



# Nature restoration Forest eco-systems

A Policy Brief from the Policy Learning Platform on  
Environment and Resource Efficiency

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**Interreg  
Europe**



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## Summary

Forests are the largest terrestrial ecosystem in the EU. They host most biodiversity on land and contribute substantially to carbon storage and sequestration. Whilst forest ecosystems have shown improvements in the last decades, a deterioration of the condition of European forests can also be observed. Climate change impacts aggravate other destructive pressures such as pollution or pests and affect the extent and intensity of forest fires. In light of these pressures, the New EU Forest Strategy for 2030 sets a vision and concrete actions for increasing the quantity and quality of forests in the EU and for strengthening their protection, restoration and resilience.

The present policy brief provides an outlook on EU initiatives that local and regional authorities should refer to for boosting the restoration of forest ecosystems, afforestation and climate adaptation measures to the benefit of local communities. It also features a selection of Interreg Europe good practices and policy changes of particular interest with a high degree of replicability and adaptability to other local contexts.

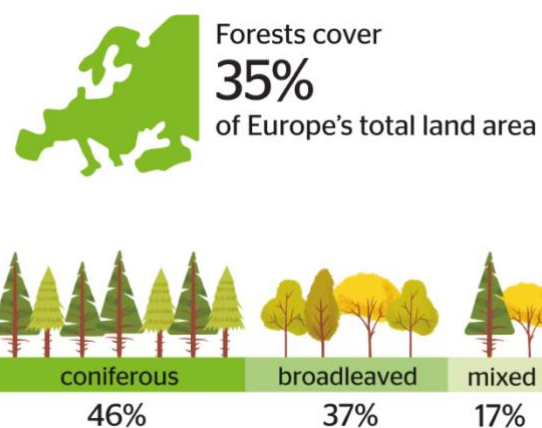
## European forests

In 2020, there were an estimated 180 million hectares of forests and other wooded land of the EU-27's land area. According to Forest Europe, most European forests are predominantly coniferous (46%), whilst 37% are mainly broadleaved, and the rest are mixed.

European forests are steadily becoming more diverse in tree species composition with stands composed of two or more tree species occupying 67% of the forest area. Monocultures or naturally homogenous forests dominated by single tree species represent 33% of the forest area.

Almost 50 million ha of forests are in areas protected for the conservation of biodiversity and landscape, considerably more than several decades ago. The area of forests designated for biodiversity conservation has increased by 65% in 20 years, and the area designated for landscape conservation by 8%. Forests designated for the protection of soil, water, and other ecosystem services represent about 32% of the forest area.

About 2% of the forests are considered undisturbed by man.



Source: Forest Europe

## Main challenges for European forests

European forest area has become bigger in the last decades thanks to natural processes, afforestation, sustainable management and active restoration. Also, the amount of deadwood in European forests has been growing. Yet, **the condition of European forests is apparently deteriorating**, with increasing mean defoliation of the main tree species. In March 2023, the German Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture published the results of its Forest Condition Survey 2022 and reported that 4 out of 5 trees are sick. Whether spruce, pine, beech or oak - the trees in Germany's forests are suffering greatly, in particular from drought and high temperatures which have continued to take their toll on the forests.

Climate change continues to negatively affect European forests, particularly but not only in areas with mono-specific and even-aged forest stands. Climate change has also brought to light previously hidden vulnerabilities aggravating other destructive pressures such as pests, pollution and diseases,

and it affects forest fire regimes, leading to conditions under which the extent and intensity of forest fires in the EU will increase in the next years.

There is a **clear regional pattern in specific disturbances**: fires occur mostly in the Mediterranean region, and windstorms and heavy snowfalls in central and north-western regions. Ungulate browsing is a European-wide disturbance. Damage by insects fluctuates, while damage by wind and snow has increased. However, an apparent shift in disturbances has been observed recently, suggesting extreme droughts and heat waves, more extensive bark beetle outbreaks, and a wider occurrence of forest fires.



