

**30th Task Force Meeting of the
International Co-operative Programme
on Assessment and Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Forests
(ICP Forests)**

Athens, Greece, 29–30 May 2014

Minutes

Opening

1. The 30th Task Force Meeting was hosted by the Hellenic Agricultural Organization “Demeter”, Institute of Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems and Forest Products Technology in Athens, Greece. It was attended by 52 delegates from the following 24 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United Kingdom. For a list of participants, please refer to Annex I.

2. Mr Michael Köhl (Germany), Chairman of ICP Forests, opened the meeting. Also referring to the antecedent 3rd ICP Forests Scientific Conference 2014 and excursion, Mr Köhl expressed his gratitude to

- Prof Dr Haroutonian: President of the Hellenic Agricultural Organization “DEMETER”,
- Dr Aristotelis Papadopoulos, Director of Research of the Hellenic Agricultural Organization “DEMETER”,
- Mr George Amorgianiotis: Secretary of the Special Secretariat for Development and Protection of Forests and Natural Environment, Directorate of Forest Resources Development,
- Mr Kostas Dimopoulos, Dr Dimitris Vakalis, and Ms Eleni Giakoumi, Delegates from the Directorate of Forest Resources Development and the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change,
- Dr George Karetzos: Director of the Institute of the Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems and Forest Products Technology, the National Focal Center of Greece,
- Dr Panagiotis Michopoulos and his colleagues from the Institute of the Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems and Forest Products Technology,
- Mr Panagiotis Kalliris, the Director of the Forest Service of Korinthia, for his excellent guidance during the excursion.

Mr Köhl welcomed Mr Krzysztof Olendrzynski of the LRTAP Convention Secretariat in Geneva, the Chair of ICP Integrated Monitoring (ICP IM) Mr Lars Lundin (Sweden), and the delegate of ICP Vegetation (ICP Veg) Ms Felicity Hayes (UK). He introduced the new Head of the Programme Co-ordinating Centre (PCC) Mr Walter Seidling and his colleague Ms Alexa Michel, who have taken the mandate that was filled by Mr Martin Lorenz and Mr Richard Fischer after the PCC had moved from the former Thünen Institute of World Forestry in Hamburg to the Thünen Institute of Forest Ecosystems in Eberswalde (Germany).

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

3. The Task Force adopted the agenda and approved the minutes of the 29th Task Force Meeting in Belgrade 2013.

Item 2: Report by the Programme Coordinating Centre (PCC)

4. Mr Lorenz reported on the **main activities of PCC** between the 29th Task Force Meeting in May 2013 and the relocation of PCC on 1 October 2013. Referring to the Progress Report of PCC and the Executive Summary, he mentioned his representation of ICP Forests at the WGE meeting in Geneva (12–13 September 2013). He briefly covered the topics of the last PCG meeting in Hamburg (28–29 November 2014) at which, i.e., the database system, data analyses, the reorganization of the Thünen Institute, and the ICP Forests reporting system were discussed.

5. In the context of the cooperation between ICP Forests and the former EU-LIFE project “FutMon”, Mr Lorenz reported on the final payment of the Community contribution by the European Commission to the FutMon consortium. He explained that the Commission had compared two possible approaches of reducing their contribution, one approach based on ineligible invoices (about EUR ~2.0 million) and the other one based on alleged data gaps and insufficient reports (about EUR ~2.4 million). The Commission had chosen the latter approach as it led to a higher reduction. Mr Lorenz criticized that the Commission had allocated the reduction to project actions but had refused to also allocate it to partners. He reported that his consultation with the responsible German Federal Ministry for the Environment (BMU) and the responsible National Authority (BSU) has so far not been of help and that he had contacted the ASTRALE Monitoring Team according to a proposal by BMU. He stressed the resulting difficulties in distributing the final payment to the partners under the consortium. After the ensuing discussion Mr Lorenz proposed that the former staff of PCC at the Thünen Institute in Hamburg will

- (a) Calculate by itself partner-specific reductions based on data gaps found in the ICP Forests database;
- (b) Alternatively consider to charge the partners with their individual non-eligible costs and to allocate only the remaining reduction according to data gaps;
- (c) Consider the involvement of an EU-ombudsman;
- (d) Take into account the reply expected from ASTRALE.

