

## FORESTRY

Representing the interests of landowners, ELO supports the **entrepreneurial activities** of its members who **invest in forest resources**. In so doing, landowners provide a large number of social, economic, and environmental products and services. Beyond supplying traditional products, such as pulp for paper and cardboard, timber for construction, and cork, forest owners provide a wide array of other non-wood products and services.

Indeed, forests not only **positively affect the quality of peoples' lives** through providing products and related employment, but **sustainable forest management (SFM)** can maintain and enhance environmental amenities and ecological value, protect soil and water resources, and mitigate against climate change. Enhancing the **multifunctionality** of forests to provide all of its many functions is thus a priority for ELO, and this can be done most effectively through supporting the entrepreneurial activities of landowners to plant trees and manage forests.

Maintaining the **productive capacity of forests**, while preserving their **biological diversity**, is a vision supported by ELO. For land and forest owners to adequately provide the desired environmental products and services and ensure the health of forest ecosystems essential for society and the economy, the following key factors must be considered:

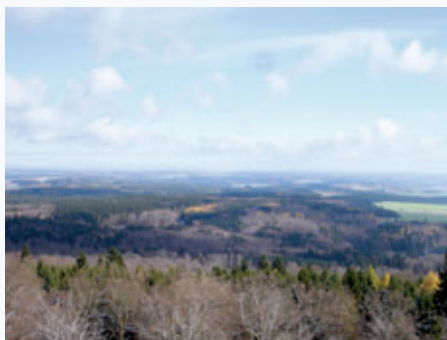
- **Biodiversity enhancement**, inside and outside the Natura 2000 network, is a valuable concept, but the profitability of a countryside that is managed by man must be maintained.
- **Carbon sequestration** and the use of **forest biomass** (low-value timber and small-size wood) as a renewable energy source, through the development of local networks.
- **Non-wood forest products** such as safe water production, eco-tourism, recreation, fishery and hunting, which can also be considered as a source of income.



ELO strongly supports **SFM** and related efforts, including the concept of **certification** as a means to promote the use of wood from sustainably managed forests and to improve its competitiveness on the global market. ELO also actively participates in the **Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE)**.

ELO believes that **SFM** should be supported through protecting the European wood market against illegally logged wood and hopes to support **SFM** in regions and countries where forest management and related laws are less developed through participating in the **Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan (FLEGT)**.

ELO is working towards developing **new market opportunities** aimed at increasing the competitiveness of the forest-based sector. In so doing, it recognizes and supports the important role of research and development.

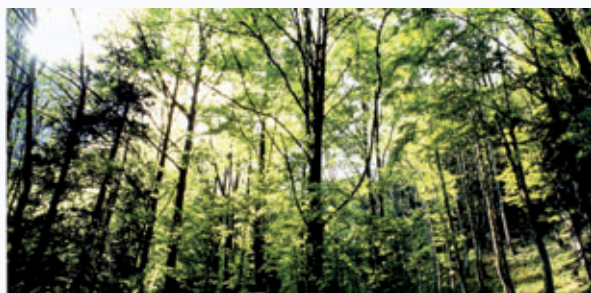


Forest area in the EU is growing, and only 60% of the annual forest growth is being harvested. The afforestation and reforestation of lands carried out within the framework of rural development is partly responsible for this expansion. A **huge potential** exists for developing wood energy markets and sequestering carbon in soil and wood. These activities could have positive repercussions not only for climate change mitigation but also for the rural economy, ecological stability and soil stabilization. However, it is also important for biodiversity conservation, another major concern of ELO.

Since 1992 and the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, ELO has participated in **European strategies to halt the decline of biodiversity in Europe**. ELO is working on the implementation of Natura 2000 specifically as this concerns forest habitats through various actions and communication strategies. ELO is also an expert for the “Streamlining European Biodiversity Indicators for 2010” (SEBI) working groups (biodiversity and rural activities related to forest habitats). The aim of SEBI is to elaborate European indicators to monitor biodiversity trends for 2010.

Regarding the loss of biodiversity, each year fires damage thousands of hectares of forests in southern Europe. Desiring prevention measures from European Union, ELO submitted recommendations through the **Forest Fires Prevention Expert Group** to the European Commission to tackle environmental disasters caused by these fires.

**Land and forest owners** play a **strategic role** with respect to all of these issues. The ELO plays an important role through facilitating their active contribution to the sustainable development of our forests for the next generation. ELO's Forest Department represents their interests during decision-making processes at the European level. ELO also develops and supports instruments for the payment of environmental and non-marketed goods and services provided by land and forest owners to society.



ELO helps to develop **good management practices** and **communication strategies** in the various fields mentioned. ELO acts as a facilitator between stakeholders and European or local decision-makers by recommending policies and actions and proposing alternatives.

The European Commission will launch the **EU Forest Action Plan** in 2006, and ELO will contribute to its implementation. ELO will work with its European forest network, to reach the objectives, which are improving **long-term competitiveness**, **improving and protecting the environment**, contributing to **quality of life** and fostering **coordination and communication**. This Action Plan is an opportunity to enhance the contribution of land and forest owners to sustainable forest management.

ELO is also facilitating the integration of **New Members States**, especially through its activities which support the sharing of forest related experiences. Many of the New Member States have restored ownership rights and/or privatised forest land and other forest-related assets, including some previously state-run activities in forest management.