Source: GreenMatters

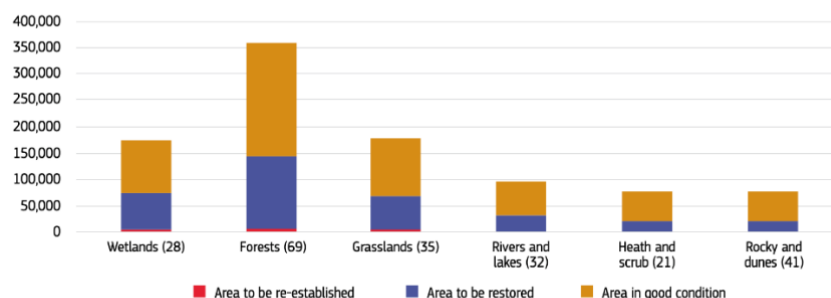
The major challenges and obstacles to achieving policy objectives include the funding of afforestation, reforestation and climate change adaptation activities. Moreover, competing land uses interests, effective operation and coordination of all key sectors and stakeholders, as well as more frequent and more severe weather events resulting from climate change represent key barriers for increasing the restoration of forest ecosystems.

## European policy framework

The European Union has established an impressive policy framework for the conservation and restoration of habitats and biodiversity. At the cornerstones of European legislation are the [Habitats Directive](#) and [Birds Directive](#) which require Member States to conserve and restore EU threatened habitats and species. In addition, the EU developed adjacent initiatives such as the [EU initiative on pollinators](#) and a specific [regulation on invasive species](#).

However, thus far these European policies and initiatives have only been successful to some extent, which is why the EU has been putting forward new strategies and is working on binding targets and timelines for nature restoration and biodiversity.

### Restoration needs for habitats types listed in the EU Habitat Directive



Source: EEA: Restoration needs of habitats listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive based on reporting by Member States (2013-2018). Romania is excluded because it reported Annex I areas exceeding the terrestrial area of the country. NB the figures are averages. They include habitats that have a poor or bad conservation status or an unknown status.

## EU Biodiversity strategy for 2030

With the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#), the EU published an ambitious plan to reverse the degradation of ecosystems focussing on topics such as climate change, forest fires, food insecurity and disease outbreaks. The Strategy provides a new impetus for the protection and restoration of nature and in particular of forests:

- **Protection:** Primary and old-growth forests are the richest forest ecosystems that remove carbon from the atmosphere, while storing significant carbon stocks. As part of the Strategy's focus on strict protection, it calls for the definition, mapping, monitoring and strict protection of the EU's remaining primary and old-growth forests.
- **Restoration:** In addition to strictly protecting all remaining EU primary and old-growth forests, the Strategy highlights that the EU must increase the quantity, quality and resilience of its forests, notably against fires, droughts, pests, diseases and other threats likely to increase with climate change. It underlines that to retain their function for both biodiversity and climate, all forests need to be preserved in good health. More resilient forests can support a more resilient economy.

## New EU Forest Strategy for 2030

In July 2021, the European Commission adopted the [New EU Forest Strategy for 2030](#), a flagship initiative of the [European Green Deal](#) that builds on the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. The strategy contributes to the [package of measures](#) proposed to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions of at least 55% by 2030 and climate neutrality in 2050 in the EU. It also helps the EU deliver on its commitment to enhance carbon removals by natural sinks as indicated in the [Climate Law](#).

The Forest Strategy sets a vision and concrete actions for increasing the quantity and quality of forests in the EU and strengthening their protection, restoration and resilience. The proposed actions will increase carbon sequestration through enhanced sinks and stocks thus contributing to climate change mitigation. The Strategy commits to strictly protecting primary and old-growth forests, restoring degraded forests, and ensuring they are managed sustainably – in a way that preserves the vital ecosystem services that forests provide and on which society depends.

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*“Forests and other wooded land... are essential for the health and well-being of all Europeans. We depend on them for the air we breathe and the water we drink and their rich biodiversity and unique natural system are home and habitat for most species found on land around the world. “*

*New EU Forest Strategy 2030*

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The Strategy promotes the most climate and biodiversity friendly forest management practices, emphasises the need to keep the use of woody biomass within sustainability boundaries, and encourages resource-efficient wood use in line with [the cascade principle](#). A roadmap for planting at least 3 billion additional trees in the EU by 2030 is included in the strategy.

## EU Nature restoration law

In June 2022, the European Commission adopted the proposal for a [Nature Restoration Law](#) aiming at restoring damaged EU ecosystems and bringing nature back across Europe. The proposal contains legally binding targets for nature restoration in different ecosystems that will apply to every Member State, complementing existing laws.

