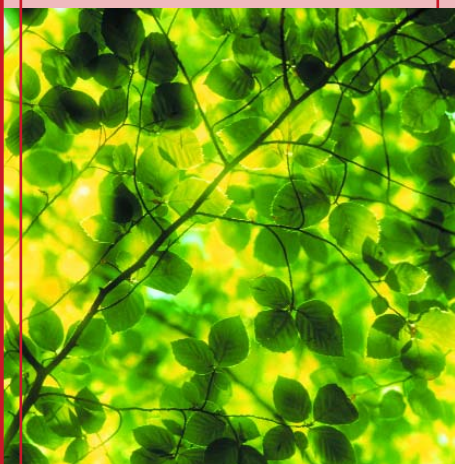




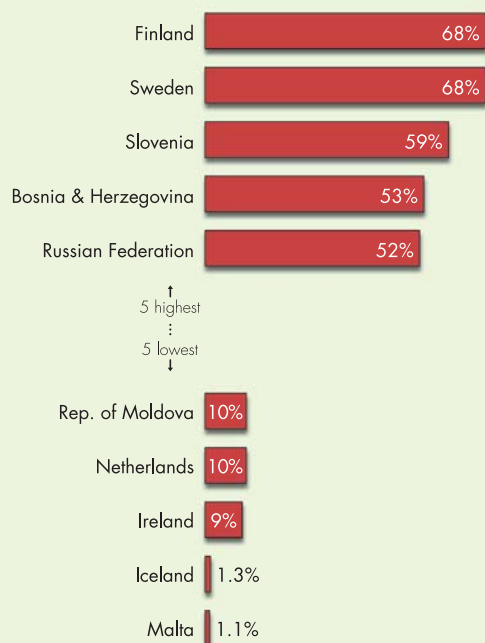
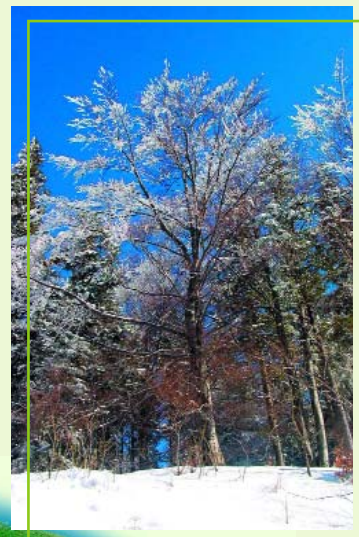
4th MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE



Europe's Forests in the Spotlight

Europe's forests in the spotlight

Talking about European forests means talking about almost half of Europe's land area. On the occasion of the Living Forest Summit in Vienna, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) presents up-to-date information on the state of Europe's forests, comprising data from 40 European countries of the MCPFE. These data were collected in co-operation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.



Countries with highest and lowest proportions of forest area in relation to their total land area

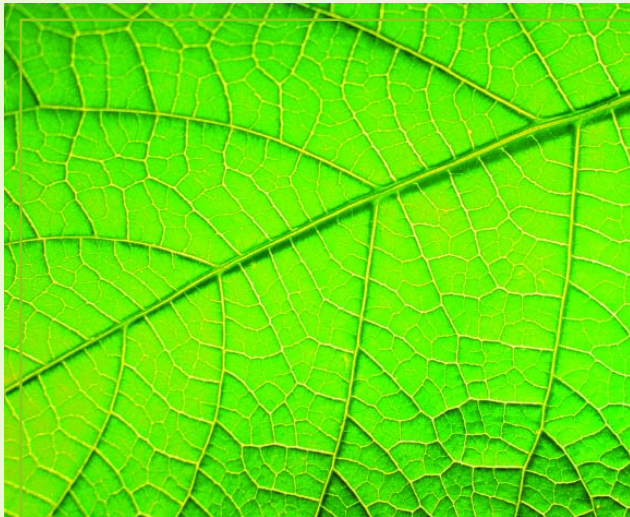
Focus on forest resources

Almost half of Europe is forested

Europe's forests cover around 1 000 million hectares. This is about 30 times the size of Poland. Presently, the proportion of forests in relation to Europe's total land area is 47%. The largest forest area is located in the Russian Federation, making up 81% of Europe's forests. There are 1.42 hectares (equivalent in size to about two football grounds) of forest per capita in Europe.

