

# SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY 1<sup>st</sup> Workshop 2016

March 17 - 20 2016 - Milverton - UK

## REPORT



Participants in the workshop at Milverton Sawmill, with the owner Philip Chambers (third from left)



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## Background

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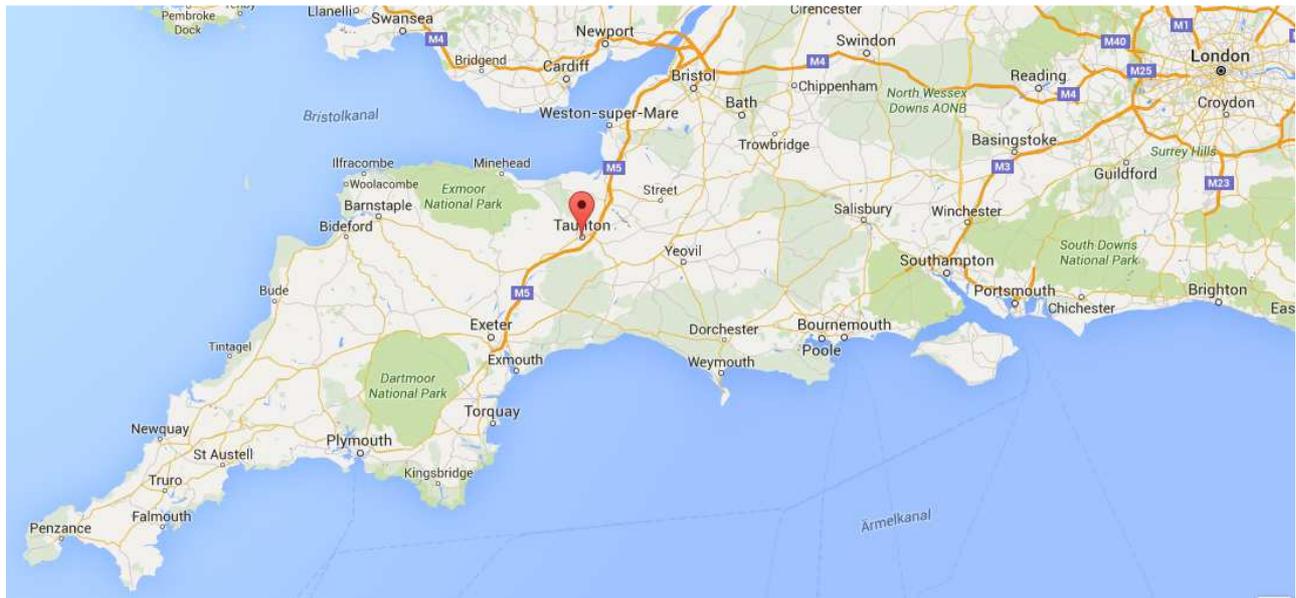
### Context

This workshop, organised by Forum Synergies in cooperation with EuCAN, was conceived as the first of a planned series of three or four workshops which together will address, in different locations in Europe, the issue of Sustainable Forest Management.

### Aim of the Workshop.

The aim of this first event was to raise awareness of the different services provided by sustainable forest management, and to understand and communicate what sustainable forestry means in practice.

### The region



The South West region is rich in examples of the work of national organisations and other local initiatives.

### Participants.

Of the 30 participants who attended the two main days of the event, just over half were from the United Kingdom, and the remainder from nine other European countries - four from France, two from Slovakia, and one each from Austria, Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Serbia and Sweden. About 12 other people from South West England attended part of the event, including those who hosted the field visit on the first full day. See full list of participants at **Annex 1**. More information about participants, their organisations, motivation and expectations can be found in the **booklet of participants** which is provided as a separate document

## Elements of the meeting

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This was a two and a half day event, based in the historic village of Milverton in the county of Somerset, southwest England. On Day 1, the path travelled by bus into Exmoor National Park to visit a large private woodland and the National Park headquarters. They returned to Milverton in the mid-afternoon, and held working groups and then a plenary session to discuss issues raised by the field trip, before enjoying an international buffet supper.

Day 2 started with a presentation of international definitions of sustainable forestry, and of the different services or 'public goods' which forests and woodlands can provide. These ideas were then developed in workshops. At midday, the group visited Milverton Sawmill. The afternoon and evening were then spent in discussion processes focused on the synergies between the different purposes for which woodlands are managed, and articulating a vision of sustainable forestry management. Presentations of personal experience were offered by fourteen participants - see **Annex 3**

Most of the participants left for home on the evening of Day 2 or early on Day 3. However, a group of 12 participants were able to devote three hours to further discussion, focused on the main conclusions and on plans for further workshops.

### Field trips

On day 2 the participants visited **Pixton Woods**, a 350-hectare woodland in the Haddeo Valley near Dulverton. In the afternoon the group visited the **Exmoor National Park**. We were welcomed in their office for lunch and were offered a presentation by the National Park Authority's Conservation Officer .

On day 3 participants visited the Milverton sawmill and were received by its owner Philip Chambers.

### Market of initiatives

During our "market of initiatives" we offered to the participants the opportunity to share their project/experience with other participants in a "market place". Sitting at a table they could put posters, leaflet etc. in order to present their initiatives.

This market was organised in different rounds: up to 6 presentations at the same the same time. The other participants were "visitors" to these tables

After approx. 20-25 min. there was the opportunity given to "visitors" to change and listen to another presentation. The atmosphere of a fair or a "market place" opened the space for a very lively discussion, giving the chance for exchange of experiences in small groups.

List of presentations see **Annex 3**

### International Buffet

All participants were invited to bring special food or drinks typical of the place they come from. During the "international buffet", these specialties were personally presented by the participants and through the stories behind gave a further insight into different European realities.

### Detailed Programme

See **Annex 2**

### Field trips and issues arising

Pixton Woods. The participants spent two hours in Pixton Woods, a 350-hectare woodland in the Haddeo Valley near Dulverton. This woodland, which has been in the Dru family for several generations, is now owned by Bernard Dru, who was ill and therefore not present. The party was accompanied by the chairman (Sir Harry Studholme) and officers of the Forestry Commission, which is the government agency responsible for all management of state forests and regulation of private woodlands in England and Scotland; Graeme McVittie, Woodland Officer of the National Park; and Ben Williams, owner of another large woodland estate nearby.