The FutMon partners represented in the meeting agreed to the proposal. They stressed that calculations under item (a) could well lead to an identification of unjustified reductions which could in turn be brought to the attention of ASTRALE and the EU-ombudsman.

6. Mr Seidling continued to report on the main activities of PCC after the **relocation of PCC** on 1 October 2013. He presented an organization chart of the Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute and explained how PCC fits into the institute’s structure. He named all colleagues from the Thünen Institute who had lately assisted PCC in the meeting of the Convention’s regular reporting requirements. Ms Sigrid Strich (Germany) explained the reasons for the move of the PCC from Hamburg to Eberswalde. The Thünen Institute for World Forestry was closed down last autumn and became part of the new Thünen Institute for International Forestry and Forest Economics. Eberswalde was decided to be the new location of PCC because of its long tradition in forest monitoring on a national level. The old PCC staff had decided to not move to the new location.

Item 3: Report by the Secretariat of the LRTAP Convention

7. Mr Krzysztof Olendrzynski of the LRTAP Convention Secretariat provided an update on the activities under the Convention. In the Secretariat’s opinion, the move of PCC had gone well and all procedures had been followed correctly from a legal point of view. He reported that amendments to the three latest Protocols (Aarhus Protocol on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), 2009, Aarhus

Protocol on Heavy Metals, 2012, and Gothenburg Protocol to Abate Acidification, Eutrophication and Ground-level Ozone, 2012) had been completed.

8. The WGE reporting system is currently being modified. The **2014–2015 workplan for the implementation of the Convention** will be changed to a new format. It just went from negotiation to implementation mode and has become more output oriented. While science still covers the largest part, the aim of the science should be to advance policy making (“top-down”). A renewed emphasis is given on improving the implementation throughout the entire UNECE region, accession to and ratification of the Convention’s most recently amended Protocols by countries in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (EECCA), and communication and outreach in general. If the Convention is not being followed, the secretariat’s response is to “name and blame” the respective member. Hard measures like funding cuts as common in EU programmes/projects are not applied.

9. Mr Olendrzynski described **recent developments of the EMEP, WGE, and EB Bureaux**. There will be several changes: joint meetings of EMEP SB/WGE as of 2015 and a science package for WGSR/Executive Body, combining the work and scientific output of EMEP and WGE. In general, EB asks for clear messages to implement clear policies. The reporting system of CLRTAP is for informing the Convention about the progress of the programme, it is not a place for publishing scientific results.

10. The **WGE response to the ICP review in 2013** included the following recommendations: easier access to and downloading of data, single WGE website with further links, e.g., to the EMEP homepage, more joint and combined type of work such as joint thematic workshops and publications of ICPs. Keywords given were, i.e., EECCA, long-term trends, N ~ biodiversity. They acknowledge that the decrease in the voluntary funding of effects oriented activities needs to be reversed. This is being discussed at high levels. The knowledge of the costs of ICP Forests and the amount of funding are unknown to the Secretariat and remain with the national authorities. CLRTAP only co-finances a small percentage of the total costs; the rest must be covered with national funding. Regarding support from EB, Mr Olendrzynski pointed out that CLRTAP is an autonomous body that depends entirely on its member countries. The UNECE provides the secretariat but has no influence on the Convention itself.

Item 4: Reports of other ICPs

11. Ms Felicity Hayes (UK) presented the achievements of **ICP Vegetation** in 2013/14 and their plans for the future. ICP Vegetation had held its 27th Task Force Meeting with 84 experts from 22 countries and a one-day ozone workshop in Paris, 28–30 January 2014. Ms Hayes briefly described the revisions to Chapter 3 in their Modelling and Mapping Manual and introduced a web-based smartphone app for recording ozone leaf injury on vegetation. ICP Vegetation had participated in the EU FP7 project ‘ECLAIRE – Effects of climate change on air pollution impacts and response strategies for European ecosystems’ and had published an ozone injury leaflet and a report on deposition to and impacts on vegetation in EECCA/SEE and South-East Asia. Ms Hayes finally presented the ICP Vegetation medium-term workplan (2015–2017) and informed about the move of the moss survey coordination of ICP Vegetation from the UK to the Russian Federation. The 28th ICP Vegetation Task Force Meeting will be held in Rome, Italy, 3–5 February 2015.