The aim is to cover at least **20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 with nature restoration measures**, and eventually extend these to all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. The law will scale up existing experiences such as rewilding, returning trees, greening cities and infrastructure, or removing pollution to allow nature to recover.

For **forest ecosystems**, the proposed law aspires to achieve an overall increase of biodiversity and a positive trend for forest connectivity, deadwood, share of uneven-aged forests, forest birds and stock of organic carbon.

## Global Biodiversity Framework

In December 2022, the European Union joined 195 countries in the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#) at the UN Biodiversity conference COP15 in Montréal (Canada). The agreement provides a global roadmap to protect and restore nature for current and future generations, sets measurable targets by 2030 and 2050 and spurs investments for a green global economy with the Global Biodiversity Fund.

The Global Biodiversity Framework aims at restoring 30% degraded ecosystems on land and sea and at conserving 30% of the world's marine and terrestrial areas by 2030. Moreover, it aspires to reduce risks from pollution and pesticides and targets subsidies harmful to biodiversity.



### Description of forest ecosystem services from the 17th century

"I am the forest, I am ancient, I guard the stag, I guard the deer, I protect you from the storm, I protect you from the snow, I fight the frost, I keep the spring, I guard the soil, I am always there, I build your house, I heat your stove. Therefore, you humans, hold me in high esteem."

Inscription on a 17th century forester's lodge in the Black Forest  
Source: GreenMatters



## European financial support for nature restoration and forest ecosystems

The EU is working towards the ambition of dedicating 7.5% of the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework ([MFF](#)) adopted for the 2021-2027 programming period to biodiversity objectives as of 2024, and 10% in 2026 and 2027. According to the EU Biodiversity Strategy, through EU structural and investments funds ([ESIFs](#)) and direct funding instruments such as [LIFE](#) and [Horizon Europe](#) programmes, around €100 billion will be available for biodiversity spending, including restoration.

The European Regional Development Fund ([ERDF](#)) for instance could support projects such as the [VALCONMAC](#) project that will rehabilitate and protect the ecosystems of Macaronesia's forests containing unique tree species and groves. It could also enable projects like [URBFORDAN](#) where cities in the Danube region joined forces to develop their forest areas sustainably. It could also help modernising the process of breeding, planting and cultivating a variety of trees species as in the [Saving forgotten forest fruit trees](#) project which introduced a joint forestry curriculum to technical schools in Croatia and Hungary. Moreover, projects such [OFIDIA2](#) can support the early detection of forest fires helping to save property and lives threatened by an increasing number of forest fires in Italy and Greece or creating single operational command structure ([ARIEM+](#) project) to improve response coordination and elaborated harmonised protocols for tackling emergencies such as forest fires, floods and erosion in der border region of Portugal and Spain.

The LIFE financing programme has supported over 1,800 nature and biodiversity projects in order to safeguard Europe's nature since its creation in 1992. Despite the programme's small size, the EUR 2.2 billion invested so far in these projects has done much to implement EU biodiversity policy. In the present programming period, the LIFE programme will continue to enable projects on nature, biodiversity and climate adaptation. To this end, the [new regulation](#) governing the programme between 2021 and 2027 allocated a budget of EUR 2.143 billion for the subprogramme 'Nature and Biodiversity', and EUR 947 million for the subprogramme 'Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation'. LIFE is expected to help the dissemination of best practices and solutions like those promoted by the [HEALTHY FOREST](#) project on advanced methodologies for more sustainable forest management, the [LIFEinFORESTS](#) project improving the conservation status of the Natura 2000 forest sites in Hungary and demonstration projects such as the [LIFE FOREST CO2](#) project on the assessment of forest-carbon sinks and promotion of compensation systems as tools for climate change mitigation.

Restoring Europe's ecosystems and biodiversity, and managing sustainably natural resources to ensure food security and a clean and healthy environment is one of the four 'key strategic orientations' of the [Horizon Europe](#). It dedicates funding to [protecting and restoring ecosystems and biodiversity](#) and managing sustainably natural resources on land and at sea, and achieving climate neutrality and adaptation. Horizon Europe [Cluster 6](#) – on food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment aims at reducing environmental degradation, halting and reversing the decline of biodiversity on land, inland waters and sea and better managing natural resources through transformative changes of the economy and society in both urban and rural areas. The EU also supports biodiversity research through the [Biodiversa ERA-net](#), which coordinates national research programmes across Europe and organises international funding for biodiversity research projects on a competitive basis.