Monika Stalinova translating for Anna Figurova (both SK) while giving a presentation in the Market of Initiatives



International Buffet - regional food a communicating factor



Pixton Woods. Graeme McVittie talking about the management of Pixton Woods

Their presence enabled us to have a broad debate about forests and forest policy in England.

The management regime for Pixton Woods was explained by Graeme McVittie. It is mainly an oak woodland, representative of the long-standing native sessile-oak (*QuercusPetrea*) woodlands found in the Exmoor Valleys. These woodlands traditionally produced tanbark (used for tanning leather) and charcoal. When Bernard Dru inherited the Pixton Woods, they were in rather poor condition, a heavily infested with rhododendrons, which had been introduced a century before as habitat for pheasants. Mr. Dru has removed most of the rhododendrons, with help from a government grant. He is now working to improve the timber quality of the standing oak trees; and to encourage regeneration, which is not easy to achieve because of the presence of deer and a large population of grey squirrels. Elsewhere in the woodland, he has applied a regime of clear felling of quite significant areas, 10 or more hectares at a time, with re-planting of oak and other hardwood species or (on the higher land) of mixed species of conifers (Sitka Spruce, Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar, Japanese Cedar), in an attempt to ensure resilience in the face of pests, diseases and climate change.

Economic return. The woodland is managed for two main economic returns:

- Timber, which is processed in a sawmill owned by Mr. Dru about 20 miles away and then sold on to a company which produces wood floors and renovates buildings, or to other buyers. All the offcuts are sold for firewood, or used in woodchip form to heat Mr. Dru's house and farm buildings.
- Shooting, for which pheasants are raised in large numbers and form the basis for a highly profitable business at the top end of the market, whereby guests may pay up to £50 per pheasant shot. Shooting is also used to control the grey squirrels.

There is a limited public access through the wood, on footpaths and bridleways. This limitation on access applies to most private woodlands in England, in contrast to the general right of access to moorlands and commons granted by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It is in strong contrast to the practice of *allemansrätten* in Sweden, which enables anyone to walk through any part of the forests.

The problem with squirrels and deer was contrasted by some of the visitors to the impact of wild boar elsewhere in Europe, for example on farm land in Sweden.

Reflections on the woodland visit. In the absence of Mr. Dru, there was some hesitation in offering a critique of his management regime. Participants recognised that he had made strenuous and successful efforts to reduce rhododendron, to improve the standing timber, to diversify the species, and to gain an economic return from the woodlands which will fund its continued active management and gradual improvement, and which creates local employment in servicing the shoot and adding value to the timber. But the reflections during the visit, and in group discussions at Milverton, included comments on :

- the apparently limited extent of social benefits to the local community, particularly in terms of public access to the wood
- the impact of significant clear-felling on wildlife and the landscape
- the difficulty of securing regeneration of hardwood species in the face of the squirrel population
- the apparent inconsistency of rearing pheasants, using large quantities of imported grain which helps to sustain the population of squirrels and the damage that they cause to young trees
- the absence of any area-scale agreement between Mr. Dru and adjoining owners for the control of grey squirrels
- the lack of veteran trees, and of standing deadwood which would have wildlife value.

Forests and woodlands in England. Compared with many countries on the continent, England has a low percentage of forest and woodland cover - about 10% of the total land area and only growing slowly. This is a result of many centuries of clearance of woodland, to make way for farming, settlements and other activity. The loss of woodland was partly made good in the 20<sup>th</sup> century by the planting of forests both by the government (through the Forestry Commission) and by private owners or commercial companies in response to fiscal incentives from the government. Recent years have seen a further gradual increase in forest cover, mainly through the action of private landowners and of non-profit

organisations such as the National Trust and Woodland Trust and government-sponsored initiatives such as The National Forest.

Forestry Commission. The government's role in relation to forestry is implemented in England and Scotland by the Forestry Commission (and by other government agencies in Wales and Northern Ireland). The Forestry Commission's declared aim is to protect, improve, and expand the forest cover. The Commission has two main functions :

- To manage the State Forests, large parts of which were planted from 1919 onwards to make good the shortage of timber caused by the first World War and to strengthen the economy of upland areas, mainly in Scotland and northern England. The State forests total about 280,000 in England. The Coalition Government of 2010-15 proposed to sell the State Forests, but withdrew this proposal in the face of a massive public outcry. The forests are still used for timber production, on a sustained yield basis : but in recent decades the emphasis in their management has increasingly shifted towards biodiversity, landscape improvement and recreational use. In some regions, the Commission's income from recreation and tourism is now higher than that from timber. There is also an increasing focus on the role of woodlands in catchment management, because of the impact of disastrous floods upon public and political opinion.
- To regulate forestry activity by private landowners. Forestry activity in private woodlands is subject to control by the Forestry Commission, through approval of forest management plans and the requirement to secure a felling licence for the cutting down of more than a limited number of trees. This regulatory function is served by a staff of about 180 people. By these means, the Commission can influence the management, felling and planting regimes of all larger private woodlands. It does not have much influence over smaller woodlands, which are a major feature of many regions particularly in England.

Resilience in the face of pests, diseases and climate change. A major part of the Forestry Commission's work is addressed to coping with pests and diseases which affect forests and woodlands, and with the potential impact of climate change; and to promoting the resilience of woodlands in the face of these problems. The incidence of pests and diseases has sharply increased in the last decade in the United Kingdom. The most serious impacts are those of :

- *Phytophthora ramorum*, which since 2009 has infected large numbers of Japanese larch trees in South West England, and is now causing similar damage in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland
- *Phytophthora alni*, which has killed many thousands of alder trees throughout England, Scotland and Wales
- *Chalara fraxinea*, which is spreading rapidly in England (because it can be carried on the wind) and is expected to kill a high proportion of the c.124 million ash trees in the United Kingdom. It is expected that only about 1% of these trees will survive. The Earth Trust is undertaking nationwide research to find the 'Plus trees' which show the greatest resistance to this disease, and which may form the basis of a new generation of ash trees<sup>1</sup>.