12. Mr Lars Lundin (Sweden) reported on recent activities and priorities of the **ICP Integrated Monitoring** (ICP IM) in 2013–2014. He informed about the scope of ICP IM, their contributions to CLRTAP, their Annual Report 2014 and Workplan 2015. He provided an update of their database: For the year 2012, 12 of a total of 16 countries had delivered data from 46 out of a total of 70 sites. They are in contact with several countries to renew the countries’ data commitments or to invite them to become a new member. Mr Lundin presented recommendations for combined activities of ICPs as

requested by the EB, such as a common webpage, developing a database for metadata, improving visibility, harmonizing methods and intercalibrations across ICPs, holding joint thematic workshops and publishing reports on, e.g., trends, ozone, nitrogen, biodiversity, improving collaboration within countries, and enhancing the cooperation of ICP Waters, ICP Forests, and ICP IM, especially since in some countries these ICPs may even share the same sites. He suggested a collaborative report with ICP Forests on cause-and-effect relationships like the one by de Vries et al. from 2002¹ in compliance with review recommendations. ICP IM held their 2014 Task Force meeting, including a workshop and excursion, in Westport, Republic of Ireland, 7–9 May 2014, with 25 participants from 12 countries. The next ICP IM Task Force meeting will be held in Minsk, Belarus, 6–8 May 2014.

Item 5: Reporting to WGE

13. Mr Seidling presented the **2014–2015 workplan for the implementation of the Convention** and highlighted the workplan items under the lead of ICP Forests. Besides the items for which ICP Forests is explicitly mentioned as lead body, there are additional objectives where contributions from ICP Forests are expected. The advance version of the workplan (ECE/EB.AIR/122/Add.2) can be downloaded from the website of the Convention². The PCG will discuss all items in the workplan that concern ICP Forests at their next meeting in October. Ms Gudrun Schütze (Germany) will attend the next PCG meeting if it fits with her other duties. PCC will be organizing the writing process and ask EP Soil and the Soil Coordinating Centre for input.

14. Workplan item 1.9 on assessing policy outcomes within the Convention requires an assessment report from all groups under the Convention. The organization and specifics of such a report will be elaborated by the EB/WGE in the month following. There was neither an outline nor a deadline defined at the time of the Task Force meeting.

15. Mr Seidling presented the **new template for reporting by task forces and expert groups on implementation of the workplan** and his completions for discussion. Two meetings were reported missing from the list of meetings held in the period covered. PCC will include the 4th Lab Head Meeting in Croatia in September 2013 and the joint EP in Freising in June 2013 to the list of meetings. Mr Olendrzynski stressed the importance of the Task Force to discuss all items from Item 7 onward. This template is binding for the entire convention. PCC will list all items for which input from ICP Forests is expected and prepare a complete draft as soon as possible for discussion.

16. Mr Seidling presented a summary of the results of the review of the ICPs. The **Action Plan for the Implementation of the Long-term Strategy for the Convention** includes recommendations for the future organization and functioning of the ICPs. PCC will circulate the evaluation paper of the review committee within ICP Forests. PCG will review it in the context of the development of the new ICP Forests strategy. A thorough discussion will then be held at the next Task Force meeting.

¹ de Vries, W., Forsius, M., Lorenz, M., Lundin, L., Haussman, T., Augustin, S., Ferretti, M., Kleemola, S. and Vel, E. 2002. Cause-effect Relationships of Forest Ecosystems. Joint Report by ICP Forests and ICP Integrated Monitoring. Report for United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. Federal Research Centre for Forestry and Forest Products (BFH) together with Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE). 46 p.

²

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2013/air/eb/ECE_EB.AIR_122_Add.2_advance_version.pdf.

