

**COMMUNIQUE**

**UEAA meets with the « Forest Team » of the EU Commission Directorate General for Agriculture and Rural Development**

**(DG Agri)**

On 30 November some representatives of the UEAA had a digital meeting with Alfonso Gutierrez and his colleagues who deal with forestry issues in the Directorate General for Agriculture in the Commission. The UEAA was represented by professor Vilém Podrázský from the Czech Academy of Agricultural Sciences, professor Bernard Roman-Amat from the French Academy of Agriculture as well as Kerstin Niblaeus (Head of the group as member of the Steering Committee of UEAA) and professor Göran Örlander from the Swedish Academy of Agriculture and Forestry.

**The aim of the meeting was to underline and elaborate on the UEAA Position Paper regarding the New Forest Strategy of the EU Commission.**

The UEAA representatives underlined that they share the concern about biodiversity decline and the climate change and agree that the forests play an important role in mitigating these threats. However, they also reiterated the criticism in relation to the scientific basis of the strategy which is too limited, dealing mainly with climate and biodiversity aspects and not with the vast pool of forestry science available in the member states. Neither does it address economic aspects. It is also biased, « cherry picking » reports that support a political direction that has already been decided. The relevant information about forestry management is hardly found in the “top” scientific journals. Importance of forests in the biosphere and practical forest management are often two different worlds. In addition, a report from the EU Commission Joint Research Centre based on satellite images has been done using incorrect methods.

The differences between types of forests in the member states and the different natural and socio-economic conditions have not been sufficiently taken into account.

Thus the UEAA concludes that there is not a solid scientific base for requesting significant changes in forest management practices in the member states at this stage. The UEAA group explained that there is a vast pool of scientific knowledge in forestry science in the member academies of UEAA and that UEAA would like to put this at the disposal of the Commission for sound science-based decision. The UEAA group had a constructive discussion thanks to the DG Agri colleagues and all agreed to meet again in a few months time.

**Tbilisi, 6 December 2021**