



To the Members and member organisations of EFI

18 May 2017

Dear colleagues,

In late April this year, the Board and Council of the European Forest Institute met in Dublin. Discussions focused around the important developments of the Institute, since the previous ordinary Council meeting in Vienna in 2014, and especially on the implementation of the new EFI Strategy. It is encouraging for all of us dedicated to, and involved in the work of EFI, that the Council confirms their engagement in our activity and emphasizes the relevance and importance of the work of the organization. In Dublin the Council did exactly that. EFI has made a difference and it is recognized. The Council also elected new members to the board.

EFI's new strategy is ambitious in its vision, as it aims at positioning the Institute as a globally recognized European science-policy platform. Our task is to generate policy-relevant science to unlock the potential of forests in addressing emerging challenges. The strategy is articulated around the importance of forests and its sound governance in building a bioeconomy and increasing the resilience of our societies. The Institute aims to facilitate science-informed policies for the benefits of our society. Nothing less.

It has been encouraging to participate in the development of the new strategy. I am very grateful for all the inputs from Associate Members, Member Countries, the Secretariat - and from my fellow Board members. I think it would be accepted by them that I in particular mention the work done by Eeva Hellström in the development of the strategy. Her contributions have been instrumental.

Five years have gone since the first ThinkForest event was organized in Brussels in 2012. It is clear that ThinkForest has been a very much needed platform that has provided an informed dialogue on European forests and how they can contribute to address societal challenges. European forests need a reliable voice in Europe and in Brussels in particular. ThinkForest has represented this voice for five years and we will strive to make it continue to do so. To underline this I would like to quote the current Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Margot Wallström, when she recently expressed: We need more facts in politics, less so politics in facts.

Research by EFI member organizations and the EFI Secretariat is the core of our activity. In these days when people all over the world engage in science marches and speak out towards the tendency to undermine scientific-based information, we should stay firm in defending the research-based knowledge needed to make better policies. I trust that all member organizations are with us in this endeavour. I am also confident that the EFI Scientific Advisory Board will assist us and guide us in our further work. We are very grateful for their contributions.

I look forward to welcoming you all to the EFI Annual Conference 2017 in Oslo in October.

Yours sincerely,



Knut Øistad

Chair of the EFI Board