

World Youth Skills Days

IFSA interviews for FOREST EUROPE

List of questions:

- What did FE do to support you in developing soft skills or organizational skills?
- What did you learn when working together with FOREST EUROPE?
- Which skills help you now to ease your job search (or writing Master Theses or...)
- What does FOREST EUROPE do to include the youth actively?
- Where did you gain personally when working together with FOREST EUROPE?

Volodymyr Kravets

- What did FOREST EUROPE do to support you in developing soft skills or organizational skills?

As the Head of the FOREST EUROPE Sub-Commission in IFSA, I am responsible for communication between the two organizations. This allows me to learn a lot from the FOREST EUROPE process and its representatives. I had the chance to participate in the High-Level Policy Dialogue, as well as two Expert Level Meetings, and am currently preparing to join the 9th Ministerial Conference.

Through these experiences, I had an opportunity to see how the political dialogue and negotiations on the international level are happening, and even participated directly, representing IFSA. I would like to highlight that FOREST EUROPE, while providing these opportunities, also offers strong capacity support. With this support, we can communicate our ideas and interests more effectively, developing strong suggestions that can have a positive impact.

Beyond that, I am leading the IFSA Youth Task Force, working on the youth position paper, which will be presented at the FOREST EUROPE 9th Ministerial Conference in October 2024, in Bonn, Germany. As part of the process, we organized two youth consultation workshops, where we collected youth views on the future of European forest policies. This has given us a practical experience of negotiation facilitation among youth. And the following writing process will further broaden our knowledge of policy development.

- Which skills help you now to ease your job search (or writing Master Theses or...)

As a second-year Master's student, the question of the job search is extremely relevant to me. The communication skills acquired through the IFSA position and network developed within FOREST EUROPE are particularly helpful. Participation in the processes provides an overview of the political trends and potential fields of demand for forestry specialists. **The skills and knowledge gained in policy development and negotiations open new opportunities and give insights into what actual work can be like.**

I would also like to emphasize the FOREST EUROPE webinar series, which among many topics, provides an overview of Green Forest Jobs. The different and sometimes unexpected career paths presented at the webinar show how interesting and inspiring the work in the forest sector can be.

Lea Arbogast

- Which skills help you now to ease your job search (or writing Master Theses or...)

I am currently writing my Bachelor's Thesis about youth integration in environmental political processes - so FOREST EUROPE made it possible for me to gain more first-hand experiences in this topic which I'm really thankful for. Through this event (Expert Level Meeting) I learned to be less afraid of these kinds of political processes and people that take part in them as they always seemed a bit "far-away" but I learned that everyone attending is only human and learns together, regardless of age.

- What does FOREST EUROPE do to include the youth actively?

As youth we often hear sentences like: "it is your future." - especially regarding questions about the environment. This can be quite frustrating because most of us aren't in a position to really influence that future yet. **Through the youth task force, FOREST EUROPE gave us (as in "the youth") the platform to have an active voice in our own future on a serious/equal ground.** I am really thankful for the work they are doing and I'm looking forward to being a part of future events.

Nikolina Mencin

- What did you learn when working together with FOREST EUROPE?

While working with FOREST EUROPE, I learned about the role it plays in promoting sustainable forest management across Europe. **I gained insights into the importance of collaboration, skilled workforces, and the role of forests in achieving a sustainable and climate-neutral economy.** Overall, my experience with FOREST EUROPE provided valuable knowledge about sustainable forest management, policy dialogues, and the evolving context of forest management.

- Where did you gain personally when working together with FOREST EUROPE?

Working with FOREST EUROPE I gained insights into various countries' approaches to document signing and the impact of such documents on forest management practices across Europe. I gained experience in High-level Policy Dialogues and effective communication within a pan-European context. This experience enriched my understanding of forest governance and sustainability, equipping me to contribute meaningfully to the field.

Raghav Sharma

- What does FOREST EUROPE do to include the youth actively?

FOREST EUROPE is actively involving youth in meaningful ways. One key initiative is their inclusion of young people in ELM (Expert Level Meeting) participation. Additionally, FOREST EUROPE collaborates with IFSA to gather youth perspectives on the importance of their involvement in forest policy across Europe.

To achieve this, FOREST EUROPE has assembled a team of six young individuals from various European countries who have conducted workshops to gather insights from young foresters. These workshops focus on youth perspectives on FOREST EUROPE's work, particularly in sustainable forest management and Green Forest Jobs. The findings from these workshops will be presented at the Ministerial Conference in Bonn.

This initiative offers significant benefits. It motivates young people by providing professional development opportunities and exposure to high-level discussions. It also allows FOREST EUROPE and its member countries to gain valuable input from the youth, helping shape the future of Europe's forests based on the visions and ideas of the next generation.

- What did you gain personally when working together with FOREST EUROPE?

Participating in ELM (Expert Level Meeting) through FOREST EUROPE has been an incredible opportunity for personal and professional growth. Engaging directly with ministerial representatives from various European countries and witnessing negotiations on crucial documents has been an enriching experience. Observing the roles that different countries and organizations play in these discussions provided me with invaluable insights into the field of forestry.

This experience allowed me to learn from experts, deepening my understanding of the importance of forests and the dedication of countries towards sustainable management. It significantly enhanced my knowledge and boosted my confidence. I greatly appreciate the platform FOREST EUROPE provided for youth involvement through

IFSA's participation. Being represented in high-level political conferences not only builds our confidence but also motivates us to work harder towards our goals.

Moreover, these meetings are highly inspiring and offer valuable opportunities to network with professionals from across Europe, further expanding our connections and enhancing our ability to contribute meaningfully to the forestry sector.

Alina Lehikoinen

- Where did you gain personally when working together with FOREST EUROPE?

Working with FOREST EUROPE has made me feel like a true non-dismissible equal in the forestry field. This has meant opportunities for leadership while having a space to learn and ask questions with no judgement. **FOREST EUROPE values youth as collaborators and gives those looking for it an opportunity to lead.** This collaboration has made me more confident in myself and encouraged me to push myself and try new things.

This kind of working environment that FOREST EUROPE has created has made me grow as a person and a professional, but it also has made me improve my other working environments. I have tried to develop my working environments in a collaborative, respectful and encouraging direction, which hopefully carries forward and encourages even more young people to seek out these growing opportunities to try new things.

- Which skills help you now to ease your job search (or writing Master Theses or...)

With FOREST EUROPE, I have been able to connect theory with practice. Although I feel like my university education has given me a good understanding of the workings of international forest policy, it is still a different eye-opening experience sitting in the middle of the room where those policies are debated and decided on. Thanks to FOREST EUROPE actively including youth in its work and the last Expert Level Meeting, I have more grounds to claim my expertise and have something to show for it. It feels especially important going forward and transitioning from university studies to work life.