17. Mr Seidling presented an overview of the state of the **ICP Forests Technical and Executive Reports 2013 and 2014**. The 2013 Technical Report was published online at the end of March 2014 and had been sent by post to all NFCs and chairs of the Expert Panels and Working Groups the week preceding the meeting. The new cover layout of the report was evaluated. The 2013 Technical Report was published in the Working Paper series of the Thünen Institute to avoid it being pure grey literature. This series, however, has a fixed cover design. After a suggestion to possibly publish the 2014 Technical Report under the UNECE, Mr Olendrzynski explained that the publication process would have to follow UN rules and a clear UN mandate would be needed. Mr Markus Neumann (Austria) proposed that the Bundesforschungs- und Ausbildungszentrum für Wald, Naturgefahren und Landschaft (BFW) in Vienna could publish the 2014 Technical Report with an ISBN and the LRTAP logo on its front cover. This was approved.

18. At the last EP meeting in Eberswalde in March 2014, EP Crown discussed the analysis of time series with shorter time spans in order to avoid blank countries because of missing years from, e.g., changes in the network. Mr Till Kirchner, responsible of the ICP Forests Data Unit, assured that different time series were already being calculated and will be included in the final 2014 Technical Report. Regarding zero values in the column “(Investigated but) unidentified” of Table 3-21, Mr Kirchner agreed to verify the data in the database and consult with EP Crown. The category “Atmospheric pollutants” of the same table was also discussed. A zero value may falsely imply that there is no atmospheric pollution whatsoever. After a proposal by Mr Nenad Potočić, it was decided to add the following footnote to Table 3-21 in the 2014 Technical Report: “Visible symptoms of direct atmospheric pollution impact”. It was further discussed how to proceed with maps on which damaging agents are found on only a small number of plots. It was recommended to map only the most important agent groups. PCC will update the contact information of the Ministries and National Focal Centres in the next draft of the 2014 Technical Report. Changes regarding the contact information can be sent to Ms Michel. PCC will circulate a new draft version of the 2014 Technical Report as soon as possible.

19. The 2013 Executive Report is in its final stage and will be distributed as soon as possible. After discussing the outline and contents of the 2014 Executive Report as presented by Mr Seidling, the Task Force decided that the Scientific Committee was to prepare a new draft outline of this report and present it on the following day of the meeting. As a result, Mr Ferretti presented a new outline of the 2014 Executive Report and the Task Force approved that the Scientific Committee is responsible for the contents of the 2014 Executive Report. The Scientific Committee will decide on and communicate a timetable for the preparation of the report. Everyone is encouraged to send ISI papers to the Scientific Committee for finalizing the chapters. A final draft will be circulated to the Task Force before it will be presented to the WGE in September. Comments will be accepted for 10 days. The Executive Report is usually published after the WGE meeting in September. The general function and future character of the Executive Report will be further discussed at the next PCG meeting.

Item 6: Activities of Expert Panels and other bodies of ICP Forests

20. **Changes in the leadership/coordination** of several expert panels were adopted. Mr Nenad Potočić (Croatia) and Mr Volkmar Timmermann (Norway) are from now on replacing Mr Peter Roskams (Belgium) and Mr Gerardo Sánchez Peña (Spain) as chair and co-chair of EP Crown. Mr Tom Levanic (Slovenia) and Ms Vivian Kvist Johannsen (Denmark) are replacing Mr Markus Neumann (Austria) as chair and co-chair of EP Growth. In addition, Ms Urša Vilhar (Slovenia) had asked to be removed from her position as co-chair of EP Meteorology, Phenology, and LAI. Mr Stephan Raspe (Germany) and Mr Stefan Fleck (Germany) will continue to act as chair and co-chair of this EP. The members of the ICP Forests Task Force express their gratitude to the resigning chairs and exquisitely thank them for their valuable contributions to ICP Forests.