The new [Interreg Europe 2021-2027 programme](#) also provides opportunities for exchange of experience on any policy objective, including the possibility to test out solutions through pilot actions when justified. By way of example, as a result of the first Interreg Europe call, the project 'Green Infrastructure for Forests and Trees (GIFT)' has started in March 2023. The project aims to improve regional policies by raising awareness that sufficient green infrastructure of trees and forests is a prerequisite for halting biodiversity loss and mitigating climate change.

## Protecting and restoring forest ecosystems

### Eco-systems services of forests

Forests and trees have an irreplaceable function and provide wide range of ecosystem services. They filter pollutants to provide clean air and water, regulate temperature, store carbon, stabilise soil and prevent erosion, provide medicine, food and materials. They are home to most species on the planet, main source of terrestrial biodiversity and the main terrestrial carbon sink on the planet.

Today, most EU forests are semi-natural (89%), about 3% are primary or old-growth forests and the remainder are plantations. In its [guidelines](#) for 'Defining, Mapping, Monitoring and Strictly Protecting EU Primary and Old-Growth Forests' published in March 2030, the European Commission underlines in particular the role of primary and old-growth forests. These forests are some of the EU's richest ecosystems and store significant carbon stocks. They are of paramount importance for biodiversity - providing a habitat for many of the EU's endangered and endemic species - and the provision of multiple ecosystem services. In Europe, these forest areas are rare, often small, and fragmented.



#### ▪ Restoring ecological diversity of forests (Croatia and Hungary)

The forest companies of the Croatian-Hungarian border region implemented the project 'Restoring Ecological Diversity of Forests' in order to preserve a range of forest ecosystem services such as biodiversity, recreation and biomass resources. The overall objective of the project is to provide forest companies and organisations responsible for managing habitats with a detailed, up-to-date monitoring system supported by airborne imaging. This accelerates reactions to emerging hazards, protects/restores natural assets by enabling forest companies to select more efficient interventions, improves knowledge of forest engineers, and raises awareness of forest values while providing financial benefits due to the technology used. The companies surveyed a total of 24,838 ha using airborne imaging technologies and defined parameters for monitoring. As a result, it was possible to differentiate species, calculate stocks as well as to recognise invasive species and diseases.

Further information about the practice is available [here](#).

#### ▪ Forests for water in Catalonia (Spain)

The innovative good practice from the Catalan Region aims at strengthening the link between forests and water. Overall, the objective is to diversify financing sources for forest management by integrating ecosystem service provision into the economic balance sheet. The instrument chosen to frame this joint strategic planning was the "Urban Masterplan of the water reservoir". The region aspires to reach a written recognition in a legal document underlining the role of forestry in water and landscape conservation, and recognising of forestry as a potentially relevant economic activity in the area that can be promoted along with the tourism. In parallel, a real Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) mechanism has been designed and begun to be implemented in the area: a Voluntary Fund for forests and water. The Fund will be based on the diagnosis, priorities and recommendations included in the Urban Masterplan. The Fund is ringfenced for the six municipalities affected by the Rialb reservoir and will only invest on its watershed of about 35,000 ha.

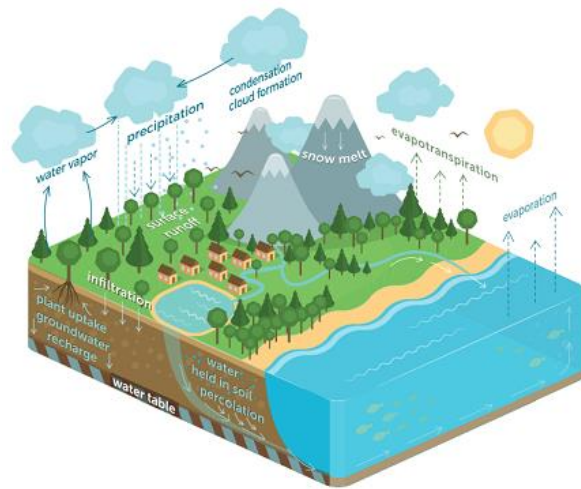
Further information about the practice is available [here](#).