Pixton Woods, 2nd stop. discussion about diseases and resilience strategies

Implications for forestry regimes. Discussion among participants about the search for resilience in the face of these problems pointed to the value - in forestry regimes of diversity of species, including diversity in the provenance of the trees; of having a mixture of age groups and sizes of trees (age/maturity classes); of a continuous cover approach, without clear-cutting; and of working on a 'sustained yield' basis, whereby the 'capital' of biomass in a woodland is not diminished. This is the approach advocated by PROSILVA, a European federation of professional foresters across 24 European countries who advocate and promote "Close to Nature Forest Management Principles" as an alternative to clear felling and short-term tree plantations. PROSILVA originated in Slovenia : in response to its

<sup>1</sup> see presentation by Kerry Lock, UK, Market of Initiatives, Annex 3

influence, forestry practice in Croatia and Slovenia is almost wholly on the basis of continuous cover. This shows up strongly in the aerial photographs of forests in Europe offered by Global Forest Watch, which show extensive areas of clear felling and replanting in so many other European countries<sup>2</sup>. This approach alone is not a sufficient recipe for sustainability, which must take into account other social, economic and environmental aspects of forest management and the ‘downstream activity’ in the economic chain of woodland products

Fiscal and financial incentives. The Forestry Commission has limited funding, all sourced by the European Union, which it can offer as grants for improvement of woodland. These grants are deployed on a point-scoring basis towards management of woodlands, provision of essential access roads, removal of rhododendron and similar purposes. Some further public funding towards management of private woodlands or creation of new woodlands is provided through the government’s Countryside Stewardship scheme and through the local development strategies created and funded through the LEADER programme. To be eligible for such funding, the woodland must be the subject of an approved management plan. Forest cover is increasing each year in England by about 2,000 hectares, and in Scotland by about 10,000 hectares (despite resistance from upland farmers). The pace of this growth is limited by lack of finance. Until recent years, the planting of new private woodlands was encouraged by government rules which permitted the cost of planting such woodlands to be deducted from taxable income. At present, income from forestry is not subject to income tax. But fiscal or financial incentives are needed in order to encourage the planting of woodlands on previously farmed land, because the value of the land immediately falls when it becomes woodland and the farmer loses agricultural grants.

Bringing woodlands into management. In England and Wales, many of the private woodlands are broadleaved, under-managed, with timber of poor quality and under-used, and declining in biodiversity and landscape quality. One reason for this is that in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the management of many woodlands was transferred from the landowners to the tenant farmers, many of whom were neither interested nor skilled in woodland management. In Wales, and in some parts of England, action is being taken by government agencies, local authorities or national park authorities to encourage owners of woodlands to bring them into effective management, to gain an economic return from them, and to improve their biodiversity and landscape quality. For example, the long-standing project CoedCymru (*Welsh Woodlands*) has enabled local authorities throughout Wales to employ advisors who encouraged farmers to bring the woodlands into management, and to use or sell timber, firewood or other woodland products. CoedCymru supported the creation of many small sawmills throughout Wales, in order to process the timber arising from this project. It has a research and development workshop, through which innovative uses of small-scale hardwood timber (such as end-grain flooring) have been promoted<sup>3</sup>.

Ancient woodland. The centuries-old process of clearing forests for agricultural and other purposes led to the destruction of much of England’s heritage of ‘ancient woodland’ (which is defined by law as land which has been in continuous use as woodland since at least 1600 AD). Only about 2% of the original English woodland still remains. There is now active public and parliamentary campaigning to protect this residue of ancient woodland, which environmentalists believe is as precious as tropical rain forest. At present, there is no formal statutory protection for ancient woodlands, though some of them fall within national parks and other protected areas and some are protected by the National Trust and other charitable or community-based organisations (see next paragraph). The government’s National Planning Policy Framework provides that ancient woodlands shall not be destroyed “unless the benefit of the proposed development outweighs the loss”. This provision is not an effective protection, and there are many current threats to ancient woodlands from new highways, housing, power stations and other proposed development. A Parliamentary Group on Ancient Woodlands, chaired by Rebecca Pow MP (who attended part of the workshop at Milverton), is campaigning to change the wording of that provision, and to secure legal protection of ancient woodlands parallel to that which is given to ancient buildings. A report published in 2015 by the National Capital Committee described ancient woodland as “priceless” and urged the production of a national register of ancient woodlands.

<sup>2</sup> see presentation by Laszlo Galhidy, HU, of WWF Hungary, Market of initiatives, Annex 3

<sup>3</sup> More information about CoedCymru can be found in the ‘Success Stories’ section of the Forum Synergies website ([http://www.forum-synergies.eu/bdf\\_fiche-experience-51\\_en.html](http://www.forum-synergies.eu/bdf_fiche-experience-51_en.html)) .

Non-profit and community woodlands. A third sector of woodlands ownership, which has grown in recent years alongside the State and private sector, is that of non-profit organisations and communities. This sector includes :

- The National Trust, set up in 1895 to protect places of historic interest or natural beauty. This formidable organisation, with over 4 million members, is now the largest non-government landowner in the United Kingdom. Its land holdings account for more than 610,000 acres (2550 km<sup>2</sup>), mostly of countryside, and covering nearly 1.5% of the total land mass of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This includes over 300 historic, plus gardens, parks, farmland and many and varied woodlands. Many of these properties have been given to the National Trust by private landowners, or by the government after it accepted them from private landowners *in lieu* of inheritance tax. The Trust is committed to the high-quality multipurpose management of their woodlands, most of which are fully open to public access.
- The Woodland Trust, set up in 1972, is the UK's largest woodland conservation charity. Since its inception, it has acquired more than 1,000 woodland sites covering over 20,000 hectares (50,000 acres). It campaigns to protect ancient woodland; to restore damaged woodlands; and to fight for woodland that are under threat. It creates new native woodland around the UK with the help of communities, schools, organisations and individuals. Its properties are managed with a view to long-term environmental and social benefit.
- County Wildlife Trusts, which exist in every county in England, and which own and manage a wide range of varied properties of high ecological value, including many woodlands
- The National Forest Company, which was set up with government funding in 1995 in order to redeem the despoiled landscape of the 200 square mile area in central England, within which during the last 20 years it has increased the forest cover of the area from 6% to 20%, mainly in mixed broadleaved woodlands of high ecological and recreational value<sup>4</sup>.
- A growing number of community forests, owned or leased by communities in different parts of England and mainly managed by voluntary effort<sup>5</sup>.

