

Brussels, 22 May 2026  
(OR. en)

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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: AOB item for the meeting of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 26 May 2026:  
Avoid duplication of criteria and indicators and the introduction of thresholds or ranges for sustainable forest management  
*- Information from Sweden, on behalf of Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Slovenia and Sweden, supported by Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and Slovakia*

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According to the EU Forest Strategy for 2030, the European Commission will identify additional indicators and thresholds or ranges for sustainable forest management (SFM) concerning forest ecosystem conditions, such as health, biodiversity and climate objectives. In light of this, we emphasise our strong commitment to the FOREST EUROPE process and its crucial work on criteria and indicators for SFM. We further emphasise that the diversity of European forests and their management, means that indicators and potential thresholds should be best set at national or sub-national level, while FOREST EUROPE should continue to be used for European cooperation and common understanding on SFM. We remind that indicators and potential thresholds for SFM are key elements of national forest policy, and thus falling under the competence of Member States. Therefore, the added value and appropriateness of the Commission's work on indicators and thresholds or ranges for SFM at EU level needs to be demonstrated.

Since the 1990's, the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, FOREST EUROPE, has provided an intergovernmental platform for promoting SFM and established a common, internationally recognised definition for SFM more than 30 years ago. These criteria and indicators are the basis for the flagship report State of Europe's Forests, and the 2025 report was presented earlier this spring. Besides the continuous evolvement, a dedicated process to review the criteria and indicators started already in 2020 and is ongoing with a view to keeping them fit for the future.

In its EU Forest Strategy for 2030, the Commission announced that it would identify additional indicators as well as thresholds or ranges of thresholds for SFM concerning forest ecosystem conditions, such as health, biodiversity and climate objectives. In this regard, we recall that the Council in its Conclusions from 15 November 2021, invited the Commission, *in close cooperation with the Member States, and with the support of research networks in the European forest-science partnership, to carry out an assessment and to decide together on whether new EU level indicators, thresholds or ranges for SFM are needed and on what their added value would be. Furthermore, taking into account forests differences between countries, these thresholds or ranges must be decided and set at national level or sub-national level.*

We call on the Commission to outline the planned work on indicators and thresholds or ranges for SFM. This includes how feedback provided by Member States has been taken into consideration, as well as in the review and further implementation of the EU Forest Strategy for 2030. We call on the Commission to jointly assess with Member States the added value of establishing indicators and thresholds or ranges for SFM at EU level. We welcome the Commission's engagement for the work on SFM within the FOREST EUROPE process and encourage continued prioritisation of the process.