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 geomonitor;
- 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.