Summary report of the Commission Expert Group on Legislation on seeds and plant propagating material

Section *Forest Reproductive Material*

Arcachon (FR), 26-27 APRIL 2017

Chairperson: Ms Diana Charels

With the exception of Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, and Slovakia all Member States participated in the Commission Working Group on forest reproductive material. Thirty participants attended the meeting with the aim to discuss ongoing forestry-related issues at European Commission level, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) level.

SECTION A Information and/or discussion

A.1. General overview of forest activities in France.

There were several presentations on the forest activities at national level, the implementation of Directive 1999/105/EC on forest reproductive material and the reforestation activities after the storms in the Aquitaine region in 1999 and 2009.

A.2. Outcome of the Working party on forest reproductive material, 27-28 April 2016, Sopron (Hungary).

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

A.3. Plant Health Regulation.

The Commission informed Member States about Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 on protective measures against pests of plants. The Finnish delegate noted that Article 83(5) of that Regulation does not contain a reference to Directive 1999/105/EC on the marketing of forest reproductive material and Directive 98/56/EC on the marketing of propagating material of ornamental plants. Commission promised to look into this matter.

A.4. EPPO Quality Pest Project.

The Commission presented the state of play and the timeline of the project. The Commission informed that a list of Union quarantine pests and a list of Union regulated non-quarantine pests will be established under the new Plant Health Regulation. In addition, the Commission informed that the requirements for visual inspection, sampling and testing of the Union regulated non-quarantine pests will be laid down in the marketing Directives on Seed and Propagating

Material. Several delegates expressed the need for a future listing of *Phytophthora* species as Union regulated non-quarantine pests for the forestry sector.

A.5. EU forest strategy.

Member States were informed about DG SANTE's contribution to the EU Forest Strategy and the upcoming mid-term review of that Strategy.

A.6. Forest Reproductive Material Information System, FOREMATIS.

The Commission explained new features of the system such as the unique identifier allowing the identification of each entry and tracing back of the history of that entry. The Commission intends to expand the system to include tree species listed under the OECD Forest Scheme. A formal agreement between the EU and OECD will be concluded before the system is established. The Finnish delegate mentioned the need for a help function explaining the different fields in FOREMATIS. The Austrian delegate enquired about the use of FOREMATIS to allow Member State Competent Authorities to consult information documents prepared upon movement of forest reproductive material in the EU in accordance with Regulation 1598/2002. The Commission replied that an expert group may be composed to look into this matter.

A.7. Forest seed labs in the EU in 2016

The Austrian delegate presented the outcome of a survey on forest seed testing laboratories in the EU. Twenty-six Member States responded to the questionnaire which contained, amongst others, questions on the number of seed testing laboratories in the Member State, the accreditation of the laboratory, the seed testing rules applied, and the participation in referee tests.

A.8. Conservation and sustainable utilisation of forest tree diversity in climate change, SUSTREE

The Austrian delegate presented the SUSTREE project composed of 8 project partners. The project aims to establish a transnational model for seed transfer and the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources of forest trees in climate change. Access to national forest genetic resource information should be enabled and linked to present and future climate forecasts along with the recommendations for seed transfer in a changing climate. New seed transfer models should be implemented as pilot applications within forest companies to raise awareness of stakeholders and policy makers.

The project recognises the added value of FOREMATIS and considers that the inclusion of information on climate, soil and seed harvest in the information system could help in addressing the challenges identified.

A.9. Discussion on important OECD issues on Forest Reproductive Material.

The discussion on OECD issues focussed on the changes to Rule 2.1 on Delineation of Regions of Provenance and Rule 4.3 on summary list of basic material, that were agreed upon in the OECD Technical Working Group. Member States agreed on the changes to Rule 2.1. but did not want to modify Rule 4.3. The Commission will inform the OECD Secretariat of the aforementioned EU position prior to the OECD Annual Meeting.

A.10. FAO's 16th Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

Member States were informed about the outcome of FAO's 16th Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The information to be collected for The Second Report on the State of the World's Forest Genetic Resources should cover the state of the forest genetic resources as well as the efforts related to the conservation, sustainable use, and development of

these resources. Efficiency will be increased through combined reporting for the Second Global Plan of Action and Second State of the World Report. There will be a cross-sectorial fund for raising funds for, and increasing efficiencies of the work on, Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. The previous separate Multi Year Programs of Work and strategic plans will be combined into a single strategic plan document. There will be a new modified major output and milestone to enhance the Commission's work on climate change and Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

A.11. LIFE for European Forest Genetic Monitoring System.

The LIFEGENMON project involves 6 partners. The aim of the project is to develop optimal indicators and verifiers for monitoring of genetic diversity changes in time along a transect from Bavaria to Greece for two selected target species. The project envisages the preparation of guidelines for both selected species and 5 additional species to implement forest genetic monitoring at a national, regional and EU scale. There will be a general and targeted dissemination of the project results.

A.12 Field visit.

On the first day of the meeting there were visits to seed orchards, nurseries of container and bare root seedlings, and reforestation plantations. Breeding programs and silviculture of maritime pine, loblolly pine, and eucalypt were explained by researchers from L'Institut national de la recherche agronomique (INRA) and Institut technologique Forêt Cellulose Bois Construction Ameublement (FCBA).

Diana Charels