## Forests and water

Forest management and water quality are closely linked and it is widely recognised that sustainably managed forests play an important role in **maintaining water quality**. Through stabilisation of soil, forests minimise erosion and hence reduce the impairment of water quality due to sedimentation. Woodlands protect water bodies and watercourses by trapping sediments and pollutants from other up-slope land use and activities.

Forests also play a role in **water availability**. They influence the amount of available water by intercepting precipitation, evaporating moisture from vegetative surfaces, transpiring soil moisture, capturing fog water and maintaining soil infiltration.



Source: FAO

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ([FAO](#)) points out that **changes in land use** - such as deforestation, degradation, reforestation, and afforestation - can influence water services and landscape resilience in the face of water-related natural hazards. Deforestation for example can lead to increased water yield in the short term but may reduce annual yield in the long term, affecting both nearby and distant water supplies. Deforestation can also increase sediments downstream, resulting in flood risks.

Many local administrations are recognising the important link between forest and water. For example the [PROGRESS](#) has highlighted the good practice ‘Forest for water’ (see previous page) in the Catalan region. By setting up a ‘Voluntary Fund for Forests and Water’ the region aspires to diversify financial sources for forest management by integrating ecosystem service provision into the economic balance sheet.



### Recovering poplar groves in Granada (Spain)

The Vega of Granada and its poplar groves are a sign of identity for more than a century. However, in the last 20 years, the poplar area in the Vega de Granada has been substantially reduced and replaced by intensive agricultural crops. During this period, 4,500 ha of poplar groves have been lost due to the loss of economic competitiveness of poplar groves, the low market value of the wood and the lack of appreciation of the environmental services provided by poplar trees. They offer a high carbon sequestration capacity, regulate the water cycle, refresh the environment, conserve soil quality, improve air quality and provide habitat for many species of fauna. The good practice aims to recover the poplar plantations and aspires to develop a local proximity industry and a low ecological footprint. Today, the technical structural timber derived from innovative manufacturing processes offers a great opportunity to deliver timber for construction. At the same time, the poplar groves are an intangible asset absorbing much more CO<sub>2</sub> than intensive herbaceous crops, reducing pollution and acting as a green ring for the metropolitan area of Granada.

Further information about the practice is available [here](#).

## The recreational function of forests

Forests provide an environment where it is possible to escape from the stresses of modern life, to connect with nature and experience tranquil and scenic places. Forests also provide wild areas where activities such as mountain biking, orienteering and other active and challenging sports can be pursued.

The development of [forests for recreation](#) is seen as an important aspect of sustainable forestry and there is an increasing recognition of the wide ranging benefits that forests provide to society. Today, recreation is perhaps the most important non-timber service provided by forests.

Several Interreg Europe projects have featured good practices offering recreational activities in forest areas and peri-urban nature. The [ECO-CICLE](#) project has shared the immensely successful good practice 'Cycling through the trees' (see below) which allows visitors to cycle between the trees around a double circle up to a height of 10 metres. The [RENATUR](#) project presented the [green belt of Vitoria-Gasteiz](#) (Spain) offering large green areas around the city and the [Flemish belt around Brussels](#) (Belgium) working in design workshop with students to make the Northern periphery around Brussels accessible.



Source: [www.bosland.be](http://www.bosland.be)

**ECO-CICLE**  
Interreg Europe



### Cycling through the trees (Belgium)

The Belgian forest of Bosland, in the Province of Limburg, is located just an hour away from Brussels. Here, the Pijnven forest has been turned into an cycling experience by installing an elevated, circular cycling path in the trees. The corten steel pillars were installed at varying intervals of one, two and three metres apart, symbolising the straight trunks of the pine trees and ensuring that the structure fits well into the environment. By unlocking the Bosland forest, the largest uninterrupted forest area in Flanders, visitors can experience this natural world in a very special way. Moreover, Bosland received a new landmark that will help attract cyclists and tourists. As a part of the Cycling through the Trees project, Bosland is improving the Pijnven forest management with a woodland management plan.

The opening of the cycle path was a huge success, receiving a lot of attention in Belgian and international media, as well as being covered in numerous architecture and design magazines/websites. The cycling paradise remains one of the biggest attractions and one of the main reasons to come to Limburg and inspired new projects such a cycle path through water and the underground.

