

Balancing biodiversity and forest management

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The interaction between biodiversity, forest management and policies like Natura 2000 was discussed 'on location' on 13 October, when ThinkForest participants gathered in the Sonian Forest near Brussels.

Patrick Huvenne and Dirk Raes from the Management of the Sonian Forest gave a short tour of part of the 4,500 ha forest, offering participants some practical insights into the challenges and trade-offs between managing the forest for recreation, biodiversity and production.



A 'classroom in a forest'

Daniel Kraus and Andreas Schuck from EFICIENT presented the work of the [Integrate+ project](#), and gave a hands-on demonstration of the Sonian Forest Marteloscope. They explained the marteloscope concept (a training site of 1 hectare of forest in which every tree is numbered, mapped and recorded) and showed how with evaluation and simulation software, you are able to carry out virtual tree selection exercises. These allow you to apply, compare and discuss different management goals – for example focusing on economic or biodiversity value – making the marteloscope a useful training and calibration tool.

Natura 2000 – challenges and solutions

Georg Winkel from EFI looked at the conflicts, challenges and possible policy solutions for the implementation of Natura 2000 in managed forests. The challenges included balancing conservation and wood production, the participation of stakeholders, climate change, funding and integration with other policies. In a lively discussion with the audience, Georg explored five potential policy solution pathways, including reinforcing the ecological, social and economic rationales, and working towards an integrated European land use and conservation policy. However, he pointed out that it is a long-term process, and that policy learning needed to be improved and facilitated across the 28 EU Member States.

Further information

Lauri Hetemäki, Assistant Director, European Forest Institute, tel. +358 (0)10 773 4316

The event was part of the ThinkForest Science-Policy in Action Day, which took place in Brussels on 13 October. The day brought together around 100 scientists, policymakers and stakeholders to network and discuss the role of forests.

Photos: Simon Pugh