Forest area continues to increase

Contrary to widespread opinion, Europe's forest area is increasing steadily. It is growing annually by 0.08%, which is about the size of Cyprus. In the context of the current debate on carbon sequestration of forests, this also means that more carbon is stored annually in forests.



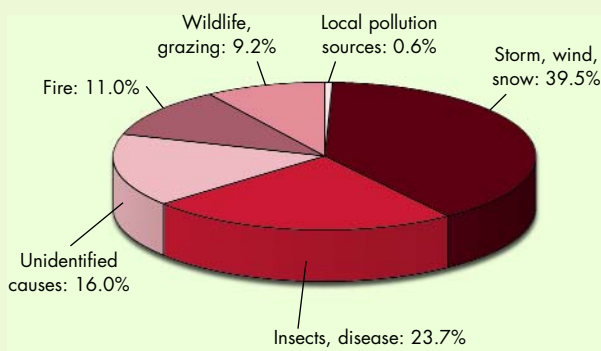
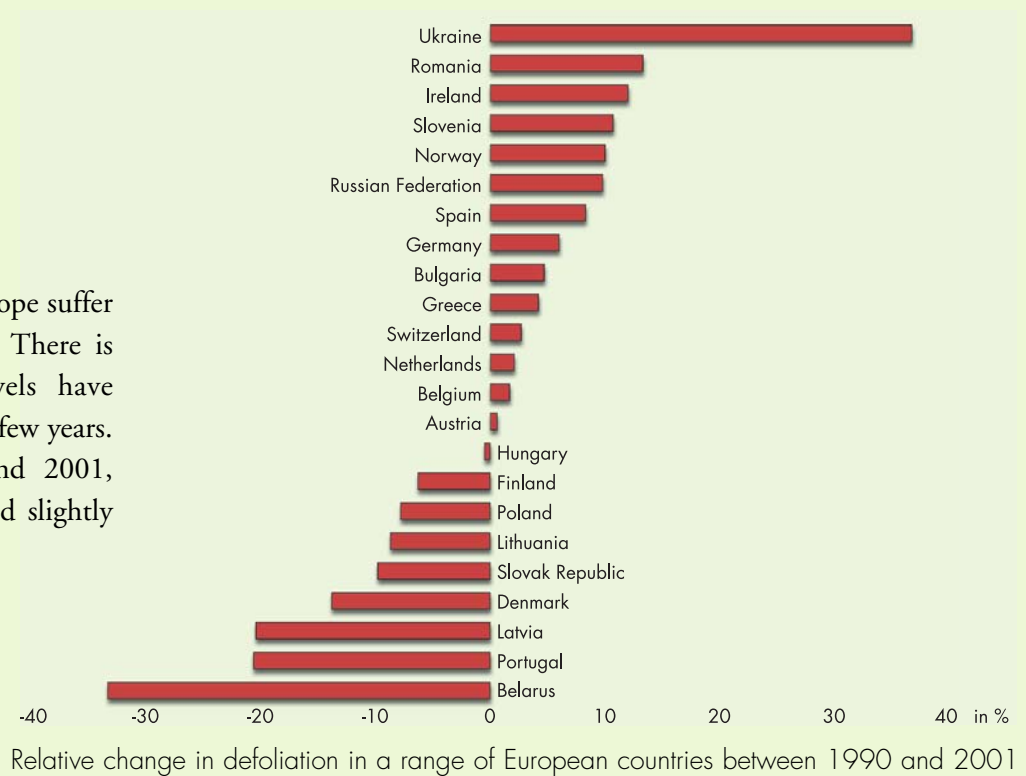
Focus on forest health & vitality

Deposition of air pollutants has been stabilised, but at high level

The broad debate on forest die-back in the late 1980s triggered efforts to reduce emissions of air pollutants which did lead to a reduction of sulphur, nitrogen oxides and ammonia depositions in most European countries during the 1990s. Despite these efforts, the deposition of air pollutants is still relatively high.