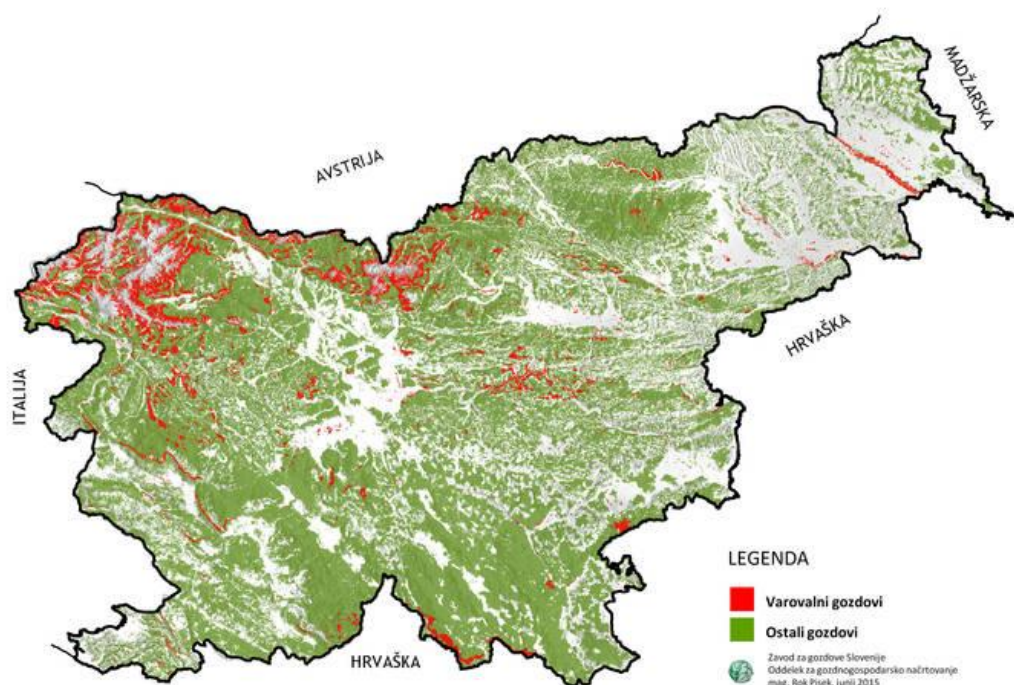
Further information about the practice is available [here](#).

## Forests management plans in Slovenia – Policy changes

Forest management planning in Slovenia has a long tradition. However, the forestry sector must increasingly integrate other fields in its work (e.g. water protection, tourism, recreation) to direct forest use according to its principles: sustainable, close to nature and multifunctional. This implies that public forestry agencies need to manage complex and conflicting interests and require better public participation skills and improved financial, organisational and technical capacity to effectively use participatory approaches.

The main priority of the Slovenian [Action Plan](#) developed under [BIOGOV](#) Project was to implement participatory governance processes to aid the preparation of forest management plans. The Slovenian Forestry Institute used the interregional learning opportunities for capacity building of staff and got particularly inspired by study visits to Romania and Sweden as well as the good practice '[A participatory process leading to cross-fertilisation between policy and practice](#)' submitted by the Belgian BIOGOV Partner. As a result, the Slovenian Forest Service has been able to substantially improve planning processes and has implemented **policy changes** by

- Preparing Regional Forest Management Guidelines on participatory planning
- Increasing consultation for planning and co-creating 3 recreational paths with forest owners, cycling association, municipalities and end-users
- Carrying out training workshops for planners & stakeholders to plan forest management for the next 10 years.
- Strengthening the role of biodiversity in forest management.



