





# Connecting knowledge to action

3 September 2018

To the Members and member organisations of EFI

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Dear Colleagues,

Each summer we hear terrible news about forest fires from across the world, a trend that has continued this year with the especially tragic news from Greece. Unfortunately, more are expected to come unless we put forward a long-term strategy to address their root causes. Last May, during a **Thinkforest event in Madrid on forest fires**, experts highlighted that forest fires will become a European problem and not only a concern for southern Europe. This summer confirms that. On 23 July there were simultaneously forest fires ranging from the fire-prone areas of the Peloponnese or Algarve to the lush forests of Central Europe and the vast boreal forests around the Baltic Sea.

But European forests are also affected by other natural disturbances, from pests and insect damage to storm events, that can have profound impacts on our forests and livelihoods. The increasing problem of bark beetle outbreaks is a good example. Natural disturbance regimes have intensified during recent decades due to climate change, but also due to land-use and forestry changes. Policies and management practices to ensure the resilience of our forests are urgently needed. Science-based information for media reporting is also crucial to prevent misinformation of the public.

In this context, a year ago the EFI Resilience Programme started **the SURE project** - SUSTaining and Enhancing RESilience of European Forests - to tackle these challenges with a transnational and transdisciplinary European cooperation approach. The project, which is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, also aims to establish a European Forest Risk Facility. A Facility like this is needed because the scale of natural disturbances we are experiencing in Europe can only be addressed by effective and synergistic European-level cooperation. The Facility will follow a 'connect-collect-exchange' principle to support and facilitate transnational knowledge exchanges on different natural disturbances (which are increasingly interrelated), between and within science, practice and policy. However, to realize the full potential and impact of such a Facility we need the support and commitment of our Member countries. We need to react transnationally to a problem that does not have borders. To do that we need the commitment of as many of our Member Countries as possible. In that sense, I also would like to thank the Norwegian Ministry of Agriculture and Food for the support we have received to start up the Facility. A long-term structurally built problem like the one we are facing requires a long-term knowledge-informed answer. It is time to bring knowledge to action!

During the EFI Annual Conference in Sardinia later this month, we will discuss this as well as many other developments. Please, don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to receive more

information on the above initiative.

More information on the Annual Conference and registration is available [here](#).

With my best wishes for an inspiring autumn!

Marc Palahí

Director

