRIs in the next future. As the debate on the 7th FP is quite advanced within the EU-Commission, well prepared activities are needed now, next year will be too late.
- The elaboration of the 7th FP is an ongoing process that has no fixed deadline at the moment. A mounting pressure strategy will be necessary, starting with good minutes of this meeting delivered to DG Research to create awareness. In the minutes the follow up should be addressed, also a list of bullet points of relevant topics for DG Research should be delivered. The next steps could be a meeting with the new Commissioners on Research, Agriculture and Environment and a special event on forest research including stakeholders and representatives of the Commission.
- The heads of European NFRIs should demonstrate to the EU-Commission this initiative and deliver a paper addressing the contributions of forestry research. This paper could be the basis for a delegation from this group of heads to the Commission.
- The intended Technology Platform of the forestry industry is very important for future forest research within the FP. Also new ERA-Nets should be established.
- Activities on the EU-level are necessary not only for the 7th FP. The visibility of forest research and the awareness of its importance to EU policy fields and reporting obligations should be raised.
- The IUFRO-World Congress 2005 in Brisbane offers an opportunity to make visible this process of heads of European NFRIs. There are similar networks in other regions that should be invited for a meeting of 1-2 hours before the Congress. The unique situation in Brisbane should be used for deliberations on the main research fields in the future and to share experiences. A specific programme with interesting topics is necessary.

Next steps

The heads agreed on the following actions:

- R. Päivinen will coordinate the next steps towards the 7th Framework Programme aiming at a draft strategy paper for NFRI's. The first step is to contact the relevant officers in the Commission and an investigation of possible activities to promote forest research within the deliberations on the 7th FP. The findings will guide the planning of the next steps: elaboration of documents for the Commission, planning of an special event in Brussels on forest research, meeting with new Commissioners, participation in the planning of the Technology Platform related to wood and forestry.
- IUFRO will prepare a special meeting of heads of NFRIs from different regions at the Congress 2005 in Brisbane.

Next meetings of heads

The heads agreed on biannual meetings of this group as a general rule. Depending on actual issues or special reasons additional meetings can take place. The elaboration of the 7th Framework Programme of EU will need a meeting in Brussels very soon. The IUFRO Congress 2005 in Brisbane also offers a good opportunity for a meeting of heads attending the Congress. Also meetings in combination with other regular meetings (e.g. of EFI or IUFRO) are possible.

The next regular meetings of heads of European NFRIs will be:

- 2006: First week of July in Riga, Latvia
- 2008: France

The meeting 2006 will be organized by Latvia, Austria and France. Liaison Unit of MCPFE will check possibilities to support the organisation.

Minute taker : H. Mauser

ANNEX I: Participants

Country	Surname	First Name	Institution	Position	Mail
PARTICIPANTS					
Austria	Mauser	Harald	Austrian Federal Office and Research Centre for Forests - BFW	Head	harald.mauser@bfw.gv.at
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ANNEX II: EU-Biodiversity Stakeholders' Conference in Malahide (chapter Forestry on page 11)

Stakeholders' Conference

Biodiversity and the EU - Sustaining Life, Sustaining Livelihoods

Grand Hotel, Malahide, Ireland

25-27 May 2004

FINAL

MESSAGE FROM MALAHIDE

**HALTING THE DECLINE OF BIODIVERSITY - PRIORITY
OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS FOR 2010**

27 May 2004

Final version incorporating amendments from Plenary 27 May 2004

PREAMBLE

To be completed by Irish Presidency and Commission.

- Presents priority objectives to 2010.
- For each objective, presents priority targets for 2010 – as far as possible SMART – and where appropriate earlier targets; where not otherwise specified, targets are to be achieved by 2010.
- Represents the outcome of a broad consultative review and prioritisation process culminating in the Malahide Conference.
- Achievement of the targets will require strengthened institutional arrangements for coordination (intra-EC and EC-MS-civil society).
- The Malahide Conference calls on the Commission, MS and civil society to respond rapidly with appropriate coordinated action to achieve the targets.
- Structured on ECBS Sectors and Themes (with one new sector, one new theme).

SECTOR 3: FORESTRY

OBJECTIVE 6: To conserve and enhance biodiversity through sustainable forest management at national, regional and global levels.