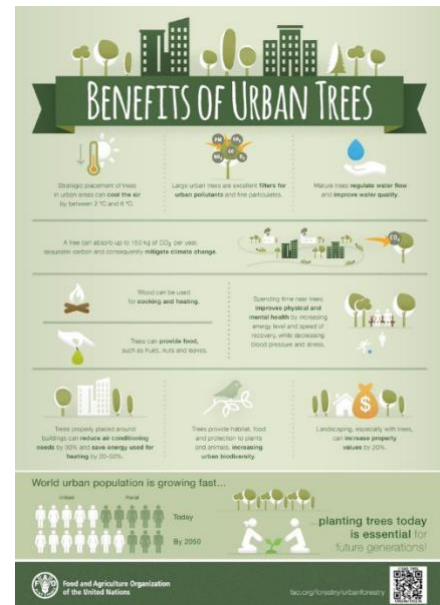
Source: Slovenian Forest Service - <http://www.zgs.si/eng>



## Urban forestation

Trees in urban and peri-urban areas are mainly street trees and trees in parks, open spaces, on private property and in green buildings. On average, green areas such as urban green spaces and urban forests make up 40% of the land covered by Europe's cities.

In March 2023, the European Commission published the '[Guidelines on Biodiversity-Friendly Afforestation, Reforestation and Tree Planting](#)'. The Commission underlined that over the last decades, urban areas have undergone significant unsustainable land use development, which has resulted in increased soil sealing and a loss of the peri-urban agroecosystem. As a consequence, these changes have an effect on the structure of urban green spaces and their capacity to provide ecosystem services. For cities, these include erosion control-related measures, air purification and outdoor recreation. In this context, European cities have a crucial role in restoring and increasing biodiversity.



The Municipality of Reggio Emilia (Italy) has been addressing the urgent need of urban reforestation and presented its [Urban Forestation Plan](#) within the framework of the [PROSPERA](#) project. The Municipality intends to plant 50,000 trees before 2030, in 100 different public green areas in order to protect Reggio Emilia from pollution and impacts of climate change. The forestation interventions are part of a participatory co-designing process involving the residents of targeted neighbourhoods. The co-design process respects the territorial context as well as the needs of different communities in terms of accessible spaces and services by improving shading, air quality and local microclimate.



### The national forest park of Athalassa (Cyprus)

The National Forest Athalassa has plenty of underground waters, relatively smooth terrain and it consists of geological formations of the Troodos Mountain range, some of which were formed during the Cenozoic era. For many years, the forest located in Cyprus' capital Nicosia was an abundant, declined and inaccessible area. Over the last decades, the park was transformed into an oasis of greenery with many endemic, indigenous trees, shrubs and herbs. It is now the main green lung of Nicosia and a source of leisure and oxygen for the locals and the visitors of the capital.

Throughout the area, there are growing more than 300 trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, while the rich fauna of the park counts about 173 species of birds, 27 species of butterflies 7 species of mammals, 6 species of reptiles, as well as an amphibian. Significant contribution to the development of the park has always been the standard planting of trees by schools and organised groups during the tree festival, organised by the competent bodies of the park. Today, the Athalassa Park is a European reference for how a natural area can combine green infrastructure and urban development.

Further information about the practice is available [here](#).



#### ▪ **Peri-urban forest park in Bilbao, Spain**

The city of Bilbao in Northern Spain is flanked by two mountain ranges which host the Bilbao Forest Parks. Together with its urban parks and gardens, these peri-urban open areas make up the green belt of Bilbao. Recently, 18,500 native trees have been planted in order to reinforce the values of preservation, conservation and enjoyment of nature.

The restoration with native vegetation allows the city to take care of biodiversity and to maintain healthy ecosystems. Over the last few years, more than 100 hectares of recreational areas have been generated in peri-urban forest parks. Today, recreational areas and their infrastructure provide an incentive for visitors, facilitate environmental education and research activities, while allowing an orderly use with minimal impact on ecosystems.

Further information about the practice is available [here](#).

#### ▪ **Land purchase policy by Kampinoski National Park, Poland**

The Kampinoski National Park borders with Warsaw and is surrounded by communes with intensive development due to the proximity and accessibility of Warsaw. For 40 years, the park authorities have skillfully and systematically carried out a land purchase policy to enhance the integrity of the park and to better provide ecosystem services. From the very beginning, the buyout process has been carried out with taking into account the rights of private owners and providing them with appropriate compensation. In doing so, 861 ha of peri-urban open spaces have been secured over the last 10 years. In addition to the primary role of securing areas for nature, park authority strives to make area available to any visitors and educate people on civic responsibility and environmental awareness.

Further information about the practice is available [here](#).

