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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 23 and 24 June 2025: Conference "Science and Innovation for Resilient Forests", Sękocin Stary and Rogów, 28-29 May 2025 <i>- Information from the Presidency</i>

From 28 to 29 May 2025, the conference 'Science and Innovation for Resilient Forests' was held as part of the Polish Presidency. The conference addressed the greatest challenges currently faced in that forestry, focusing on key topics such as forest resilience, bioeconomy and remote sensing assisted forest inventory, while also considering social expectations toward forests, including community and urban forests. The issue of nature conservation through an innovative bioeconomy was also explored in depth, as well as a dedicated poster session focused on the conservation of old-growth forests.

The conference brought together experts from across the Europe, representing scientific institutions, international and local non-governmental organizations and public administration. The conference was attended by the Deputy Minister of Climate and Environment, as well as representatives of the European Commission, including the Deputy Director General of the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and representatives of DG AGRI and DG ENVI. On the second day, the conference participants visited the Warsaw University of Life Sciences Arboretum in Rogów, where research on the adaptation of forest management to climate change and the impact of alien tree species on ecosystems and the protection of old-growth forests was presented.

The first day of the Conference focused on a panel discussion titled "Current Challenges in Forestry – Social and Urban Forests vs. Public Expectations". Scientists and policymakers from European Commission, France, Poland, Universities and International Forestry Student Association discussed how to reconcile growing social demands with the need to protect and use forests sustainably.

Following the panel, two thematic sessions were held: "Nature Conservation Through Innovative Bioeconomy – Priorities of the New European Commission" and "Remote Sensing Assisted Forest Inventory". Experts from the European Commission, the European Forest Institute, EUSTAFOR, Universities, and the European National Forest Inventory Network shared their professional and scientific perspectives on these critical issues.

The **importance of forest resilience and climate adaptation** was highlighted as a long-term strategy to face climate related stressors. The discussions underlined the need for **innovative bioeconomy and nature conservation** which should be in harmony with nature. Forest-based bioeconomy centred on wood and forest products have to be linked to the principles of the circular economy and EU policy priorities. At the same time, public interest in the non-timber values of forests continues to grow, leading to **growing expectations from public to social and urban forests**.

The panels also stressed the crucial role of **technological innovations and monitoring of forests**. Building an effective framework for this will require the integration of data from multiple sources.

The most important conclusion of this Conference could be summarised by the following motto: **“We have to cooperate and go beyond”**. In the creating of strategies for forests, one should remember that integrated approaches are essential in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss. **Sustainable Forest Management** that balances ecological, social and economic objectives, supported by **cross-sectoral cooperation** and **science based policies**, is crucial. Greater efforts are also needed in **public education to raise awareness** and foster a sense of shared responsibility for forests. Particular attention should be given to old-growth forests, which play a vital role in achieving both sustainable forest management and nature conservation objectives. As such, they deserve a clearly defined place in national and Union policies.

The field component of the Conference took place at the Forest Experimental Station in Rogów, home to the Warsaw University of Life Sciences Arboretum—one of the largest and most significant gardens of its kind in Poland. It is located in a former forest habitat and has the character of a forest park. It houses some of the richest, most interesting and unique collections of trees and shrubs in Central and Eastern Europe. The site also features forest experimental plots with non-native forest tree species. The arboretum is surrounded by experimental forests where research on forest management modifications is conducted. During the field excursions, the participants had the opportunity to see the most fascinating sections of the Rogów Arboretum, with a special focus on foreign tree species and unique opportunity to explore the most intriguing experimental forest plots featuring the introduction of exotic tree species for forestry purposes. The participants also had the chance to visit the unique site of “Zimna Woda” Nature Reserve, which offers a rare opportunity to observe the natural dynamics and succession processes of old-growth forests.