



## **Summary report of the Commission Working Group on Forest Reproductive Material**

**Vienna (AT), 8-9 MAY 2019**

Chairperson: Ms Diana Charels

Thirty-eight participants from twenty-one (BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PL, SI, SK, FI, and UK) out of 28 Member States participated in the Commission Working Group on forest reproductive material. The aim of the meeting was to discuss ongoing forestry-related issues at European Commission level and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) level.

### **1. General overview of forest activities in Austria**

About half of the total surface of Austria is covered by forests of which more than 80% are under private ownership. The multi-purpose function of forests and the activities of Austrian Research Centre for Forests were presented.

### **2. The forest reproductive material certification system**

The national implementation of Directive 1999/105/EC on forest reproductive material was explained. Austria is the only EU Member State without forest reproductive material of the tested category. The Master certificate is issued in the forest upon collection of forest reproductive material.

### **3. Outcome of the Working Group on forest reproductive material, 25-26 April 2018, Novo Mesto (Slovenia).**

Participants were debriefed about the points addressed at the previous Commission Working Group in Novo Mesto.

### **4. Crossing borders – European forest reproductive material moving in trade**

A publication on bilateral trade between EU Member States was presented. National data sets from 16 Member States were collected, and analysed using a gravity model based on Newton's law of universal gravitation.

### **5. Outcome of the survey on the list of tree species in Directive 1999/105/EC**

The Austrian delegate presented the outcome of the survey on the amendment of the list of tree species in Annex I to Directive 1999/105/EC. There is a need for further follow-up on the survey. The Austrian delegate will contact with the Member States concerned and present an update at the Commission Working Group taking place in 2020.

## **6. FOREMATIS – Outcome of the survey on UPOV codes**

The Commission presented the outcome of the survey on new UPOV codes in order to allow the inclusion of new forest species in the Forest Reproductive Material Information System (FOREMATIS). There was an exchange of views on the certification of shrubs. The OECD Forest Scheme allows the certification of shrubs whereas Directive 1999/105/EC is restricted to tree species. In the case of certain tree species, a tree in one Member State may be a shrub in another Member State. The Commission concluded that there is a need for further reflection on the inclusion of shrubs in the national lists of Member States.

The Commission asked Member States to send their lists of nationally regulated tree species to be included in the FOREMATIS template by 10 June 2019.

The Commission promised to take up the issues raised by Member States on the FOREMATIS application with the IT colleagues.

## **7. Plant Health Regulation**

The Commission presented the state of play of a draft Commission Implementing Regulation implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 on protective measures against pests of plants.

## **8. SUSTREE project**

Climate change is already altering tree species distribution. Natural processes such as migration and genetic flow are not fast enough to adapt to the new climatic conditions. The project focuses on assisted migration and covers a number of Member States in central Europe. It has established a transnational model for seed transfer of forest trees in climate change.

## **9. Austrian approach for approval of poplar clones**

The Austrian delegate explained that in Austria stoolbeds are approved. Those stoolbeds including their location are registered in FOREMATIS as basic material. Further information will be provided via E-mail.

## **10. Implementation of EU Forest Strategy**

The Commission informed that a report on the mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy has been prepared and was presented in the Council.

## **11. Mutual assistance between Official bodies**

The Commission explained the rules applicable upon movement of seeds to another Member State for the production of seedlings, which are subsequently transferred back to the original Member State where the seeds were collected. The official bodies of both Member States concerned need to provide assistance to one another pursuant to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1598/2002 laying down detailed rules for the application of Council Directive 1999/105/EC as regards the provision of mutual administrative assistance by official bodies.

## **12. Exchange of views on important issues of the OECD Forest Scheme**

The discussion focussed on the production of clonal forest reproductive material. There is a sub-Working Group of the OECD Forest Scheme dealing with this topic. Different approaches are possible when it comes to the registration of basic material. It is important to distinguish between the origin of the basic material and the production place of the clone(s). The model master

certificate should be changed to incorporate this information and take into account new production techniques such as in vitro propagation and somatic embryogenesis.

### **13. Any other business**

There was an exchange of views on proposals presented by the Belgian delegate regarding Directive 1999/105/EC. One of the issues concerns the difficulty to understand the use of foreign languages in the information document issued upon movement of forest reproductive material between Member States. A model for that document is provided in Commission Regulation (EC) No 1598/2002. The German delegate informed that translation of that information document in several languages is available at [www.ble.de/forstvermehrungsgut](http://www.ble.de/forstvermehrungsgut) under point 9.

Member States did not agree with the Belgian proposals to analyse the number of germinable/viable seeds in each harvested lot and control the origin/provenance through a DNA test.

With regard to the Belgian proposal to include information on genetic diversity in the legislation, the Finnish delegate noted that this information is only relevant in the case of selected stands and when seed is collected from less than 100 trees.

The Belgian delegate enquired about the possibility of including a definition of the term “forestry purpose” in Directive 1999/105/EC. The French delegate proposed to send a summary of the proposed definitions that have been discussed in France.

The Austrian delegate explained the importance of the inclusion of information regarding the altitude upon import of Douglas fir from the US. This information is particularly important when the imported seed is subsequently moved to another Member State for planting. When seed originating from a low altitude is planted at a higher altitude, the plants will either die immediately or after 5-10 years.

Member States were asked to send in comments on the issues addressed under any other business by 10 June 2019.

### **14. Field visit.**

On the first day of the meeting there was a visit to the company Lieco in Styria producing forest plants in containers. In Semmering, the Austrian delegate showed several Regions of provenance and explained the differences in climatic and soil conditions.