21. Mr Nils König (Germany) reported on the latest activities of the **Working Group QA/QC in Laboratories**. He presented the ring test results from the 16th Interlaboratory Comparison Test 2013/2014 and summarized the meeting of the heads of the labs in Zadar, Croatia, in September 2013. The main topics covered in Zadar were the last water, foliar, and soil ring tests, analytical problems, new methods, the comparison of methods, and the evaluation and controlling of the QA-forms. FSCC had declared that they are no longer able to organize the soil ring tests. For suggestions of another country/lab for organizing the soil ring tests from this time forward, please contact Mr König. This issue will be further discussed at the next meeting of EP Soil and WG QA/QC in Göttingen, Germany, 21–24 April 2015.
22. Mr Nenad Potočić (Croatia) gave a status report on the **EP Crown Condition and Damage Causes**. He reported that the number of countries had dropped from 34 to 24 since the end of the FUTMON project but that there are still more than 5000 plots active. In addition to the reduction of plots, the assessment frequency and plot locations have changed in some countries. There has been no downward trend in the Level II network, however, with 21 countries and 480 plots still active. Mr Potočić presented a list of current data evaluations and projects in the EP. The last ICC N-Europe was held in Estonia, 25–28 June 2013, the last ICC S-Europe in Italy, 30 September – 2 October 2013, the next ICC Central Europe will be in Witzenhausen, Germany, 10–13 June 2014, and a Photo ICC 2015 is in the planning stage. Data from ICCs will be sent to PCC for evaluation.
23. During the last EP meeting in Eberswalde, 3–5 March 2014, EP Crown had made the following suggestions for future reporting: to reconsider time series in the Technical Reports in order to include as many countries as possible in the Level I maps. For the 2015 Technical Report, changes will be proposed by the current authors by the end of this year and will be discussed by EP Crown. PCC will perform the evaluations on several damage agents but select only the most interesting agents for the next Technical Report (e.g. defoliators on oak).
24. In collaboration with Mr Potočić, Mr Kirchner informed about **data quality assurance and the problem of versioned checkroutines**; the central question being whether it is possible to provide verification reports of the existing database and whether it is possible to get a better quality overview by applying existing checkroutines to old data. The respective action plan calls for the development of an automated algorithm to run existing checkroutines against old data by PCC. In case of success the resulting quality report will be provided to EP Crown. The Expert Panel can then get in contact with the respective countries and discuss data inconsistencies and potential updates.
25. Mr Markus Neumann (Austria) summarized the minutes of the last **EP Growth** meeting in Eberswalde, 3–5 March 2014, which 16 participants from 13 countries had attended. During that meeting, EP Growth discussed re-measurements in the upcoming winter 2014/2015, the status of the growth database, and procedures for uploading, checking and updating data and new data evaluations. All countries present at that meeting agreed on re-assessments on Level II plots as scheduled. Mr Neumann described the sampling design for growth measurements on Level II plots.
26. Ms Nathalie Cools (Belgium) gave an overview of data evaluations of the **EP on Soil and Soil Solution**. She reported on the 18th FSEPM on Soil and Soil Solution in Ljubljana, Slovenia, 10–12 April 2013, which 29 delegates from 16 countries had attended. Main discussion items had been quality assurance and quality control, the status of the Forest Soil Condition Database (FSCDB), and data evaluations. She also reported on planned, progressing, and finished solid soil and soil solution data evaluations and addressed problems, consequences, and recommendations that had come up during the analyses. Ms Cools listed past and future activities of the FSCC. The next Soil EP meeting will be held jointly with other EPs in Göttingen, Germany, in April 2015.

27. Mr Marcus Schaub (Switzerland) reported on the last meeting of the **EP on Ambient Air Quality** in Eberswalde in March 2014, which had been attended by 17 participants from 13 countries, incl. two ICP Vegetation representatives. He presented AAQ data (processing) issues, e.g., the implementation of more automated QA/QC procedures, respective conclusions, and future tasks.

28. Mr Daniel Žlindra (Slovenia) gave an overview of planned, progressing, and finalized studies and scientific publications with involvement of the **EP on Deposition**, with 6 of the 19 transnational evaluations in 2014 dealing with deposition alone. He announced the incorporation of the aggregated deposition database in the ICP Forests database in 2015 and encouraged all countries to cross-check their data if they have not done so already. The next EP meeting will be held in Göttingen, 21–23 April 2015.

