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Presentations	Session 3.1	<i>European Forest coalitions – past, present and future.</i>

*Abstract Session 3.1 – EU Forest Governance post-2020: Perceptions, coalitions and policy frames.*

Forest governance in the European Union (EU) is complex as various policy domains relate to forests and a large potpourri of policy instruments, both legally binding and non-binding, were developed and implemented over the past three centuries. The year 2020 builds a turning point for forest policy making in the EU, not only because new forest-related policy strategies were outlined (e.g. EU Biodiversity strategy 2030, Green New Deal), but also because a large number of forest-related policy instruments are in the making (e.g. regulation on deforestation and forest degradation, LULUCF Regulation, climate law, renewable energy directive, rural development regulation, policies on sustainable finance, etc.). Previous research indicates three lines of arguments in EU forest policy-making: Firstly, there is a clash of interest between those who regard forests as resource that should be sustainably managed and used, and those who see the protection of forests as of utmost importance. Secondly, there is disagreement on the level at which forest policymaking and coordination should occur, relating to competency and subsidiarity issues. And lastly, there are different forest management traditions and trends across sectors and regions in Europe (plantation forestry, “Nordic forestry”, multifunctional or integrated forest management, etc.), being connected to different governance approaches and policy priorities, and eventually major forest policy “frames” or “discourses”. With these in mind, our exploratory research aims to study how representatives of the Member State, the European Commission, and Brussel-based stakeholders perceive present and future EU forest policy in addition to understanding what frames underlie those visions. Lastly, our research aims to understand what new coalitions form across and between those actors’ groups. A total of 66 interviews were conducted (28 x EU level representing forest owners, industry and environmental and conservation groups + 38 x Member States from forest and environmental ministries) during the summers/autumns of 2019 and 2020. We conclude by putting our recent findings in the perspective of past research on EU forest policy and comparing them, and identifying “well-known” policy frames and coalitions from new developments.

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