Defoliation is still a problem

One-fifth of the trees in Europe suffer defoliation to some degree. There is evidence that damage levels have begun to stabilise in the last few years. Even so, between 1990 and 2001, levels of defoliation increased slightly overall in Europe.



Damage to forests by various damaging agents. More than 10 million hectares of forests are reported to be damaged.

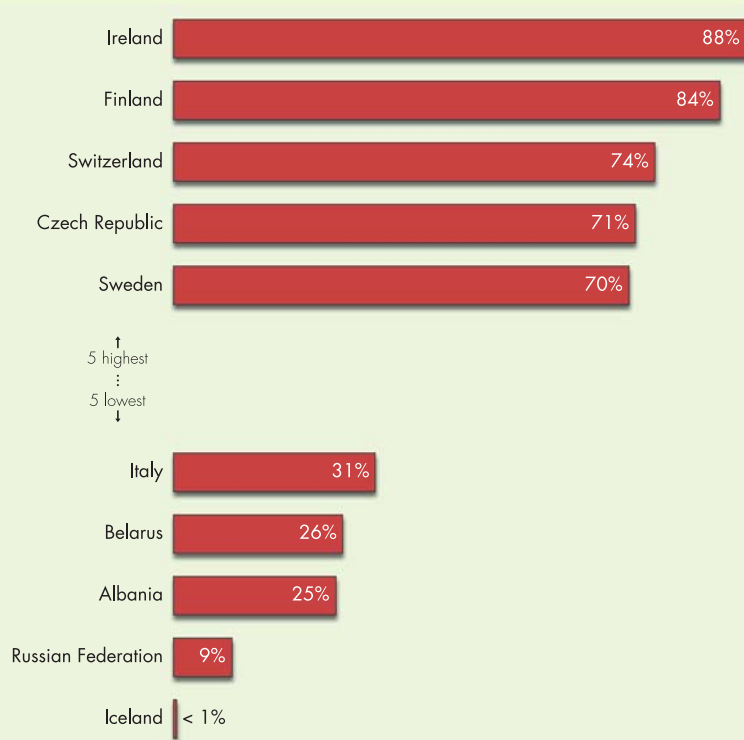
Storms and insects also cause considerable damage

Storms and insect calamities also have the potential to damage forests severely. Together they account for more than 60% of damage to forest areas. For example, in 1999, cyclone "Lothar" caused the highest damage ever recorded in Europe, amounting to almost 200 million cubic metres of merchantable timber. Fire is the most damaging factor in the Mediterranean countries. In Europe as a whole it is responsible for 11% of the damaged forest area.

Focus on productive functions of forests

73 cubic metres of wood grow per second

The annual increment of wood in Europe's forests amounts to 2 287 million cubic metres. This equates to 73 cubic metres per second. Increment is lower in Northern and Southern parts of Europe because of less favourable climatic conditions.



European countries with highest and lowest annual fellings in per cent of the annual increment