29. Mr Stephan Raspe (Germany) reported on the last meetings of the **EP on Meteorology, Phenology, and LAI** in Freising, 17–19 June 2013, and Eberswalde, 3–5 March 2014. He discussed data quality issues and presented a data correction flow. He introduced current studies and invited the meeting participants to join the discussion group on the ICP Forests homepage on “Study on tree phenology trends” by Ms Urša Vilhar (Slovenia). He mentioned the past phenology training courses, new formats of the LAI-Forms that had been developed under FUTMON, the reduction of LAI-measurements after FUTMON to 27 plots in the database, and efforts to revise the LAI- and phenology manual. He also presented results of discussions on the future structure of the EP. LAI will continue to be a part of this Expert Panel, the name of the EP will remain in force, and the responsibilities of the open co-chairmanship for phenology after the resignation of Ms Vilhar will be shared by the chair Mr Raspe and co-chair Mr Stefan Fleck (Germany).

30. Mr Marco Ferretti (Italy), chair of the **Quality Assurance Committee**, informed about the due revision of the ICP Forests Manual in 2015. He had distributed an inquiry for revision needs on 4 April 2014 but had received only few reactions. He presented the publication strategy of the Scientific Evaluation Committee and respective publications in special issues of the journals *Forest Ecology and Management* and *Annals of Forest Science*. He suggested that after years of harmonizing monitoring methods, EPs should now focus on data evaluation, with EP meetings arranged around defined evaluation projects and defined scientific outputs. He proposed to publish multi-author synthesis papers in addition to individual publications and traditional special issues in ISI journals. He reminded the audience to include ICP Forests as keyword in all their publications with relevance to ICP Forests.

Item 7: Data analyses by external institutions and ICP Forests Expert Panels

31. Mr Seidling provided an overview on data applicants and studies published with ICP Forests data during the last reporting period. The list of publications was based on the information as received from the ICP Forests community and published on the ICP Forests website.

32. The **regulations for informing other ICP Forests members on internal and external evaluations** were discussed. For CLRTAP reporting requirements the use of the data collected under ICP Forests by PCC is permitted. The procedures for internal vs. external data analyses, however, need to be clarified. It was suggested that PCC maintains an overview of all data requests and permissions for data usage including the respective access period and potential restrictions as well as all resulting publications on the intranet for controlling purposes. As the ICP Forests website has been developed based on a commercial Content Management System (CMS) with strong restrictions due to dynamic functionalities, Mr Kirchner stated that the implementation of a database listing publications on the website is not yet possible. In general, all countries must approve a change in the data policy similar to changes in the ICP Forests Manual. Also, there are no legal means against anyone using the

data for purposes other than signed with the data request form. This discussion will be resumed at the next PCG meeting.

33. For keeping copies of distributed datasets, Mr Kirchner informed that it is not possible to reconstruct older versions of the database. With 50 data requests per year, it is also not feasible to copy and save this many versions of the database. It was emphasized that data applicants themselves are not allowed to archive the data as received from ICP Forests even if regulations of certain funding agencies and scientific demands require them to do so. According to the ICP Forests data policy, all ICP Forests data must be deleted by the data applicant at project closure. Mr Kirchner will evaluate possible future proceedings, but for the moment no satisfying outcome has been defined.

34. Mr Köhl presented further potential changes to the data application and publication process as discussed during the 29th Task Force Meeting in Belgrade. A draft of a new data request form and corresponding changes to the ICP Forests Manual will be prepared by PCC and discussed during the next PCG meeting. It will then be put to the vote during the next Task Force meeting.

35. Mr Kirchner will check whether data accounts have been deleted in the past. He will add all forms and guidelines about, e.g., rules, IP, to the website.

