



Tbilisi, October 11, 2021

To the European Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski

**UEAA Position Paper
on the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030.**

Forest strategy and forest management practices: to achieve optimal balance between the conflicting demands will be crucial to find compromise solutions that can unite the different stakeholders. Prior to any decision, the UEAA strongly recommends broad scientific discussions and evaluations of scientific findings e.g. between scientists within the different regions, before changes in current management practices are requested.

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The UEAA which is a network of Agricultural Academies in 28 countries is making the following statement in regard to the Communication of the Commission on the new Forest Strategy for 2030.

By tradition forests and forestry have been part of the land use in all European countries. Forestry has played an important part in the sustainable use of the landscape, securing stability and resilience and providing ecosystem services such as soil protection, formation and protection of water resources and biodiversity conservation in addition to the production of timber.

The approaches vary from country to country, reflecting cultural heritage, traditional uses and specific demands. There are great variations in the type of forest between regions in Europe – the Nordic countries with boreal forests, the Atlantic region with Roman heritage, Central Europe, Eastern Europe and Mediterranean countries which all require different kinds of forest management.

During many years, even centuries, a huge pool of knowledge about forest management has been built up in the various countries, based on practical evidence as well as more and more advanced science.

The current forest ecosystems now face challenging societal demands especially from the climate and biodiversity crises. Forest management needs to take this into account. Europe has international commitments in relation to the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as UN Conventions regarding Climate Change and Biodiversity. At the same time the EU has set strategic objectives for Bioeconomy.

Changes in forest management practices should be seen in a long-term perspective, with rotation periods of many decades or even centuries. It will be crucial to find the optimal balance between the conflicting demands, between bioeconomy aspects and sustainability and find compromise solutions that can unite the different stakeholders. We will need regionally differentiated strategies for sustainable forest management taking into account ecological as

well as economic aspects. National strategies will also differ, reflecting history, national priorities and demands.

In order to succeed in this difficult process, it is necessary to maximize the use of the vast pool of insight and ongoing research in the European countries which provides the best knowledge of the current state of the forest ecosystem and also the ability to assess the consequences of different forest management alternatives. This needs also to include qualified competence within the fields of national economy and socioeconomics.

The UEAA appreciates the suggestions in the Commission Communication about a future partnership for research related to forestry that will be given a role in the long-term assessment of the state of forests in Europe.

However, we also note that the Communication expresses very concrete views on how forest management should change in the near future. We do not think that there has been enough involvement or transparency in relation with scientists from the different countries to rectify this. There is a need for broad scientific discussion and evaluation of scientific findings that are used to request changes in current management practices, e.g. between scientists within the different regions. To obtain a more common picture of the current state of knowledge would facilitate the difficult task of finding solutions that can gather support from the different stakeholders.

Guram Aleksidze

**President of the U E A A
Georgian Academy of Agricultural
Sciences**

Elena Horska

**Vice President of the UEAA
Slovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences**