

THREE BILLION ADDITIONAL TREES BY 2030

#3BillionTrees



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Conference

Rooting for #3BillionTrees

*Date: 20 March 2024 14:00-18:00
BREY Auditorium, Avenue Auderghem 45
European Commission, Brussels*

Background

“The EU’s forested area needs to improve, both in quality and quantity, for the EU to reach climate neutrality and a healthy environment” (European Green Deal Communication, 11.12.2019).

Larger and more resilient forest areas, more trees in urban areas, focus on the right species in the right locations, are all crucial elements for the success of European policy on biodiversity and climate including the Nature Restoration Law. The new EU Forest Strategy for 2030¹ aims at ensuring forest restoration and reinforced sustainable forest management for climate adaptation and forest resilience. It sets out among other things a **road map for planting 3 billion additional trees by 2030** (3BT) based on the principle **“the right tree, in the right place for the right purpose”**.

The escalating impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss on Europe’s forests pose a very significant risk for forest-based economies, rural life, the maintenance of forest carbon sink, biodiversity and other ecosystem services. Planting trees helps to restore habitats and promote biodiversity conservation by providing food, shelter and breeding grounds to wildlife. Planting trees helps mitigate climate change by reducing the concentration of greenhouse gases. Many regions in the EU experience forest and land degradation, and habitat fragmentation due to human activities such as intensive forestry and urbanization. Planting trees helps restore degraded ecosystems, stabilize soils and prevent erosion. Planting trees also provide employment opportunities and a sense of belonging. Furthermore, wood is also a key part of bioeconomy, under an increasing demand. Projections indicate that the demand of biomass will be considerably higher than what will be available through sustainably sourced supply.

The 3BT gained momentum, together with the launch of the EU Biodiversity and Forest Strategies, as a response to the urgent need to address environmental challenges and climate change impacts. It aims at increasing forest cover and promoting sustainability. It builds on planting actions and commitments made

¹ COM (2021) 572.

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by governments, organizations or citizens to promote biodiversity, contribute to mitigating climate change and adapt to its consequences and restore ecosystems.

The 3BT pledge is not only about reaching a numerical target but also about fostering a global culture of environmental stewardship and collective action to safeguard our planet for future generations. It underscores the relevance of integrating nature-based solutions into broader climate mitigation and adaptation strategies to address the interconnected challenges of ecosystems degradation, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Larger and healthier forest is a precondition for achieving the carbon removal targets of the revised **LULUCF regulation**. The **Forest monitoring law and the soil monitoring law proposals** set the framework for improved monitoring and knowledge of our forest and soil, including forest soil. Planting trees – in the appropriate ecosystems – helps restore nature and will contribute to the objectives of the **Nature Restoration Law (NRL)**. Member States will be required to contribute to the 3BT when identifying and implementing the restoration measures to meet the objectives and obligations set out in the NRL. The 3BT also fits very well with the need to make up for increasing logging rates in the EU due to an increased demand for biomass. In general, even if the 3BT refers to additional trees rather to re-planting of logged trees, planting new trees allows to maintain and further extend the size of forest and tree cover in the Union.

A particularly strong link is becoming more and more evident between **water resilience and forests**: trees play a crucial role in regulating the water cycle, influencing precipitation patterns, improving water quality, mitigating the impacts of extreme weather events such as floods and droughts and preventing soil erosion. Forest ecosystems have a direct impact on humidity in the atmosphere and the quantity of rainfall, the water is then filtered by forest soil resulting in more and purer tap water for the surrounding communities. They also cool the temperature and help greatly against heatwaves. Protecting and restoring forest ecosystems is therefore essential to maintain water security, biodiversity, ecological resilience in landscapes.

Not least, it is important to recall the objective and benefits of the **transition to a carbon-neutral economy**. The whole chain of tree growing – planting, nurseries, etc. – provides work for many people. The average house prices have been shown in case studies to be up to 20% higher for properties associated with mature trees – conversely a strong correlation was identified between poor quality environments and deprived neighborhoods. Besides the well-known economic benefits related to timber production and use, trees can be beneficial for the economy in relation to **green infrastructure developments**, which also play an important role in enabling commercial development. Finally, wildfires

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cost over 2 bn € annually and generate significant CO₂ emissions. Restoring and reforestation, focusing on more resilient species, allows to prevent or reduce such losses.

Draft programme

Moderator: **Katrina Sichel** Managing Director, Wit and Word Communications SRL

14:00 – 14:05	Video message by EU Commissioner
14:05 – 14:15	Welcome speech Florika Fink-Hooijer , Director-General, DG Environment.
14:20 - 15:30	High-level panel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pippa Hackett, Minister of State, Ireland – Alain Maron, Minister (Brussels- Capital Region) (TBC) – Francesco Gaeta, Director, European and International Affairs (France) (TBC) – Nuno Banza, President, Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (Portugal) (TBC) – Jürgen Tack, President, European Landowners' Organization – Viveka Beckeman, Director General, Swedish Forest Industries
15:30 – 15:45	<i>Coffee break</i> – 15 minutes
15:45 – 16:45	Thematic sessions (each max 30 minutes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewilding forests (natural regeneration/restoration of degraded forest ecosystems) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Martin Jentzen (Sweden) – Areti Christodoulou, Department of Forests, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, Cyprus • Reforestation after fires/disturbances in light of adaptation to climate change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sonia Roig, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (Spain)
16:45 – 18:00	Success stories from the pledgers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisations which reported trees to the EU tree counter