

**Joint Meeting
of the Executive Committee of the FAO European Forestry Commission (EFC)
and the Bureau of the ECE Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry (COFFI)**

20 May, 15.00 to 16.30 (CET), virtual

Minutes

The Joint Bureaux met virtually on 30 October 2020 from 15:00 – 16:30 CET via Microsoft Teams.

This report presents the decisions taken by the Bureaux¹, which was attended by the following members:

EFC Executive Committee:

- Ms. Lyubov Polyakova (Ukraine), Acting Chair

COFFI Bureau:

- Mr. Guy Robertson (USA), Chair
- Ms. Maria Sokolenko (Russia), Vice-Chair

Mr. Kenan Kilic (Turkey) and Mr. Rob Busink (the Netherlands), both EFC Vice-Chairs,

Mr. Vardan Melikyan (Armenia), resigned from his vice-chairing position.

From the Secretariat were present:

- Mr. Gianluca Sambucini, Chief, ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, COFFI Secretary
- Mr. Florian Steierer, ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section, Secretary of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management (JWP)
- Ms. Alicja Kazprzak, Forestry Officer, ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section
- Ms. Leonie Meier, ECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section

On invitation, Mr Matthias Dieter (Germany), Chair of the Joint ECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management, provided his comments prior to the meeting as observer.

The Bureaux meeting was chaired by Ms. Lyubov Polyakova and Mr. Guy Robertson.

¹ Bureaux refers to the members of the Bureau of the Committee on Forests and Forest Industry and the Executive Committee of the European Forestry Commission meeting jointly.

Agenda item	Information provided and discussion	Decisions taken	Action required
1. Adoption of the agenda	The Chair of COFFI opened the Bureaux meeting and welcomed the Bureaux. She introduced the provisional agenda and asked the Bureaux members for its adoption.	The agenda was adopted without changes.	None