National Parks. The field visit took the participants into Exmoor National Park, which is one of the 12 National Parks which have been created in England and Wales since 1951. These parks are unlike most of the National Parks on the European continent, in that the land within the parks in the United Kingdom is largely in private ownership and has long been used for farming, forestry, mining etc. Each National Park contains small towns and villages with a resident population. The role of each National Park Authority is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Park area, to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the Park's special qualities by the public, and to have regard to the social and economic well-being of the people who live in the Park. The nearest parallel to these parks on the European continent is the family of *Parcs Regionaux Naturels* in France, which are created by groups of local authorities with the double purpose of protecting the heritage and promoting the well-being of rural people. The National Parks in the UK pursue their role through land use planning and countryside management.

Within each National Park, the Forestry Commission is required to consult the National Park Authority before approving forest management plans or issuing felling licenses. For forest owners, the National Park represents some constraint on the management of the woodland, because the Park Authority may insist upon very high standards of environmental care. But it can also be an advantage, because Forestry Commission grants towards improvement of private woods, for example for removal of rhododendrons, are prioritised within national parks and other protected areas. The officers of Exmoor National Park will accept clear felling in areas (such as we saw in the Pixton Woods) which are less prominent in the landscape : elsewhere, they may insist upon continuous cover forestry. Woodlands cover just over 13% of the National Park area, and are seen by the Park Authority as significant assets, which should be used to produce benefits in biodiversity and landscape, plus income and local jobs at the time of heavy pressure upon the Park Authority's own finances and upon the regional economy.

<sup>4</sup> See Simon West's (UK) presentation in the Market of initiatives, Annex 3. More information about the National Forest can be found in the 'Success Stories' section of the Forum Synergies website ([http://www.forum-synergies.eu/bdf\\_fiche-organisme-109\\_en.html](http://www.forum-synergies.eu/bdf_fiche-organisme-109_en.html))

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, the description of voluntary management of two woodlands in southwest England in Michael Dower's presentation (UK). Market of initiatives, Annex 3

Added value to forest products. Mr. Dru's sawmill, which turns trees into timber for flooring and other building elements, was cited as a good example of added value. It was stated that there is now only limited return from charcoal, because the price of unprocessed firewood has risen remarkably. The rising demand for renewable energy, particularly for woodfuel (prompted partly by the Renewable Heat Incentive introduced by the government), has created a rising market for firewood, so that woodland owners can make profit out of their poorer timber and offcuts. In southwest England, timber to be used for firewood is currently selling at £40 (€50) per cubic metre collected from the forest. Timber which was previously sent to chipboard factories, or even used in construction, now often goes straight into woodfuel. It was noted that in parts of Austria, farmers and other woodland owners can sell their main tree stems for timber and then sell all the 'brash' (branches and twigs) to be turned into chips for domestic or institutional woodfuel heating systems.

Milverton sawmill. During the second day of the workshop, participants visited the Milverton sawmill and were received by its owner Philip Chambers. This family-owned business, with 15 workers, has been in operation since 1967, and was described by Mr. Chambers as being at the bottom end of the market, receiving only those softwood tree-trunks which other more sophisticated sawmills do not want. Using a long-established bandsaw, the mill can cut any size of tree to produce timber, planting material, fencing and pallet wood. These products sell well, despite the absence of FSC or other certification, which Mr. Chambers dismisses as irrelevant. The offcuts and sawdust are turned into woodchips, which go for drying elsewhere because Mr. Chambers does not have the space to dry it himself. His workers include local youngsters who have left school without qualifications and who might otherwise be unemployable.



Milverton sawmill. The owner, Mr. Philip Chambers explaining his philosophy

## Discussion during the Workshop at Milverton

Sustainable Forest Management - International standards. One purpose of this first workshop was to consider what we should mean by 'sustainable forest management'. Discussion on this was introduced by Andrew Heald, of the Confederation of Forest Industries (Confor). He described the development of international trade standards for timber and other forest products, in response to (inter alia) the concerns of pressure groups related to the felling of tropical hardwood trees. The outcome is the present regimes of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Programme of Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) standards, which are used to certify the 'sustainability' of the forest management practices which have yielded products which carry the FSC or PEFC labels. These regimes are explained in voluminous guidance documents, and are supported by processes of annual inspection of the relevant forests or woodlands and supply chains. The documents are translated into many languages, and some governments have produced simplified extracts to help producers in their countries.

Standards in the United Kingdom. Such a simplified document is currently being produced, by a group including Andrew Heald, for use in the United Kingdom. In the UK, the FSC standard has been endorsed by the Forestry Commission, as the basis for its approval of forest management plans. 45% of the UK's woodland area is certified. Around 87% of softwood (conifer) timber harvested in the UK in 2009 was certified: this included all Forestry Commission timber and some from the private sector. Many large private enterprises in the UK observe the standards, and can afford the cost of annual inspections in order to retain the certification. But this process can be too complex and costly for small woodland owners or enterprises. The UK Woodland Assurance Standard, which is less complex and does not imply annual inspection, is recognised by both FSC and PEFC. The UK Forestry Standard sets out the Government's approach to sustainable forestry, taking into account the EU Forestry Strategy and relevant directives described below.

EU Forestry Strategy. The European Union does not have 'competence' in the field of forestry: this means that the responsibility for forestry policy lies with each member state. However, there has been much multinational discussion on the subject, including the 1990 Conference on Protection of

Forests and the 1993 Helsinki conference which produced “Principles of Sustainable Forestry”. These principles are expressed in FOREST EUROPE, a pan-European political process for the sustainable management of the continent’s forests. 2006 saw the publication of the European Forest Action Plan. In 2013 the European Commission published “A new EU Forest Strategy” (COM(2013) 659 final). This document notes that :

*“Forests and other wooded land cover over 40% of the EU’s land area, with a great diversity of character across regions... Forests are multifunctional, serving economic, social and environmental purposes. Forests contribute to rural development and provide around 3 million jobs... Ensuring sustainable forest management is essential if these benefits are to be delivered in a balanced way”.*

Defining sustainable forest management. The EU document then offers the following definition:

*“Sustainable forest management means using forests and forest land in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.”*

European Union directives. Despite the absence of a formal EU forestry policy, the management of many forests within the European Union is affected by other EU instruments, notably the Birds and Habitats Directives and the Water Framework Directive<sup>6</sup>. The EU Forest Strategy notes that:

*“Nearly a quarter of the EU’s forest area is protected under Natura 2000, and much of the rest is home to species protected under EU nature legislation”.*

European Landscape Convention. Woodlands and forests are also major elements in creating and sustaining the character of Europe’s landscapes. The governments and peoples of 40 European countries have committed themselves, by adopting the Council of Europe’s European Landscape Convention, to the recognition in law of the importance of all landscapes, and to the pursuit of processes to identify, assess, project manage and plan landscapes throughout their countries.