Increment of wood is much higher than fellings

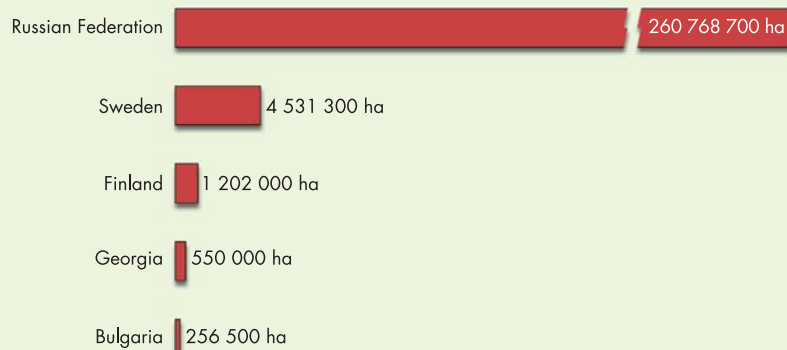
In Europe, only about 27% of the increment is felled annually. If the Russian Federation is excluded, then about half of the increment is extracted. Altogether, wood produced in Europe (logs, fuelwood and pulp wood) amounts to nearly 500 million cubic metres per year.



Non-wood forest products and services are important

Game and Christmas trees are the non-wood forest products with the highest values. Mushrooms, berries, cork and other non-wood forest products are also an important source of income in some European countries. Marketed forest services such as hunting licences, fishing licences, managed outdoor recreation areas or trails for mountain biking are also becoming more and more important.

Focus on forest biological diversity



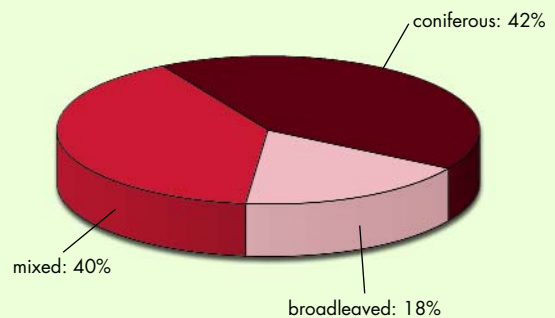
Five European countries with the largest forest area undisturbed by man

70% of Europe's forests are semi-natural

More than two-thirds of all forests are semi-natural, while 27% are undisturbed by man. Larger areas of virgin forests are located in Eastern and Northern parts of Europe, especially in the Russian Federation. Plantations play a minor role in Europe as a whole, covering only 3% of the forest area.

Mixed forests in Europe amount to 40%

Due to climatic conditions, most coniferous forests are located in Scandinavia. Countries like Austria, Germany, Poland and Turkey also have relatively high proportions of coniferous forests. 40% of Europe's forest area is covered by mixed forests. Nevertheless, mixed forests predominate only in the forests of the Czech Republic and Malta. Broadleaved forests account for almost 20% of Europe's forest area.



Proportions of mixed forests, coniferous forests and broadleaved forests in Europe

About 12% of forest areas in Europe are protected

Almost 12% of Europe's forest area is designated to conserve forest biological and landscape diversity. While there are large protected forest areas in Northern and Eastern Europe with little human intervention, most of the protected forests are managed to actively conserve biological diversity.



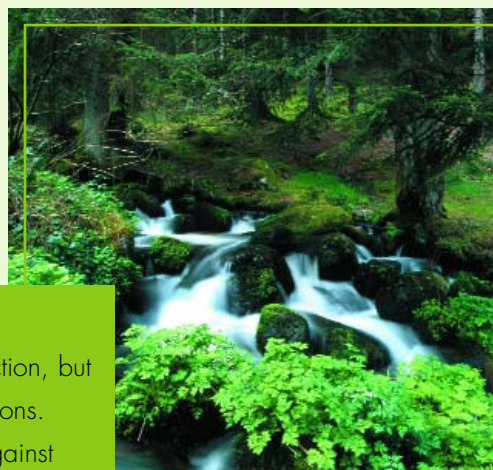
Focus on protective functions of forests

Protective forests cover about 12%

About 12% of the forest area is designated as protective forest. On 81% of these areas the management is directed to protect soil, water or other ecosystem functions, while the remaining areas are mainly managed to protect infrastructure.

Protective forests

Forests are not only subject to protection, but also provide diverse protective functions. They protect water resources, soil against erosion, infrastructure like roads and settlements as well as managed natural resources (e.g. orchards). In addition, protective forests ensure other ecosystem functions like clean air and, last but not least, the protection of humans.