<p>2. Matters related to the 78th session of the Committee on Forests and the Forest Industry, 4-6 November 2020</p>	<p>Secretariat presents plan for evaluation for 2022 and proposes the following theme which was discussed internally by the Secretariat: “Assessment of the relevance of the Forest Products Annual Market Review to the needs of member States and challenges in the forest sector”. This corresponds with recent changes in funding for this particular activity and would benefit from feedback in order to stream resources. It allows those benefiting from the product to gather their feedback. Evaluation is normally done within a month or two, and this exercise would allow Secretariat to assess how to adapt output to resources available.</p> <p>This year FPAMR was produced without additional funding and only with existing staff resources. It would be interesting to analyze how it compared with previously funded versions and how well it is received.</p> <p>Bureau members were pleased to see the FPAMR published and the JFSQ developed which is considered extremely useful. They welcomed the proposal to assess the relevance of the FPAMR, noting that the evaluation can also focus on the interface between data and analytical work.</p> <p>Secretariat updated the Bureaux about the Strategy on Landscape Restoration and Greening Infrastructure in CCA, which was developed by eight countries in the Caucasus and Central Asia. A draft document was developed and will be presented at COFFI. The purpose of the Strategy is to help countries that are interested to reach a common understanding of terminology, strategies and a platform for cooperation. Will be further developed and discussed and could be submitted to the Joint Session next year.</p> <p>Bureaux members thanked the Secretariat for this clarification. RF noted that draft strategy was never discussed with the JB. Asks for greater involvement of the JB in this process. It would be worthwhile to develop this strategy further, especially in terms of infrastructure, where mandates and action areas of COFFI should be clearly marked. How will member States further encouraged to develop this strategy, and what will be the role of the Committee?</p> <p>Secretariat clarified that the process so far has only involved countries that are interested in the Strategy. Right now, this process could be developed into a more structured procedure with a timeline leading up to the next Joint Session. The role of the Committee is to recognize the work done by the countries (both in terms of efforts to restore forest landscapes and on coming up with a draft strategy). The</p>	<p>All bureaux members in agreement that the assessment of the relevance of FPAMR is suited as evaluation theme for 2022.</p>	
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	<p>Committee could further encourage all interested MS to further engage in the process, e.g. by organizing a light negotiation process.</p> <p>Bureaux members clarified that strategy should not be adopted at COFFI, but rather considered for further development.</p> <p>Secretariat notes that COFFI is not recommending anything but rather encouraging MS to further develop the Strategy and submit it for final approval by Joint Session if also embraced by development of new IPoW.</p> <p>Bureau members suggests for the Secretariat to provide some background on the process, how it was developed and what kind of consequences it has for the work of the Committee. The draft decisions are slightly different to those sent out by the missions, so an updated version should be shared with countries beforehand. Secretariat clarifies that background document ECE/TIM/2020/3 contains useful information about the Strategy.</p> <p>Secretariat presented the outcomes of the FAO Committee on Forestry. One of the main outcomes was the release of the State of the World's Forests 2020 report, and conclusions on integration of forestry work into biodiversity mainstreaming. In addition, OneHEalth – a joint initiative between FAO and WHO aims at linking animal health to human health and pandemics.</p> <p>Bureaux members reflected on the interesting experience of running the meeting online. Special thanks to Christine for supporting the COFO chair. Elections for EFC could not take place so current composition of the EFC bureau will remain until the next Joint Session. At COFO it was also decided to raise the profile of regional commissions, which will have an impact on the Joint work with COFFI, e.g. on the preparation of technical sessions at UNFF.</p> <p>Bureau members noted some changes in the COFFI agenda, which the Secretariat resolved. Timing for the session has been reduced from 3h to 2h.</p> <p>Regarding the drafting committee for the market discussion, Secretariat clarifies that participants will be invited to a teams meeting. Bureau members request that participants who cannot attend the meeting provide written statements.</p>		
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<p>3. Funding gaps and thematic priorities for 2021</p>	<p>Secretariat notes that funding gaps are listed in the budget table, and highlights that each work area has distinct total costs. Work areas 1, 2 and 4 require significant funding, as specified. Secretariat invites Bureaux members to indicate their thematic priorities and possible funding contributions.</p> <p>Secretariat notes that a number of regular budget resources have been reduced or eliminated, but the work area outputs have remained stable. COVID-19 has also led to changes in implementation, but overall a decline in funding can be observed.</p> <p>Constraints should be voiced during COFFI</p>		<p>(input by Florian – Leonie and Gianluca, please check and confirm...)</p> <p>Secretariat to bring up the topic during the COFFI session next week in the appropriate item.</p>
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<p>4. Joint UNECE/FAO Working Party on Forest Statistics, Economics and Management</p>	<p>The Secretariat will briefly outline the planned timeline for developing the draft annotated agenda for the meeting that is currently planned to be held from 23-25 March 2020. The Annotated Agenda will be shared with the JB at the end of this year. The deadline for finalizing the annotated agenda is 16 December 2020. An important topic will be COVID-19 and the Outlook Study, which will be published at the end of this year.</p> <p>Bureau members are invited to discuss possible issues for the session. No decision is expected for item since this is only the beginning of a consultative process with bureau members that is expected to mainly take place in the second half of November 2020 and the first half of December 2020.</p> <p>Matthias asks if JWP is expected to comment on the strategic review process and the new IPoW. Provided the Outlook Study is available, it would be good to discuss the results especially with regard to different national policy approaches.</p> <p>Bureau members stressed it would be interesting to have a review of the results of the outlook study. COVID-19 restrictions still apply and are likely to continue in the new year, which is why hybrid setting would be preferable. Maria requests to have all three languages also in informal meetings (??).</p> <p>Maria asked the secretariat to ensure that all the meeting is held in line with UNECE EXCOM provisions for official decisions and meetings during COVID-19 are respected.</p> <p>Maria further requested the secretariat to organize the meeting as hybrid meeting and ensure that the meeting will be held in all three official languages.</p> <p>Maria, Luba and Guy (check?) agreed the it would be good to discuss the outcomes of the Forest Sector Outlook Study as well as the Strategic Review of the Integrated Programme of Work.</p> <p>21 March is international day of forests on the theme of health, which should also be considered during the JWP.</p>		<p>(input by Florian – Leonie and Gianluca, please check and confirm...)</p> <p>Secretariat to further consult with the joint Bureaux of COFFI and EFC as well as the chair and vice-chair of the JWPFSEM about the development of the annotated agenda.</p> <p>Consensus that Forest Sector Outlook Study</p>
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<p>4. Joint Session of COFFI and EFC in autumn 2021</p>	<p>Bureaux members – overarching themes to address during the next session. Long term concern for U.S. is disturbance processes related to climate change and other global change processes.</p> <p>It is foreseen that discussions will cover COFFI (1day), EFC (1day) and Joint Matters (1 day). There will be another European Forest Week. So far, there is an offer from Turkey to host the Joint Session.</p> <p>Request to Secretariat to think about possible topics for COFFI/EFC and Joint matters. The next JB meeting would be good time to continue this discussion. Query to JB could be sent out in advance to see if there is interest for topics. A link to the theme of the IDF could be considered and to general outputs and publications for next year.</p>		<p>Secretariat to prepare outline of topics for consideration of the JB before the next meeting of the JB.</p>
<p>6. Strategic Review Process and new IPoW 2022-2025</p>	<p>Secretariat highlights that roadmap had to be slightly adapted due to COVID-19. During COFFI, there will be a presentation on the adjustment of the roadmap. The Secretariat noted that work on ‘circular bio-economy’ needs further consideration. The work is ongoing in the Secretariat, including a study to be presented during the Joint Session next year. A project on the classification of wood waste is ongoing, including a short study paper and a classification database.</p> <p>Bureaux advised Secretariat to think about proposing practical results, not just presenting studies. In addition, clarification of terms is needed. Chair during COFFI should explain this issue to participants and invite countries with different positions to voice their opinions. Conduct roundtable or chair advisory group to discuss this particular term and how to integrate it in the new IPoW. Feedback gathered during COFFI session will be important.</p> <p>The U.S. follows the approach of keeping the concept vague and adding qualifiers like “circular economy and related sustainability concepts”. It would be interesting to see if other ECE countries share the same concerns. RF shares concerns with U.S. After COFFI, a discussion during the JWP could help advance these issues.</p>		<p>Secretariat to conduct a survey to understand interest of countries.</p>

<p>5. Date and place of next meeting</p>	<p>The Chair moves to a discussion about the date and place of the next Joint Bureaux meeting and proposes another meeting in February or March. Bureau members note that it depends on decision making procedures during JWP. An earlier date is preferred and a decision about the next date could be taken after COFFI.</p> <p>Secretariat notes that the first week of March would be most preferable.</p> <p>An informal meeting in January might be sensible.</p>	<p>The next meeting will be held in the first week of March, unless otherwise decided after the COFFI session.</p>	
<p>7. Any other business</p>	<p>None.</p>		