Sustainability as an aspiration. As the workshop discussion proceeded, it soon became clear that participants regarded the definition of sustainable forest management offered by the European Commission as “mechanistic and anthropocentric”. They saw that definition, and the FSC and other standards, as not helpful in the real-life world of promoting the sustainable management of highly varied woodlands, and particularly of small woodlands in private ownership. They saw sustainability not as a fixed attribute, but as an aspiration towards which woodland managers can strive, so that their woodlands become gradually more sustainable. They wished to see more emphasis on the value of woodlands and forests as natural organisms and systems, which have a validity and even sanctity in their own right, regardless of human intervention.

Aspects of sustainability. We therefore moved on to consider the different aspects of sustainability, in terms of the social, economic and environmental benefits - or ‘public goods’ - which could or should be produced by well-managed woodlands. Each aspect was briefly presented by one participant. They included :

- Shooting, which (according to Ian Danby of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation) can produce benefits through production of food, fostering of social contact, management of habitats, increasing the health of woodland, and creating employment (an estimate of 60,000 full-time job equivalents in the United Kingdom)<sup>7</sup>.
- Volunteering opportunities, particularly in management of small woodlands near to towns or in places where machines cannot easily be introduced. Volunteering produces benefits of health and social interaction for the volunteers; can bring particular benefit of people who suffer mental or physical handicap; can enable management of woodlands which might otherwise remain unmanaged; and enables development of personal skills which can then be more widely used and may lead on to employment<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> See Hannah Mowat’s (BE) presentation in the Market of initiatives, Annex 3.

<sup>7</sup> see Ian Danby’s (UK) presentation, Market of Initiatives, Annex 3

<sup>8</sup> see Rikki Therivel’s (UK) presentation, Market of Initiatives, Annex 3

- Access, recreation and exercise, which can contribute to popular health, to people’s spiritual connection to the natural world, and to popular support for the retention, creation and management of woodlands.
- Benefits to local communities, in providing psychic benefits, an attractive setting for their lives, space for recreation, access to woodland products, employment or volunteering opportunities.
- Production of timber and other woodland products; and added value to those products, including craft products made from timber, processing of woodfuel, food products such as herbs and fungi, with financial benefit in local processing and supply chains.
- Landscape- contribution to protecting, improving and even transforming the individual character of different landscape units, in line with the principles set out in the European Landscape Convention.
- Biodiversity, reflected in protection of all the species and natural processes found in woodland, in line with the European Union’s Birds and Habitats Directives.
- Mitigation of, and adaptation to, climate change, including catchment management in order to moderate flooding control, prevention of erosion and regulation of microclimates, and response to the requirements of the European Union’s Water Framework Directive
- Capture and recycling of carbon.

A search for synergy. In a series of working groups and processes guided by Philippe Barret, the participants explored the values which should guide the approach to management of forests, and the synergy which should be sought between the many social, economic and environmental issues which have been raised. These processes yielded a rich set of ideas, including ;



Introduction to working group sessions by Philippe Barret

- The importance of respect for the health of woodlands and forests as natural organisms and systems, which have a validity and even sanctity in their own right, regardless of human intervention. We should respect the soil and its natural systems, and pursue management regimes which have minimal impact on these systems. This implies forestry regimes based on continuous cover, in order to protect the ecosystems and prevent soil erosion.
- However, forest regimes must take account of climatic and other factors in different regions.
- Where products are taken from the woodlands, they should be put to their highest potential use, rather than being wasted.
- Processes of adding value to forest products should be as local as possible to the woodland, in order to bring benefit to local communities and to minimize the use of transport.
- Woodland management should be driven by a sense of stewardship, and the responsibility to future generations, in accordance with the Brundtland definition of sustainable development.
- The interests of all stakeholders - landowners, woodland workers, the local community, people “upstream” and “downstream” in the local supply chain - should be considered.
- Traditional uses of the forests, for example by hunter-gatherers or by people collecting deadwood for fuel, should be respected and sustained.
- Woodlands can be used to help people to understand and appreciate nature
- There is need to raise the awareness of the general population, and particularly of consumers and suppliers of woodland products and of policy-makers at all levels, to the multiple benefits of woodlands and the need for the sustainable management of woodland. This awareness can be promoted in practical ways, for example the involvement of people in making and mounting of bird-boxes.
- Woodlands in or near towns can enhance the urban landscape and microclimate; can bring pleasure and enjoyment to the urban population; and can provide opportunities for volunteering as for educational use of the woodland.

- Hedgerows, which may be seen as linear woodlands, should be managed to yield benefits of enclosing livestock, providing habitats and corridors for wildlife, enhancing landscapes, and yielding timber and firewood. In England, many hedgerows and small woodlands are currently ill-managed.
- Biodiversity in woodlands can be enhanced by skilful forest management, for example by diversity of plant species, phased felling regimes, leaving of open areas.

Land ownership. There was some discussion about the patterns of ownership of forests and woodlands in different parts of Europe. In Serbia, after World War 2, the ownership of land by any household was limited to 10 ha of farmland or 20 ha of forest, and the remaining woodland was taken over by the state. Since the splitting up of Yugoslavia, land is being returned to the pre-war owners, but still about 40% of the woods in Serbia are in State hands, and there is State control of felling and planting in private woodlands. People use private woodlands for gathering firewood, fungi and wild fruit. In Slovakia, since independence there has been a slow and legally complex process of returning forestland to the pre-World War II owners<sup>9</sup>.

Communal 'ownership'. Some participants suggested that all woodlands should be seen as communal assets, and that local communities should gain a sense of 'ownership' of the woodlands near them, whatever the legal ownership may be. In some European countries, woodlands have strong cultural and spiritual dimensions, and are seen as part of national identity. In the United Kingdom, the vigorous public reaction against the government's proposal to sell the State forests revealed a strong sense of such communal ownership. The growth of community woodlands, and the large membership of the National Trust and the Woodland Trust, are further examples of this. Woodland management plans and selling licenses submitted to the Forestry Commission are open to public comment. Many private landowners, such as the Clinton Estates in Devon, are careful to consult the public about proposed felling of trees and other activity, because they wish to carry the local population with them in such action: the benefit of this relationship is shown when members of the public report anti-social behaviour to the estate steward. Some owners of private woodland go further than this, and welcome use of their woodland by the local community<sup>10</sup>.