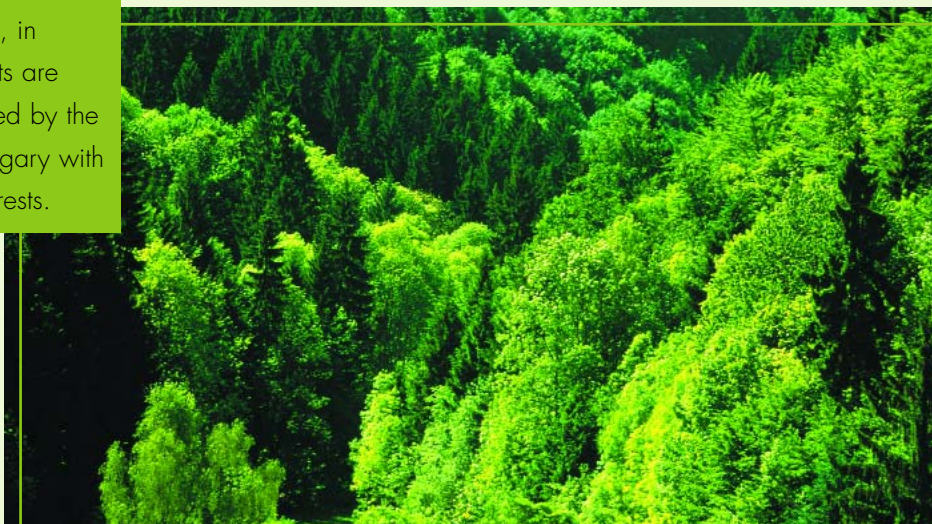
Focus on other socio-economic functions & conditions

More forest area in Europe is in public hands

Privatisation

In recent years, the Central and Eastern European countries have experienced significant changes regarding forests and forestry. Effects of this transition process include, inter alia, restitution of forests and privatisation. The range and speed of these changes is very diverse in the individual countries. For instance, in Slovenia about two-third of forests are already privately owned, followed by the Slovak Republic, Latvia and Hungary with more than one-third of private forests.

In Europe, 91% of the forest area is owned by public bodies – excluding the Russian Federation, it is slightly more than half. The proportions of public and privately owned forest area varies considerably between individual European countries. For instance, in Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Malta, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine 100% of forest area is in public hands. In contrast, private ownership predominates in countries such as Portugal (92%), Austria (82%), Sweden (80%) and Spain (78%).



There are about 9 million private forest owners in Europe

In Europe, there are about 90 000 public forest holdings in contrast to 8.9 million private owners. Excluding the Russian Federation, the average size of public holdings is about 1 300 hectares (including the Russian Federation 11 000 hectares), while private holdings on average comprise 13 hectares.



Employment in forestry in some European countries

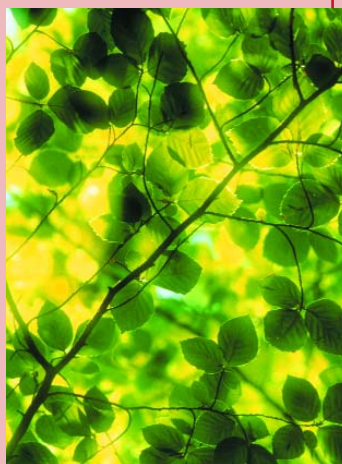
Europe's forestry provides more than a million jobs

Forestry provides 1.36 million jobs in Europe (full time equivalents). Turkey has the highest number of employees, followed by the Russian Federation, Poland and Germany. Mirroring labour market trends, employment rates in forestry have fallen by 22% in Europe over the last decade. A similar downward trend can be observed in the wood industry as well as in the pulp and paper industry.

Public access to forests is free almost everywhere

Ownership patterns and property rights have impacts on public accessibility to forests, but regulations are quite diverse. In most European countries publicly owned forests are generally free for access. Access to private forests is widespread but not universal.





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