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Brussels, 20 June 2024
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Dear Dr Bartsch,

Thank you for your letter of 15 April 2024, providing the demands of European municipal forest owners for the 2024 European elections. I take note of the points you raise in your letter.

The European Commission is fully engaged in the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy for 2030, whose aims are to overcome the significant challenges forests are confronted with and unlock the potential of forests for the future. The EU Forest Strategy recognises the central and multi-functional role of forests, and the contribution of foresters and the entire forest-based value chain for achieving by 2050 a sustainable and climate-neutral economy.

The European Commission is aware of the importance of taking into account and balancing all the environmental, economic and social functions delivered on by the forests. The challenge is to ensure forest resilience, to protect and restore forest biodiversity while at the same time, the availability of wood must be guaranteed, as well as the boost of non-wood forest-based economic activities to diversify local economies and jobs in rural areas.

As you know, the strategy promotes a strong forest bioeconomy, by addressing the sustainable supply of wood and the demand for bio-based products in downstream industries. It promotes long-lived uses of wood, such as in construction, and supports other uses of wood within sustainability boundaries. It also aims at diversifying local economies and job opportunities, for example through the promotion of non-wood forest products and services.

On bureaucracy and implementation of legislation, the European Commission has simplification very high in the agenda at the moment, as is shown by the CAP simplification package in order to cut red tape. Similar simplification concerns are of course in our mind as regards other policy areas.

Dr Christof Bartsch
Mayor of the town of Brilon
President of FECOF
Email: c.bartsch@brilon.de

In the EU Forest Strategy, the Commission proposed a new inclusive and coherent EU forest governance framework. At the level of stakeholders, i.e. civil society, forest owners and managers, industry and academia, the Commission built on the experience of the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork and the Working Group on Forest and Nature, and created one group. The newly formed Forest and Forestry Stakeholder Platform has a revised mission statement, broader membership and focus on the implementation of the new EU Forest Strategy.

Forest fires are also very high in the Commission's agenda. A number of tools are in place to prevent and respond to wildfires, including an Expert Group on Forest Fires to review forest fire trends and to determine adequate and effective responses.

The Common Agriculture Policy as well gives the possibility to Member States to support interventions dedicated to prevention and restoration of damage to forests, which includes damages from fires.

Under the Common Agriculture Policy, it is also possible for Member States to adopt interventions on training activities for primary producers.

Finally, please also take into consideration that the European Commission will review the EU Forest Strategy by 2025, as committed therein, to assess progress and whether further action is needed to meet its objectives.

Yours sincerely,



Janusz Wojciechowski

Electronically signed on 20/06/2024 15:29 (UTC+02) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121