Large-scale biofuel power plants. Strong concerns were expressed about the impacts of the new generation of massive biofuel power plants upon the market for woodland products in the countries where they are located and the apparent non-sustainability of transporting large supplies of biomass across the ocean to feed such plants. Examples are the major plant near Marseilles in southern France, which seeks biomass raw material within a radius of 400km; and the even larger plant at Drax in northern England, which depends upon large volumes of English farmland being devoted to production of miscanthusgrass and the import of thousands of tons of biomass from North America. Campaigns against these large-scale power plants are being led by the French organisations *Longo Mai* (Provençal for "Long may it last") and *Réseau pour les Alternatives Forestières* (Network for Forest Alternatives) and the British organisation Biofuelwatch<sup>11</sup>.

## Conclusions

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This first workshop should be seen as the start of a programme, focused on dialogue and the exchange of ideas, and including at least two further workshops in different regions of Europe.

We see ourselves not as an organization, but rather as a network or interest group focused on dialogue, on gathering and disseminating ideas, and on advocacy of good practice in the field of forest management.

Our geographic focus is on the whole of Europe, within and beyond the European Union. We are concerned with all manner of woodlands and forests, in both rural and urban areas, including hedgerows which are seen as linear woodlands.

We recognise the enormous variation between different regions of Europe in terms of climate, geomorphology, soils and other underlying factors; in national cultures, traditions, and patterns of land

<sup>9</sup> see Anna Figurova's (SK) presentation, Market of initiatives, Annex 3

<sup>10</sup> see Danny Cox' (UK) presentation as an example, Market of initiatives, Annex 3

<sup>11</sup> see the presentation of Nicholas Bell (FR), Market of Initiatives, Annex 3

ownership and administration; and thus in the character of woodlands and forests, and in the challenge of achieving sustainability.

Having discussed many different aspects and definitions of forest management, we resolve not to strive for any standard definitions of sustainable forest management, but rather to focus on the values and principles which may guide the efforts to achieve sustainability, which we see as a process rather than a static measurable condition.

Our consensus on the values which should guide these efforts is based on four key principles :

- Holistic respect for the health of woodlands and forests as natural organisms and systems, which have a validity and even sanctity in their own right, regardless of human intervention
- A sense of stewardship of forests on behalf of humankind now and in the future, rather than selfish or short-term exploitative use of forests
- A sense of communal responsibility for, and pride in, the forests; and of fairness in the provision and allocation of forest-based benefits and resources
- A global perspective, based on care for all the world's forests and on awareness of the fragility of global ecosystems and climate.

We recognise the wide range of stakeholders whose interests should be considered and fairly balanced in the processes of use and management of woodlands and forests. These stakeholders include the owners of land; those who work in the forests; those who live in or near the forests and may thus most directly benefit from them; those who work in supply chains based on forest products; those who represent different interest groups; local, regional and national governments; international institutions; and the wider world population, now and in the future.

The range and complexity of stakeholders, and all the benefits or public goods which can arise from forests and woodlands, point to the need for dialogue between all relevant interests when preparing and implementing plans for forest management. We, as a network driven by the values mentioned earlier, are committed to fostering such dialogue by providing a 'safe space' within which people may offer ideas in a spirit of sharing.

We need more debate about the major global forces or drivers which affect the management of forests and woodlands. This will inject a hard reality into our discussion, and will also point to the levers which can be used to move towards greater sustainability in forest management. These levers, working from global through European and national to regional and local level, may include trade deals, forest product standards, legislative controls, fiscal and financial incentives, information and advisory systems (such as those offered by Södra, the Swedish forest owners organisation, to help new members get their woodlands into sustainable management), demonstrations and site visits (such as those organised in the United Kingdom by the Small Woodlands Association or by the Royal Forestry Society) etc.

We place high importance upon a pan-European exchange of good practice, peer-to-peer learning, and the assembly and dissemination of case studies. Our network, which already has roots in many European countries, can play a significant role in this field.

We recognize the usefulness, for many who trade in or use timber or related products, of the definitions and assessment systems for sustainable forest management used by the Forest Stewardship Council and the Programme of Endorsement of Forest Certification, and those developed by some national governments. We welcome the efforts to express the principles in these systems in clear and user-friendly ways. But these broad systems, which are applied particularly to the products of major commercial forests, do not provide a meaningful guide to the day by day management of many of the world's woodlands. Those who are involved in woodland management may gain more from direct, localised and face-to-face guidance, advice and training.

Our network needs more time, more information, and more opportunities for field visits and discussions, before it can offer well-based conclusions related to the sustainability of different forest regimes. However, we have serious doubts about the true social, economic and environmental sustainability of regimes based on large-scale clear-felling and replanting. We believe that there is increasing merit in regimes based on diversity of woodland species, diversity in the age of trees, and

continuous woodland cover, particularly in the present era of growing threats from pests and diseases and of rapid climate change.

We have very strong concerns about the impacts of the new generation of massive biofuel power plants upon the market for woodland products, and upon the use of farmland, in the countries where they are located; and about the apparent non-sustainability of transporting large supplies of biomass across the ocean to feed these power plants.

## Looking ahead

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Multinational workshops. We confirm the high value of multi-national workshops like the one that we have enjoyed. We wish to see such workshops held in different regions in Europe, in order to explore how the values and principles articulated at this first workshop can be applied and flexed to the circumstances of the other regions.

We welcome the offers made by colleagues from Serbia and Sweden to host events during the next year, and we ask Forum Synergies to work with them to achieve these events. We hope that the agenda and participants in each of these events can embrace countries in the surrounding region (e.g. Western Balkans in Serbia, Scandinavia in Sweden); and that there will be some continuity in participation between the different workshops. We believe that the core dimensions of about 30 multi-national participants and 2 main days of meeting are appropriate for such events, but suggest that this core might be enriched by :

- offering optional field visits before the main event
- offering, within the main event, a field visit to at least two woodlands or forests, ensuring that the owners or managers are present
- providing face-to-face contact with representatives of local communities, in order to understand the perspective of people who are not forest professionals.