Item 8: Status of the database and future developments of the data infrastructure

36. Mr Kirchner presented an overview of the recently submitted data on crown condition (Level I) and deposition (Level II). He explained that several components of the data infrastructure had been migrated from external, private hosting platforms to the IT infrastructure of the Thünen Institute with the aim to optimize the system administration and lower the recurrent costs for the hosting. He introduced standardized web services and summarizing algorithms to automate the creation of frequently needed summaries and overviews for internal use at PCC. He informed about the finalization of the “Own Tables Module” of the data portal with which members can share processed and aggregated data and referred to the minutes of the 29th Task Force Meeting in Belgrade for the relevant data policy rules. He reminded the Task Force that for any data corrections the complete survey of the corresponding year needs to be re-submitted by the country/partner. Mr Kirchner suggested a Data Publication Workshop and Data Submission Workshop in due time and offered his help in case any problems and questions arise concerning data delivery and the Data Unit in general. The Task Force particularly thanked Mr Kirchner for his work as data manager.

37. The Task Force approved that PCC runs minor updates on the data manually in collaboration with the data owner. Mr Kirchner emphasized that no changes will be made to the database without comprehensive discussions with the respective data provider.

38. Mr Kirchner evaluated advantages and disadvantages of allowing a continuous submission of data in the future. The Task Force approved that data can from now on be submitted continuously. All data that will be delivered after a given deadline, however, cannot be included in the Technical Report. This deadline is strict and set to be February 15.

Item 9: Co-operations with international organizations

39. On behalf of the ICP Forests participants at the INFRAIA proposal preparation meeting in Berlin, 7–8 April 2014, Mr Ferretti presented the **Horizon 2020 – INFRAIA-1-2014/2015** call about integrating and opening existing national and regional research infrastructures of European interest through activities such as networking, trans-national or virtual access, and joint research. One of the

specific areas listed in the call addresses research infrastructures for forest ecosystem and resources research. The tentative title of the project as of today is FORESTING (Forest Information Engineering) and EFI acts as coordinator. Of the ca. 30 partners involved in the preparation of the proposal, many are also involved in ICP Forests: CFRI (Croatia), CNR (Italy), CRA (Italy), IVL (Sweden), METLA (Finland), NW FVA (Germany), TerraData (Italy), Thünen Institute (Germany), SFI (Slovenia), Uni Hamburg (Germany), and WSL (Switzerland). ICP Forests in itself cannot formally take part in the project because it is not a legal body. It may therefore be necessary to think about a more agile, operational branch to obtain support through competitive projects, while at the same time keeping ICP Forests firmly tied to its mandate. Mr Ferretti highlighted the fact that monitoring or research in general are not funded through this call. After participation, however, there may be a chance to get better access to European research funds in the future.

40. The contributions to the discussion included the following statements:

- (a) A group within ICP Forests wants to apply for a research project, but ICP Forests has a specific mandate that we cannot change. There seems to be a discrepancy between the participation in a project and the mandate of ICP Forests. Mr Köhl pointed out that the participation in the H2020 call is just the wish of some representatives of individual institutions but that the participation is not the wish of the ICP Forests community as a whole.
- (b) Data access is seen as a key issue.
- (c) The default data policy rules of Horizon2020 have changed compared to FP7. In FP7 only the products had to be published; now all data from a project have to be made available as open data.
- (d) The objective of this call is to find ways to combine different data from different communities. To meet this specific objective a subset of the data may be sufficient. There is no way to include all of the ICP Forests data without permission of every participating state and/or the EU.
- (e) This call is about research infrastructures and its main focus is on sharing data. Since there is no single owner of the data, a mandatory merging of data pools will presumably raise questions regarding the scope and accessibility of the disseminated data and the rights of the data owners. Hence, more clarifications are needed before this can be discussed within the member countries.
- (f) The provision of access to a lab, plots, data will be paid by the one who applies for that access. This way one could get support for existing plots.
- (g) This call is a bit like LTER Europe: harmonization of metadata, providing access to each other. ‘Maybe we worry too much.’

The discussion was halted and its continuation postponed to the strategy discussion later that day.

41. Mr Lorenz reported on the last letter from the EC with information on the final payment of the “**FutMon**” project. He pointed out that before the distribution of BioSoil data to external parties, e.g., universities, the EC as co-owner of the data has to be consulted following EU law in addition to the NFCs. Any distribution of BioSoil data must be approved by the EC.

