



## **Situation and Needs Regarding Forests and Climate Change Adaptation in Eastern Europe and Central Asia**

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The nature of threats to forest ecosystems and their ecological implications in this region differ considerably from those encountered elsewhere in Europe and Asia and in other parts of the world. This distinction has been largely overlooked in international negotiations, in scientific studies and by international assistance programmes.

An FAO consultative workshop in Sopron, Hungary, organised for country representatives of the Balkans, East Europe and Central Asia in 2010 has confirmed that the level of awareness of climatic threats in general and the readiness to take measures on the political level is high across the region. However in many countries national climate change strategies and national forest strategy documents do not contain specific references to adaptation actions in the forest sector. It is also notable that although details on the extent of climate change experienced in the last century are mentioned, impacts of increasing aridity in the second half of the twentieth century on the vitality or stability of forest ecosystems are not reported.

The response strategy most commonly mentioned is to continue efforts to achieve sustainable management of forests. Adaptation in many countries will however also necessitate the adjustment of policies, taking into account the consequences of expected impacts of climate change for both operational and protected forest ecosystems. It is crucial to identify threats and implement appropriate measures. Some countries of the region have expertise in climate change vulnerability and impact assessments as well as with development of forest carbon projects. Still, in nearly all countries the organizations responsible for forest data collection, monitoring and supervision need strengthening. Significant knowledge gaps exist in all countries, including on the effect of climate change on ecological stability, productivity, carbon dynamics and vulnerability of forest ecosystems, as well as their climate tolerance and adaptability.