#### ▪ **Green Infrastructure booklets, Hungary**

With the Green Infrastructure booklets, the Municipality of Budapest wanted to promote the development of urban green infrastructure, to help the work of professionals and decision-makers and to better inform citizens. The booklet series covers all major topics, from basic knowledge of urban ecology to ecosystem services and green spaces as well as the ecological system of stormwater management:

Booklet 1: Permeable pavements

Booklet 2: Green facades

Booklet 3: Water sensitive design in urban outdoor spaces

Booklet 4: Relationship between urban trees and utilities

Booklet 5: Renovation of downtown inner courtyards

Booklet 6: Protection of tree spaces and green strips along city roads

The publications present professional, yet easy-to-understand and applicable proposals that not only facilitate planning, but also enable the wider application of innovative and climate-friendly solutions in developments and investments, even at a smaller community level.

Further information about the practice is available [here](#).

## Recommendations and key learnings

- Recognise the role that forests are playing in **maintaining water quality and water availability** and establish a payment for ecosystems services mechanism such as [the 'Voluntary Fund for forests and water'](#) in Catalonia (Spain).
- Provide forest companies and organisation with adequate **monitoring systems** helping them to [restore the ecological diversity of forests](#) and to recognise invasive species and diseases as in the border region of Croatia and Hungary
- **Revive natural heritage** such as the [poplar groves in Granada](#) (Spain) and develop a sustainable local proximity industry
- Enable citizens to **experience the forest** with new, inspiring installations for **recreation** as build in the Belgian forest of [Bosland](#)
- Implement **participatory processes** to aid the preparation of **forest management plans** such as the [Slovenian Forest Service](#)
- **Combine green infrastructure and urban development** as implemented by the City of Nicosia (Cyprus) with the [Athalassa National Forest Park](#)
- Check the **Urban Forestation plan** of the [Reggio-Emilia](#) (Italy) to better protect your municipality from pollution and the effects of climate change
- Plant trees in the surroundings of your cities to **offer recreational space** for its citizens following the example of [Bilbao](#) (Spain)
- Develop a **land purchase policy** to counter the competition on land use and systematically follow through such as [Kampinoski National Park](#) near Warsaw (Poland)
- Get inspired by the series of [Green Infrastructure Booklets](#) developed by the City of Budapest (Hungary) to understand better understand the **relation between city trees and utilities**.
- Provide a **better environment for city trees** by using the Stockholm Solution featured in the story ['Planting trees the right way'](#).



Source: GreenMatters



## The Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform supporting regions and municipalities in meeting the challenge of restoring forest ecosystems

Interreg Europe, through its [Policy Learning Platform](#), provides a number of services to both ongoing projects and the wider regional policy [Community](#). As well as operating the [Good Practice Database](#), drawing together the best of the good practices identified by projects, and providing a [Knowledge Hub](#) of policy briefs and articles, the Policy Learning Platform offers on-demand [Expert Support](#), including a helpdesk, matchmaking service and peer reviews to assist regions in their transition:

- Via the [Policy Helpdesk](#), policy-makers may submit their questions to receive a set of resources ranging from inspiring good practices from across Europe, policy briefs, webinar recordings, information about upcoming events, available European support and contacts of relevant people, as well as recommendations on matchmaking and peer review opportunities.
- A [Matchmaking](#) session is a thematic discussion hosted and moderated by the Policy Learning Platform and designed around the policy needs and questions put forward by the requesting public authority or agency. It brings together peers from other regions in Europe to present their experiences and successes to provide inspiration on overcoming regional challenges.
- [Peer Reviews](#) are the most deep and intensive of the on-demand services, bringing together peers from a number of regions for a two-day working session to examine the specific territorial and thematic context of the requesting region, discuss with stakeholders, and devise recommendations for the region.

### Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform information

- Policy Brief on [preserving and restoring biodiversity](#)
- Policy Brief on [good governance for biodiversity](#)
- Workshop on [bringing back nature to the city](#)
- Story '[Planting Trees the right way](#)'

### Other sources

- The [European Green Deal](#)
- [The European Climate Law](#)
- The [EU Biodiversity Strategy](#)
- The [New EU Forest Strategy](#)
- The EU [Nature Restoration Law](#)
- The [Global Biodiversity Framework](#)
- The European Commission '[Guidelines on Biodiversity-Friendly Afforestation, Reforestation and Tree Planting](#)'

# Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform on Environment and resource efficiency

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