42. Mr Seidling informed about cooperations with other networks, organisations, and programmes, i.e., EANET, LTER Europe, Umweltbundesamt Wien, ICOS, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK), and Forest Europe. With LTER an MoU is in preparation.

Item 10: Data Policy of ICP Forests – Omitted.

Item 11: Organizational issues

43. Mr Seidling presented the financial statement of the last year. It is argued that the gap of unsecured funding is increasing with every year. This will be discussed at the next PCG meeting. In response to a comment by Mr Olendrzynski, PCC will make sure that at future Task Force meetings the financial statement as discussed during the meeting will be specifically approved by the Task Force.

Item 12: Future development of ICP Forests

44. Mr Nils König (Germany) on behalf of Nathalie Cools, Stephan Raspe and Peter Waldner presented a **proposal for the structure of future work in ICP Forests**. After a detailed discussion of the proposal, the following statements were approved by the Task Force:

- (a) PCG has to make a proposal each year for the future work of ICP Forests. This has to be done by looking at the questions from the WGE and Convention to ICP Forests. The proposal has to be adopted by the Task Force.
- (b) PCG has to make a proposal for the report to the WGE. This proposal has to be adopted by the Task Force.
- (c) Evaluations enforced by the WGE should be done by PCC together with the leaders of the responsible Expert Panel and other consulted persons.
- (d) PCG has to make a proposal for the Executive Report based mainly on the scientific publications of the last years. PCG should consult the Scientific Committee. This proposal has to be adopted at the Task Force meeting.
- (e) All meeting documents must be distributed to all NFCs six weeks before the Task Force meeting.
- (f) The Technical Report should include a section on crown condition and the deposition time series each year. A list of all publications with ICP Forests data should be integrated, each with a short summary. This has to be done by PCC.
- (g) A list (online) with all members of PCC should show their role and different (new) responsibilities within PCC. Their linkage to the Expert Panels should be clarified.

It is further suggested to have PCG meetings in June (directly after the Task Force meeting), in autumn (after WGE to ask for contributions) and February (to compile contributions) to prepare these papers. A decision on the number of PCG meetings is postponed to the next PCG meeting.

45. Mr Köhl initiated a **discussion on a new ICP Forests strategy**. During the discussion the following statements were provided by the Task Force:

- (a) The status of ICP Forests seems to be critical. The political relevance of monitoring activities has decreased. It is pivotal to reconcile political and societal needs with monitoring, emphasize the programme's significance, and establish clear objectives. It may be necessary to adapt technologies and develop an advanced monitoring. A clear vision is needed. The need for collaboration with other networks was emphasized.

- (b) The increase in the number of EU countries since the beginning of this programme may make it necessary to adapt to the changes and different funding opportunities involved. It was discussed that the downward trend of funding can only be reversed by raising awareness and demonstrating the importance of the programme. There is a general need for national funds; the continuation of ICP Forests will depend on it. NFCs and PCC should try to find ways to raise funds for national inventories. In order to receive continuous support, it was also argued that it must become a priority to disentangle air pollution effects from other confounding effects.
- (c) An external evaluation may be a powerful tool, i.e., for getting new ideas.
- (d) In Germany, a national regulation came into effect on 1 January 2014 making forest monitoring mandatory in order to fulfil national data needs. The methods are based on ICP Forests and keep in line with the requirements of the Convention.

46. It is approved that each NFC will analyse the state of the art by preparing a policy brief that contains the outcome of experiments and evaluations on one page like the WGE report. It is suggested to split it in two parts: national and international. The policy briefs should include simple key facts only. At their next meeting the PCG will discuss ideas from the policy briefs and include the NFCs in the discussion. They will then initiate a core group to develop a draft version of a strategy.

Item 13: Other business

47. Mr Žlindra (Slovenia) invited the Task Force to hold its 31st meeting in Slovenia in May 2015. The Task Force thanked Slovenia for the kind invitation.

Closing

48. On behalf of the Task Force Mr Köhl thanked Mr Olendrzynski from the LRTAP Convention Secretariat for his attendance, the new and old PCC, and especially the Greek organisers for their hospitality and the professional arrangements of the 30th Task Force Meeting. He then closed the meeting.