

ERIAFF Network
European Regions for Innovation
in Agriculture, Food and Forestry



Brussels, 21 March 2016

To the attention of

- the President of the European Commission, Mr Jean-Claude JUNCKER
- the Vice-President Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness, Mr Jyrki KATAINEN
- the EU Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Phil HOGAN
- the EU Commissioner for Environment, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Mr Karmenu VELLA
- the EU Commissioner for Research, Innovation and Science, Mr Carlos MOEDAS
- the EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, Ms Corina CRETU
- the EU Commissioner for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, Ms Elzbieta BIENKOWSKA
- the EU Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy, Mr Miguel ARIAS CANETE
- the President of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Markku MAKKULA
- the Chair of the ENVE Commission of the Committee of the Regions, Mr Francesco PIGLIARU
- the Chair of the NAT Commission of the Committee of the Regions, Ms Francina ARMENGOL
- the Chair of the section Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment (NAT) of the European Economic and Social Committee, Mr Brendan BURNS
- the Council of the European Union, General Secretariat, Directorate B1: Agriculture (SCA – Special Committee on Agriculture), Director BLIZKOVSKY Petr
- the Council of the European Union, General Secretariat, Directorate B2: Fisheries, Food chain and Veterinary questions, Director ARPIO Marta
- the Permanent Representations of Member States to the EU:

Austria	Germany	Poland
Belgium	Greece	Portugal
Bulgaria	Hungary	Romania
Croatia	Ireland	Slovakia
Cyprus	Italy	Slovenia
Czech Republic	Latvia	Spain
Denmark	Lithuania	Sweden
Estonia	Luxembourg	United Kingdom
Finland	Malta	
France	the Netherlands	

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Dear President,
Dear Vice-President,
Dear Commissioners,
Dear Ambassadors,
Dear Directors and Chairs,

Forests and the forest-based sector play a major role in the EU bio-economy policy, and the EU Forest Strategy testifies the strategic importance of this sector. Innovation will be crucial to maximize the benefits forests and wood can provide for society and the economy. The European Innovation Partnership Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP AGRI) specifically addresses this issue and offers a framework for supporting innovation in forestry.

We are very glad to submit to your attention the main outcomes of the second workshop **“INFORM-PRIORITIZE-COLLABORATE: COOPERATION OF REGIONS ON INNOVATION IN FOREST MANAGEMENT, USE OF WOOD AND FOREST-RELATED SERVICES”** which took place on January 29th, 2016, in Brussels.

It aimed at supporting European regions in cooperating on concrete innovation actions in the forestry sector and to connect potential stakeholders around Operational Groups within the EIP AGRI.

The event was co-organised by the ERIAFF Network (Network of European Regions for Innovation in Agriculture, Food and Forestry), EFI (the European Forest Institute), CEPF (Confederation of European Forest Owners), EUSTAFOR (European State Forest Association), EUROMONTANA (European Association of Mountain Areas), COPA (European Farmers) and COGECA (European Agri-cooperatives), and ERRIN (European Regions for Research and Innovation Network).

The workshop fostered a fruitful debate among relevant actors for forest innovation (forest owners and managers, advisory services, management authorities, public administrators, researchers). It demonstrated the high interest of many European Regions in both the contribution of forestry to their development and its potential for their research and innovation smart specialisation strategies (RIS3). A number of promising innovative approaches for forestry and forest management were presented and discussed. Despite the great innovation potential in the forestry sector and the high interest in regions to tap on it, only very slow progress in the establishment of EIP AGRI Operational Groups (OGs) on forest topics was reported. The first such OGs are expected to start their activities by end of 2016 or beginning of 2017. In many EU Member States no OGs on forestry are foreseen for the moment in their Rural Development Programmes; knowledge in the forestry practice on the opportunities they offer to support innovation is often low. To better harness the high interest and potential for innovation in the forestry sector at regional level, the supporting EU programmes have to be better communicated and used at Member State level.

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A more detailed documentation on the workshop is available on the event webpage:
http://www.efi.int/portal/capacity_building/sharing_knowledge/forest_innovation_workshop_2016/

We really hope that the results can contribute to improve and further develop the European policies and actions devoted to forests and forestry, as they represent an important environmental, social and economic resource for Europe.

Harnessing the experience collected with this workshop, we are available for any collaboration you may wish to promote innovation in the forestry sector.

With kind regards,

Marco REMASCHI, Regional Minister for Agriculture of Tuscany Region and ERIAFF coordinator
Marc PALAHI, Director of EFI
Aljoscha REQUARDT, Secretary General of CEPF
Piotr BORKOWSKI, Executive Director of EUSTAFOR
Juan Andres GUTIÉRREZ LAZPITA, President of EUROMONTANA
Pekka PESONEN, Secretary General of COPA-COGECA
Richard TUFFS, Director of ERRIN