



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from: Presidency
to: Council

Subject: Preparing forests for climate change: forest protection and information in the EU
- Follow up to the Valsain Conference and Council conclusions
- *Information from the Presidency*

Delegations will find attached a note from the Presidency which will be dealt with under "Any other business" at the meeting of the Council (Agriculture and Fisheries) on 17 May 2010.

**Preparing forests for climate change: forest protection and
information in the EU**

Follow up to the Valsáin Conference and Council conclusions

Forest protection is a priority of the Spanish Presidency, because we must ensure that our mountains and forests continue to fulfil the ecological functions which are essential for the biosphere balance and keep providing their products and generating environmental goods and services for society, and also because it is necessary to analyse, get to know and monitor the risks threatening forests in Europe; therefore it is essential to set the right political priorities.

Further to the Commission's "Green Paper on Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests for climate change", the Presidency organised a Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe at La Granja - Valsáin on 6 and 7 April 2010. Basically, the Conference was intended to serve as a discussion forum and encourage consideration of the Green Paper on forest protection and information presented by the European Commission on 1 March 2010, and also to highlight the need to sustain forest-generated environmental and social goods and services and work out ways of improving them in terms of both quality and quantity.

The Conference concluded with a Declaration on the protection of forests in the European Union - the Valsáin Declaration - which, together with the conclusions and speakers' presentations, is posted on the website of the *Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio rural y Marino* (Spanish Ministry of the Environment and the Rural and Marine Environment)¹ with a view to providing further input for the debate on forest protection and information in the European Union.

The Conference proceedings served as a basis for a set of draft conclusions entitled "Preparing forests for climate change: forest protection and information in the EU", which the Presidency has submitted for approval by the upcoming Environment Council.

Regarding content, and in particular the link with adaptation to climate change, the conclusions address a wide range of features which, generally speaking, are being considered by various technical bodies which prepare the Council meeting. The Presidency has opted for this approach in order to make for consistency between the various policies involved and for transparency of the work being done; involvement and input from all relevant fora with experience in this area are a must here.

In its quest for consistency, mutual information and cooperation, the Presidency launched the debate in the Working Party on Forestry and then involved the Working Party on the Environment. The Working Parties responsible for climate change and biodiversity were also consulted and briefed throughout. This has helped to gather input from all the aforementioned players, thereby ensuring cross-disciplinary cooperation. Of course, further work is to be carried out by Coreper, which will carry out final horizontal coordination before the conclusions are discussed and, possibly, adopted by the Council.

Today, the Presidency can state that work has progressed steadily and is at an advanced stage; and, thanks to the various contributions, we now have a more balanced text.

In line with its commitment to transparency and coordination, the Presidency will continue to keep the Agriculture Council informed of how this dossier develops.

¹ See: <http://www.mma.es/portal/secciones/biodiversidad/noticias/index.htm>.