2010 and earlier targets

National and EU level

- 6.1 Biodiversity considerations fully integrated with economic and social considerations in implementation of sustainable forest management.
- 6.2 Forest species and habitats listed under the Birds and Habitats Directives in favourable conservation status.
- 6.3 Adequate financial support secured for the conservation of forest biodiversity both inside and outside Natura 2000 sites by 2007.
- 6.4 Biodiversity of all ancient and semi-natural woodland of significant importance secured.
- 6.5 No overall long-term negative impact of afforestation and deforestation on biodiversity in EU from 2004.

Global level

- 6.6 Wood imported by the EU derived only through sustainable forest management.
- 6.7 EU imports driving deforestation identified and reduced.
- 6.8 Bilateral agreements made between the EU and the major timber exporting countries with the aim of supporting forest law enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT).

ANNEX III: Background paper

**1st Meeting of Heads of European National Forest Research Institutes
in Vienna, 5th and 6th of July 2004****BACKGROUND PAPER****Importance of National Forest Research Institutes**

Research, monitoring and knowledge transfer are vital preconditions for sustainable forest management (SFM) and a foresighted policy related to forests, environment and sustainable development of rural and urban areas in Europe¹. In most European countries national forest research institutes (NFRI, synonymous with federal or state forest research institutes) are important pillars of the national research activities, surveys and monitoring programmes covering forest ecosystems and their use, natural hazards, landscape issues and rural development. These institutions are also in the centre of knowledge transfer to the practitioners at the field level and decision makers in policy and administration.

Characteristics of NFRI

In addition to research and consulting services, NFRI are assigned with national surveys and long term monitoring, ministerial counseling and in some cases even with law enforcement tasks. Other than universities, NFRI are mainly dedicated to applied research and long-term activities as well as to the completion of ministerial needs and directives.

NFRI are often established in close connection with ministries. In many countries they are part of a ministerial organisation as subordinate institutions. Financial resources and staff development is an integral part of the respective ministerial planning. Daily management has to be carried out according to rules of public administration. The autonomy of researchers is limited. But a growing number of NFRI has an independent legal status and can operate under more flexible and autonomous conditions, including augmented acquisition of third-party funding.

¹ For a more detailed description of the role and relevance of forest research see:

Science and Technology - Building the Future of the World's Forests. IUFRO Occasional Paper No.15, 2003.

ICRIS - Proceedings of the International Consultation on Research and Information Systems in Forestry. An Austrian and Indonesian Initiative in support of the programme of work of the IFF. Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 1998.

New challenges

In the past years, the opportunities for and demand on forest science, monitoring and knowledge transfer changed more rapidly than ever before. These new challenges are occurring at a time, when government spending in all sectors is under increasing pressure. Federal budgets and staff capacities for forest research and related activities are decreasing in many countries, mainly affecting institutions that are part of public administration structures. Therefore, new models of organisation and new approaches for transnational cooperation and coordination between NFRI are needed to meet current and future demands.

The focus of forest research widened from primary production to a comprehensive understanding of forest ecosystems and their sustainable use, aiming at a broad spectrum of wood and non-wood goods, environmental and social benefits and services. In accordance with this development, traditional forest research issues vanished and new research tasks are emerging. They have to be positioned in national and international research funding programmes. Prioritisation of these issues as well as their consolidation with other research fields are preconditions for an appropriate integration of forest research in such programmes. A closer cooperation among NFRI can help to identify these needs and to ensure new opportunities for forest research in Europe.

Numerous national and international processes require monitoring, assessment and reporting (MAR) related to forests. As NFRI are mainly in charge fulfilling these tasks, closer cooperation can help to standardize and harmonize methods for MAR, the use of criteria and indicators for SFM, thus supporting a better quality of European and international data sets and facilitate transnational comparison and interpretation.

Decisions in forest management and forest policy need specific information and skills. As a consequence of increasing complexity of new forest issues the demand on reliable forest information, set of knowledge, method and technology is rising. New information technologies are one example for providing better access to forest information for all relevant actors and for helping to meet national and international requirements related to sustainable use of forests. In many countries NFRI are the main source of information on forests and of knowledge on forest management. Closer cooperation can help to improve the dissemination of forest related information and exchange of management experiences.