Federal Ministry
of Food
and Agriculture

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

# Prague Declaration on Forests

Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Mr. Marian Jurečka

and the

Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Germany,
Mr. Christian Schmidt

**We, the Ministers responsible for forestry, meeting at the Conference on "Integration of Biodiversity Enhancement into Sustainable Forest Management in the framework of EU Forestry Strategy" in Prague on 7th October 2016,**

- **acknowledge** the deep relationship between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany,

- **highlight** the value of the Strategic Dialogue between the Czech Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany (hereafter referred to as "Strategic Dialogue") which provided the framework for our cooperation on the pragmatic and efficient integration of nature conservation into the sustainable management of forests,

- **underline** the long-standing intensive Czech-German bilateral contacts between various partners and at all levels in the field of forestry,

- **reaffirm** that forest-related strategic planning and practical management in our countries are based on the concept of sustainable forest management, the implementation of which provides multiple benefits to society and contributes substantially to implementing the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, particularly but not exclusively in the fields of climate change, biodiversity conservation and social and economic development,

- **underline** both the importance of maintaining and enhancing forest-related biological diversity and, with respect to the historical, multifunctional and sustainably managed forests of Europe, the advantages of integrative approaches to nature protection in terms of cost-efficiency, areal coverage and overall effectivity in comparison with setting aside those forests and ending active forest management,

- **welcome** the establishment of four demonstration sites in the Czech Republic and twelve demonstration sites in the Federal Republic of Germany and the intensive knowledge exchange and mutual learning that have resulted on that basis,

- **welcome** also the active role of the European Forest Institute in supporting both countries' initiatives and involving other countries within a wider "Integrate+" network, which now covers more than 10 European countries, on the basis of its 2013 landmark report on "Integrative approaches as an opportunity for the conservation of forest biodiversity",

- **underline** the high relevance of the topic not only for the Federal Republic of Germany and the Czech Republic but also for most of the other European countries, due to which fact both countries decided to present their joint work within the Strategic Dialogue as a contribution to the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy,

- **welcome** the broad interest of like-minded countries in this important initiative,

- **appreciate** the excellent opportunity provided by the Prague Conference for bringing all involved sides together, thus broadening and intensifying the exchange of knowledge and forming the basis for future activities and concrete projects in this field.

## Call to action

**We are therefore determined to**

- **use** the outcomes of the Strategic Dialogue, such as the demonstration sites that have been established, the scientific evidence that has been gathered and the modern software tools in order to promote integrative approaches in forest management, forest pedagogy and communication with the general public, private forest owners and the environmental sector,

- **continue** the cooperation in the pragmatic and efficient integration of nature conservation into forest management, both now and also after the Prague Conference under a future European network which is to be established by 2017; this cooperation will serve inter alia as a contribution to the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy,

- **invite** the countries already actively involved at technical level and in demonstration sites to maintain this valuable commitment and continue the fruitful cooperation,

- **invite** other European countries to join in such a future network in order to widen the scope of best practice examples from various forest situations,

- **continue** and even increase our contributions and support for the European Forest Institute, especially with a view to encouraging broader use of scientific knowledge in policy and decision making at national and European levels and to promoting science-based information exchange across sectors,

- **invite** the other signatory states of the European Forest Institute to follow our example,

- **invite** the European Forest Institute to continue and further strengthen its new strategy and work program in this field.

**Prague, 7 October 2016**

**Marian Jurečka**
**Minister of Agriculture of the Czech Republic**

**Christian Schmidt**
**Federal Minister of Food and Agriculture of the Federal Republic of Germany**