



OPEN LETTER

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The war in Ukraine has opened another dark chapter in European history and caused thousands of lost lives, deep suffering and destruction of critical civilian infrastructure. The EUFORGEN Steering Committee wishes to express its sincere solidarity and compassion with the people in Ukraine, and particularly with our friends and colleagues in forest research and forestry throughout the country.

In addition to the direct effects of the war, we are, through contact with Ukraine colleagues, aware that the situation for forest research and forestry in Ukraine is critical. Severe budget cuts and spread of staff across Europe leaves the entire forestry sector of Ukraine in great uncertainty and difficulty.

The brutal war leaves no protection of natural heritage or nature, and in the media, we have seen forests in the battlefields which are totally ruined. This has also been confirmed by Ukrainian colleagues. The scale of the war, particularly in the eastern part of the country, suggests that the potential for destruction of forests could be enormous. Considering the role of these forests as genetic resources, essential goods, and their importance for biodiversity it is a devastating loss which comes on top of the direct human suffering. Along with the damages to the forests come the inevitable ruining of critical forest research facilities such as laboratories, nurseries, and trials designed to support good decision making for future forestry. For us it is impossible grasp the actual situation, and this comes with a feeling of powerlessness. What can we do?

With this letter we wish to underscore EUFORGEN's solidarity and moral support to the people in Ukraine, and to further communicate our wish for a dialogue on how EUFORGEN can assist the forest genetic resource community in Ukraine, and thereby the general forestry sector. To ease this communication in the short term the EUFORGEN Steering Committee invites Ukraine to rejoin the EUFORGEN Programme.

Among the mandated tasks of EUFORGEN on conservation and use of forest genetic resources we particularly see opportunities for future collaboration on forest reproductive material and restoration strategies for the purpose of raising new forests following the war.

Sincerely,
EUFORGEN Steering Committee

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