

Statement by Mr Rui POMBO

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representing the Secretary of State for Nature Conservation and Forests

**Panel 1**

**SFM maintains forest biodiversity, ensuring a balance between forest ecosystem services. What are common achievements of SFM related to the maintenance of biodiversity?**

**Panel 2**

**What is needed in the future to further enhance forest biodiversity and guarantee forests' multi-functionality? Practical examples will be presented showing challenges, gaps, and tradeoffs from different pan-European regions.**

**We advocate the dominant paradigm of integration of functions in SFM.** This principle is embed in Portuguese forest policy, legislation and practices: forests conserve and protect biodiversity while producing goods and forests produce goods while protecting/conserving biodiversity.

The Forest Policy Act, the National Forest Strategy and the Regional Forest Plans (PROF), they all pursue a multifunctional approach, integrating all the functions that forests provide and PROF include norms that specifically address each of them:

- Production of wood and non-wood products;
- Protection of soil and water;
- Conservation of habitats, species of fauna and flora and geomonuments;
- Silvopastoral, hunting and fishing in inland waters;
- Recreation and landscape.

**Integration of biodiversity in forest management has to be considered in all types of forests.** The concrete practices, contained and implemented according to the forest owners' Management Plan, depend on site characteristics, habitats, type of forests, soil, etc – they should be based on science and technical appraisal upon specific situation, applying sustainable forest management in more “operational terms”.

**Silviculture is a science based on ecology**, therefore integration of biodiversity is always considered. In this regard we've been following with great interest the work of **the Integrate Network** to promote the exchange of successful management practices and experiences amongst its Members, gathering scientific knowledge and communicating these examples of integrated forest management approaches in Europe.

**When managing our forests there's always room for improvement.** In Portugal, the cycle of high risk of fire/ diseases/low profit leads to low investment in silvicultural operations and consequently abandonment/degradation of forests. Breaking such cycle requires investment and support to forest owners, especially for those services that market can't fully recognize, such as biodiversity.