



Council of the
European Union

**Brussels, 18 March 2024
(OR. en)**

7699/24

**ENV 292
FORETS 86
AGRI 214
AGRILEG 152**

NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: Current legislative proposals:
Proposal for a Regulation on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests
– Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Presidency, on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 25 March 2024.

Proposal for a Regulation on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests**– Information from the Presidency –****INTRODUCTION**

On 22 November 2023, the European Commission published a Proposal for a Regulation on a Monitoring Framework for Resilient European Forests ('Proposal'). This Proposal constitutes the main legislative initiative of the 'New EU Forest Strategy for 2030', published in 2021.

The Proposal's main goal is to ensure high-quality forest monitoring, which would make it possible to track progress towards achieving EU targets and policy objectives on forests (including on biodiversity, climate and crisis response), to improve risk assessment and preparedness, and to support evidence-based decision-making.

The Proposal aims to establish a comprehensive, high-quality forest monitoring system (set up and managed by the European Commission in cooperation with the Member States) that would ensure standardised or harmonised data on forests and other wooded lands.

The data would be obtained using remote sensing (notably through the Copernicus programme) and grounds surveys. It would build on existing data sets, good practices of Member States and the technological advancement of remote sensing as well as the EU's capacity to provide these services.

The forest monitoring system would consist of three main elements:

- a geographically explicit identification system for the mapping and localisation of forest units;
- a forest data collection framework, specifying timing and data collection requirements; and
- a forest data sharing framework that would enable the sharing of the data and make them publicly available.

Member States would also be encouraged to develop voluntary integrated long-term forest plans or adapt their existing integrated long-term forest plans or strategies, taking into account a medium to long-term perspective.

THE PROCESS IN THE COUNCIL

The Spanish Presidency organised an exchange of views in the Environment Council on 18 December 2023.

In order to effectively address the cross-sectoral matters covered by this legislative proposal and to carry out the preparatory work linked to its examination within the Council, the Belgian Presidency proposed to establish an **ad hoc working group on forest monitoring** (AHWP FM). The establishment and mandate of the AHWP FM (code F30) were agreed on 17 January 2024. This working party will operate under the “Agriculture and Fisheries” configuration of the Council, involving the communities of the Working Party on Forestry (F.16) and the Working Party on Environment (J.1). The AHWP FM will report to the “Agriculture and Fisheries” configuration of the Council and, on a regular basis, to the “Environment” configuration of the Council.

An exchange of views on the main added value of the Proposal took place during the Agriculture and Fisheries Council that took place on 23 January 2024.

The AHWP FM met for the first time on 5 February 2024. The half-day preliminary exchange of views aimed to work on a common understanding of the general technical elements of the proposed forest monitoring system. The discussion took place around four specific questions addressed to the Commission¹ and was comprehensive, dense, and instructive.

Moving to the first reading of the text, the Presidency opted for a clustering approach allowing for a step-by-step analysis of the proposal, starting from principles and generalities, progressing through the details, and ending with the implications in terms of implementation. The Presidency identified eight clusters: Cluster 1. Forest Monitoring System; Cluster 2. Planning; Cluster 3. Identification system; Cluster 4. Collection framework; Cluster 5. Sharing framework; Cluster 6. Exchange and use; Cluster 7. Data collected; Cluster 8. Implementation².

¹ The questions can be found in doc. 5933/24.

² The clustering is defined in Presidency steering note doc. 6696/24.

For each cluster addressed, the work is structured in the following way: (1) Overview of the provisions presented by the Commission; (2) Exchange of views with Member States and further clarifications if needed; (3) Opportunity to send, after the meeting, detailed comments and text proposals for the provisions analysed.

In the second meeting of the AHWP FM on 23 February 2024, delegations expressed their appreciation of the approach proposed by the Presidency. During this second meeting, the examination of the articles of the proposal started and the first two clusters were analysed and discussed in an open, interactive, and constructive atmosphere. The examination of the next clusters will continue in future meetings of the AHWP FM, depending on the progress made and the available time.