Drawing on the experience of this workshop, we suggest that :

- a description of forestry regimes and policies in the host country and surrounding region should be sent in advance to all participants
- the workshop programme should include ample time for informal exchanges as well as formal sessions
- effort should be made to ensure that people for whom English is not the first language should be enabled to take a full part and to understand all proceedings.

**Building the network.** Participants in this first workshop will be the starting point for a continuing network, which we hope will grow to embrace people throughout Europe and become authoritative. The network will operate as an e-mail group. A proposal will come forward for the creation of a web-based portal, with links to sources of ideas, information and guidance both within and beyond the group of organisations represented in the network.

We recognize the need to assemble information about the state of Europe's forests, with help from relevant experts and organizations; to enrich our debate on issues related to sustainable forest management, so that we may progressively improve our collective understanding; and to gather and publicise case studies which illustrate good practice on difficult issues. This should be an on-going process, complementary to the organisation of workshops and involving many members of the network, plus other organisations which may wish to contribute. In due course, it may enable us to produce authoritative statements on sustainable forest management.

Gwil Wren of EuCAN, who organised the first workshop, is willing to continue as coordinator of the network. Simone Matouch will continue to provide the link to Forum Synergies, including its other activities such as the Civil Dialogue programme : she is ready to handle registrations etc. for further workshops. Forum Synergies will provide limited 'seed funds' of future events, but looks to the hosts of those events to do seek the necessary further funds, with support from other members of the network.

*Report drafted by Michael Dower*



## Annexes

### Annex 1: List of participants

Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country
Mr	Phillipe	Barret	Forum Synergies	FR
Mr	Nicholas	Bell	Réseau pour les Alternatives Forestières	FR
Ms	Anne	Berthet	Network for forestry alternatives	FR
Mr	Jonathan	Bradley	Verdant Ecology	UK
Mr	Tom	Brannigan	Environment Agency/Self employed	UK
Mr	Paddy	Cox	Keepers of Small Woods	UK
Mr	Philip	Chambers	Milverton Saw Mill owner (guide on field visit)	UK
Mr	Ian	Danby	BASC	UK
Mr	David	Dixon	National Assoc for AONBs	UK
Mr	Michael	Dower	PREPARE Partnership for Rural Europe	UK
Mr	Bernard	Dru	site visit, woodland owner	UK
Mr	Mark	Durk	Forestry Commission England	UK
Ms	Rosie	Farrell	Volunteer, London Wildlife Trust	UK
Ms	Anna	Figurova	Gemer region forest owners association	SK
Mr	Laszlo	Galhidy	WWF Hungary	HU
Mr	Stig	Hansson	Hela Sveroeige ska Leva	SE
Mr	Markus	Hassler	Philipps-University Marburg	DE
Mr	Andrew	Heald	Confor	UK
Mr.	Graham	Knight	N/A	UK
Mr.	Philip	Knowles	local woodland owner	UK
Mr	Dainis	Kreicbergs	'Saldus meža īpašnieku apvienība' via "Latvian Rural Forum"	LV
Ms	Kerry	Lock	Earth Trust	UK
Ms	Catherine	Marquot	Foundation "Toi, l'arbre"	FR
Ms	Simone	Matouch	Forum Synergies	AT
Mr	James	McLeod	McLeod countryside and conservation services	UK
Mr	Joseph	Middleton	The Woodland Trust / EUCAN	UK
Mr	Brecht	Morris	Environment Agency/Self employed	UK
Ms	Hannah	Mowat	Fern	BE
Mr	Gordon	Pfetscher	The Woodland Trust	UK
Mr	Trevor	Phelps	EuCAN (local organiser)	UK
Mr	Mark	Prior	National Forestry Commissions Partnership	UK
Mr	Dragan	Roganovic	Ibar Development Association	RS
Ms	Allison	Rogers	McLeod countryside and conservation services	UK
Ms	Monika	Slaninova	VIPA SK	SK
Ms	Tanja	Smart	Natural England	UK
Mr	Nigel	Stone	Exmoor National Park	UK
Mr-	Sir Harry	Studholme	National Forestry Commission	UK
Ms	Riki	Therivel	Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment	UK
Mr	Richard	Thomason	Small Woods Association	UK
Mr	Simon	West	National Forest Company	UK
Mr	John	Wilding	Clinton Devon Estates	UK

Title	First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Country
Ms	Narelle	Willis	volunteer	UK
Mr	Robert	Wolton	Devon Hedge Group	UK
Mr	Gwil	Wren	EuCAN (local organiser)	UK

## Annex 2: Detailed programme

### Arrival: 17March2016 Welcome & introduction to the programme

- Welcome by our hosts and Forum Synergies
  - Informal buffet supper
  - Introduction to Milverton, the workshop venue: its history, present situation, and local initiatives
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### Day 1: 18March 2016 Discovering the region and activities

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Day 1 will be dedicated to understanding the situation in the UK - from policy framework to local reality.

At the end of the day we intend to have a clearer view on :

- a) what sustainable forest management is
- b) which services are provided to societyby forests

#### 09:00 - 15:00: Field trip, including lunch

- Field visits including discussion with local people:
  - a) Pixton Woods a local woodland nature reserve
  - b) Exmoor National Park - office
- Main questions to be raised and discussed during the field trips.  
*Participants will bring findings to the working groups*
  - a) what seems to be sustainable - elements of sustainable forestry management
  - b) what seems to be not sustainable
  - c) which woodland services can be detected?

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#### Tea break on return to Milverton

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#### 15:30 - 16:30 Working groups

- main issues / questions / ideas raised during the field trips
- conclusions and criteria

*Group representatives will bring findings to the plenary*

#### 16:30 - 18:00 Plenary - feedback on field trips

- Short feedback by each workinggroup
- debate and exchange
- Introduction to the "market place": speakers briefly present the topic they will present

#### 18:30 - 19:45 Market Place of initiatives- session 1

*presentation of experiences/ projects by participants*

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#### 20:00 Dinner & international buffet

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### Day 2: 19 March 2016 From policies (national and European)toconcrete experiences

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#### 09:00 -10.30 Introduction -the policy context

International definitions of sustainable forestry  
What is the European forestry policy?

