



Summary report of the Commission Working Group on Forest Reproductive Material

Novo Mesto (SI), 25-26 APRIL 2018

Chairperson: Ms Diana Charels

Thirty participants from fifteen (AT, BE, BG, CZ, DE, DK, EE, FI, ES, HR, HU, LT, NL, SI, 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 Slovenia

Sixty percent of the total surface of Slovenia is covered by forests of which 76 % are under private ownership. The forestry policy focuses on a multi-purpose management of forests which is close to nature trying to balance the needs of all stakeholders involved.

2. The forest reproductive material certification system

The national implementation of Directive 1999/105/EC on forest reproductive material was explained. The Slovenian list of regulated tree species contains both additional tree species and deleted species as compared to the EU list of regulated species. The national Act contains provisions on conservation of forest genetic resources.

3. Outcome of the 2016-2017 traceability case study

Samples were collected from stands of beech trees intended for seed production and beech trees in selected city parks because of doubts regarding seed collection and findings during official controls on beech seed. Molecular methods allow tracing back maternal trees and verification of the declarations on the number of maternal trees used for seed collection.

4. LIFEGENMON project

The aim of the project is to develop optimal indicators and verifiers for monitoring of genetic diversity changes over time in two selected target species covering the region from Bavaria to Greece. Forest genetic monitoring is an early warning system to aid the assessment of a species' response to environmental changes at a long-term temporal scale. 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 and to support measures for genetic protection of forests.

5. Outcome of the Working Group on forest reproductive material, 26-27 April 2017, Arcachon (France).

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

6. Questions from Member States regarding Directive 1999/105/EC

There was an exchange of views with Member States on the questions addressed by Denmark and Germany. Denmark was informed that non-autochthonous stands with mixed origins can be approved for seed collection and that there are no detailed rules regarding the percentage of hybridity for the production of hybrids. The Commission informed Denmark and Germany that seeds which are moved from one Member State to another for the production of young plants and then moved back to the Member State of origin fall within the scope of Directive 1999/105/EC. This implies that the Official bodies of the Member States concerned need to provide mutual assistance to one another pursuant to Commission Regulation (EC) No 1598/2002. Following Germany's question on the inclusion of additional tree species in Annex I to Directive 1999/105/EC it was decided to organise a survey on the inclusion and/or deletion of tree species. The Commission will send out the survey. The Austrian delegate volunteered to follow up on the survey and to present the outcome at the 2019 Commission Working Group.

7. Forest Reproductive Material Information System, FOREMATIS

The Commission informed about the new features that will be present in the next release of FOREMATIS. Belgium, Hungary, Slovenia, and Spain mentioned that they still have some issues when they submit their national lists to FOREMATIS. Member States welcomed the Commission's proposal to organise electronic training sessions on FOREMATIS. The Commission promised to look into 2 issues that were raised by Finland.

8. Plant Health Regulation

The Commission informed Member States about Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 on protective measures against pests of plants. The Commission stressed that plant passports will have to be issued for the movement and marketing of forest reproductive material within the EU and that forest reproductive material operators will have to be officially registered.

9. Update on the EPPO Regulated Non Quarantine Pest (RNQP) Project

The European and Mediterranean Plant Protection Organization (EPPO) has sent the final report of the project to the Commission. The Commission informed about the pest/host combinations that were disqualified and those that were recommended for regulation as RNQPs. Experts from the EPPO expert working group identified *Phytophthora* species in forest nurseries as a priority for future RNQP listing.

10. Delisting of *Phytophthora ramorum* as a quarantine pest

The Commission communicated that it has been decided to delist *Phytophthora ramorum* as a quarantine pest. The Commission stated that it will be assessed if *P. ramorum* could be classified as an RNQP and explained the approach that will be followed.

11. Exchange of views on harmonised approach for approval and certification of clonal Forest Reproductive Material

Germany and Hungary explained their approach for the approval and certification of clonal forest reproductive material and highlighted the need for harmonisation at EU level and at OECD level.

12. Somatic embryogenesis on Norway spruce

The Finnish delegate presented somatic embryogenesis as an alternative to grafting and rooted shoot cuttings for the vegetative propagation of Norway spruce. The advantages of somatic

embryogenesis are the larger genetic gain, the faster production as compared to sexual crossing and the other vegetative propagation methods, and the possibility to control genetic diversity.

13. Implementation of EU Forest Strategy

Member States were informed about the state of play of the mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy.

14. Commercial plant varieties under the EU Access and Benefit Sharing Regulation

The Commission provided information about the notion of commercial plant varieties and the section on forest reproductive material in the EU Access and Benefit Sharing Regulation. The Bulgarian delegate proposed to keep Member States informed about the progress on this topic. The Austrian delegate volunteered to follow up on this topic.

15. 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. It was decided that there is no need for the creation of a Working Group at EU level. Instead there will be an attempt to have more EU Member States participating in the OECD sub-Working Group. The Netherlands agreed to take part in the work.

16. Any other business: Information document on mutual assistance between Official bodies

The Belgian delegate enquired about the possibility of including a standard excel template in FOREMATIS that could be used in the frame of mutual assistance between Official bodies when forest reproductive material is moved/marketed from one Member State to the other. Other delegates agreed that this would be an interesting feature but they preferred giving priority to the further development of FOREMATIS.

17. Field visit.

On the first day of the meeting there were visits to the international beech provenance trial Kamenski hrib, the LIFE GENMON forest genetic monitoring site Pri Studencu, the beech genetic monitoring site, the Virgin forest reserve Rajhenavski Rog and the research plot in that Virgin forest. The last stop was the monumental silver fir tree 'The Queen of Rog'. Researchers do not wish to determine the exact age of this tree because of the invasive methods this would require.