What are the national policies related to sustainable forestry and the services it provides?  
3-4 short statements by participants about the reality of forestry policy in different countries  
Summary

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**10.30 - 11:00 Coffee break**

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**11:00 - 12:30 Setting the conceptual agenda for this and subsequent workshops.**

The aim of this plenary session is to agree the scope of the main theme of the series of workshops, namely Sustainable forestry management in Europe :

- Which forests are we talking about ?
- What do we mean by sustainable management of forests ?
- What are the main topics to work on? Topics identified so far:
  - Timber production
  - Biodiversity
  - Climate Change adaptation, including flood control, erosion prevention and shade/heat/humidity regulation
  - Landscape- contribution to landscape character, improvement or transformation
  - Wood Fuel
  - Carbon sequestration
  - Added value to woodland products
  - Benefits to local communities
  - Access, recreation and exercise
  - Volunteering opportunities
  - Shooting.
- What outputs do we want from the whole series of four workshops ?
- What should we aim to achieve in this workshop ?

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**12:30 - 14:15 Lunch and Site visits to local saw mill and ancient woodlands**

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**14:30 - 15.45 Market Place of initiatives - session 2**

*presentation of experiences/ projects by participants*

**15.45- 16.15 Tea break**

**1615 - 19.00 Finding the synergies**

This plenary session will seek to bring together the themes and examples which have been offered in the market of initiatives and the morning's discussion. We will aim to find the synergies between the different purposes for which woodlands are managed; to link and reconcile the different benefits that come from woodlands; and to express a clear vision of sustainable forestry management, so that this vision can be passed forward to the further workshops in the series.

It is envisaged that a small editorial group will work in the evening to produce a short summary of the key ideas that have been offered, to form a starting point for the discussion on Day 3

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**Dinner**

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**Day 3 : 20 March 2016**

**09:00 - 11:00 Commitments & homework**

This final plenary session will focus on the conclusions from the preceding discussion, with a view to agreeing how these conclusions might be reflected in terms of policy, practical action and contribution to continuing discussion. The session may focus on the following questions :

- Is there broad agreement on the key ideas emerging from Days 1 and 2 ?
- What do these ideas imply for policy makers at European and national level ?
- What are the implications of practical action in the participants' own organizations and regions ?
- Should the ideas from this workshop be published in some form ?
- What message, or what suggested tasks, do we offer to the further workshops in the series ?
- Which countries, which organisations and which networks should be considered as participants for the future workshops ?

- How do we secure continuity between the different workshops, and an effective output from the overall programme ?
- What plans for the 2nd workshop: co-organising partner, location, date, finance ?

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## Official closure

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### Annex 3: Presentations during the Market of Initiatives

Success stories and presentation of the Market of initiatives can be found on the Forum Synergies website **(concrete links can only be provided once the docs are uploaded!)**

#### **Campaign against a huge biomass power station**

Nicholas Bell; Réseau pour les Alternatives Forestières, France

#### **Network for forestry alternatives: What it is about ?**

Anne Berthet, Réseau pour les Alternatives Forestières, France

#### **Small woodland keepers in the UK: difficulties and opportunities**

Paddy Cox, Keepers of Small Woods, United Kingdom

#### **The value of shooting and its relevance to forest biodiversity, social use and economics**

Ian Danby, British Association for Shooting and Conservation, United Kingdom

#### **Management Plans for two small woodlands: aimed benefits**

Michael Dower, United Kingdom

#### **Gemer region: forest owners association for countryside development**

Anna Figurova, Gemer region forest owners association, Slovakia

#### **Natura 2000 communication between stakeholders and share of close-to-nature forest management experiences**

Laszlo Galhidy, World Wildlife Fund Hungary

#### **The local dimension of local forestry and its benefits**

Stig Hansson, Hela Sverigeska Leva (*ALL Sweden shall Live*), Sweden

#### **The Earth Trust: working towards a sustainable future**

Kerry Lock, Earth Trust, United Kingdom

#### **A foundation to enhance the well-being of trees and landscapes**

Catherine Marquot, Toi l'arbre (*You, the tree*), France

#### **EU renewable energy policy and the pressure this is putting on forests, also EU climate policy and the link with forests**

Hannah Mowat, FERN, Belgium

#### **Wooden biomass in two municipalities in Serbia**

Dragan Roganovic, Ibar Development Association, Serbia

#### **Oxfordshire Woodfuel Programme's "Logs for Labour"**

Riki Therivel, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment, United Kingdom

#### **Developing Woodland Management in The National Forest, England**

Simon West, National Forest Company, United Kingdom

### Annex 4 Links

Biofuelwatch [www.biofuelwatch.org.uk](http://www.biofuelwatch.org.uk)

British Association for Shooting and Conservation [www.basc.org.uk](http://www.basc.org.uk)

Clinton Denon Estates...[www.clintondevon.com](http://www.clintondevon.com)

Confederation of Forest Industries [www.confor.org.uk](http://www.confor.org.uk)

Earth Trust [www.earthtrust.org.uk](http://www.earthtrust.org.uk)

EuCAN [www.eucan.org.uk](http://www.eucan.org.uk)  
 European Landscape Convention [www.coe.int/web/landscape](http://www.coe.int/web/landscape)  
 Exmoor National Park [www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk](http://www.exmoor-nationalpark.gov.uk)  
 FERN [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)  
 Forest Stewardship Council <https://us.fsc.org>  
 Forestry Commission [www.forestry.gov.uk](http://www.forestry.gov.uk)  
 Forum Synergies [www.forum-synergies.eu](http://www.forum-synergies.eu)  
 Global Forest Watch [www.globalforestwatch.org](http://www.globalforestwatch.org)  
 Milverton Sawmill [www.milverton-sawmill.com](http://www.milverton-sawmill.com)  
 National Trust [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)  
 Oxfordshire wood fuel programme [www.oxonwoodfuel.org.uk](http://www.oxonwoodfuel.org.uk)  
 Pixton Woodlands [www.pixtonwoodlands.co.uk](http://www.pixtonwoodlands.co.uk)  
 PROSILVA <https://www.prosilvaeurope.wordpress.com>  
 Réseau pour les Alternatives Forestière [www.alternativesforestieres.org/](http://www.alternativesforestieres.org/)  
 Royal Forestry Society [www.rfs.org.uk](http://www.rfs.org.uk)  
 Small Woodlands Association [www.smallwoods.org.uk](http://www.smallwoods.org.uk)  
 Swedish Forest Owners Organisation (Södra) [www.sodra.com](http://www.sodra.com)  
 The National Forest Company [www.nationalforest.org](http://www.nationalforest.org)  
 Woodland Trust [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

