



# NEAR EAST FORESTRY AND RANGE COMMISSION

## TWENTY-SIXTH SESSION

Amman, Jordan, 10 – 13 SEPTEMBER 2023

### INFORMATION NOTE ACTIVITIES OF THE AFWC/EFC/NEFRC COMMITTEE ON MEDITERRANEAN FORESTRY QUESTIONS – *SILVA MEDITERRANEA*

#### Executive Summary

- This document presents the past and future short-term activities planned by *Silva Mediterranea*

#### Suggested action by the Commission

The Commission may wish to:

- Encourage the Committee members to contribute to the development of interventions related to the Mediterranean Flagship Initiative
- Encourage the Committee members to support the implementation of the priority topics of the Mediterranean Youth Taskforce
- Recommend to the secretariat of the Committee *Silva Mediterranea* to coordinate the preparation of the planned publications (Unasyilva and State of Mediterranean Forests), engaging with members, working groups and partners

*Queries on the content of this document may be addressed to:*

**Silva Mediterranea Secretariat**  
[Silva-Mediterranea@fao.org](mailto:Silva-Mediterranea@fao.org)

## I. Introduction

1. Established in 1948, the Committee of Mediterranean Forestry Questions - *Silva Mediterranea* is a statutory body of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) where the Mediterranean member countries of the [European Forestry Commission \(EFC\)](#), the [Near East Forestry](#)

[Commission \(NEFRC\)](#) and the [African Forestry and Wildlife Commission \(AFWC\)](#) meet, share experiences and establish cooperative programmes.

## **II. Twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions – *Silva Mediterranea* and Seventh Mediterranean Forest Week**

2. The Twenty-fourth session of the Committee was held from 21 to 25 March 2022 in Antalya, Türkiye, in conjunction with the Seventh Mediterranean Forest Week (MFW).

3. The title of the Seventh Mediterranean Forest Week was “Forest and ecosystem restoration for the next Mediterranean generations”. It brought together country representatives from 15 Mediterranean member countries. Various events were hosted to explore a wide variety of issues related to forest and landscape restoration (FLR) in the Mediterranean region. Participants from diverse age groups were encouraged to discuss the unique obstacles that affect their participation in restoration efforts, including fruitful discussions led by young people on their own role in the mechanisms that govern FLR strategies.

4. Young people proved to play a pivotal role in the progress made and outcomes achieved at the Seventh MFW through their participation in the Mediterranean Youth Dialogue. This resulted in an official Youth Statement.

5. Also resulting from the Seventh MFW was the Antalya Declaration, which called for countries and relevant stakeholders to increase restoration efforts and work with each other to address shared environment and climate challenges. These efforts will be evaluated at the next Mediterranean Forest Week. The declaration served to establish a unified approach to Mediterranean FLR initiatives, as well as strengthen the mechanisms currently in place.

6. The Seventh MFW was an opportunity for member countries to address the issue of what they should do going forward, as well as to reflect on the successes of initiatives that have already been undertaken. In addition to achieving the week’s outcomes, participants also assessed the progress of the Agadir Commitment and endorsed the submission of the Mediterranean region represented by four countries – Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and Türkiye – as a World Restoration Flagship in the context of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 (hereafter UN Decade).

7. The Committee unanimously elected the Bureau as follows:

- Chairman: Mr Umit Turhan (Türkiye)
- Vice-Chairman: Mr Mohammed Boufaroua (Tunisia)
- Vice-Chairman: Mr Chadi Mohanna (Lebanon)

8. The Committee welcomed the offer of Tunisia to host the Eighth Mediterranean Forest Week in 2024. The Twenty-fifth session of the Committee will take place in 2024 during the Eighth Mediterranean Forest Week.

## **III. Submission and selection of the Mediterranean Flagship Initiative in the context of the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration Flagship**

9. The United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021–2030 (hereafter UN Decade) is designed to inspire a global movement in support of preventing, halting and reversing the degradation of ecosystems worldwide. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) were tasked with leading the implementation of the UN Decade in close coordination with their partners.

10. World Restoration Flagships are identified as the best or most promising examples of successful ecosystem restoration for which a country or region would like to obtain global recognition, embodying the ten restoration principles of the UN Decade. The main role of flagships is to inspire

other countries and regions to scale up successful restoration efforts and to attract global attention and investments.

11. The Mediterranean flagship proposal, entitled “Restoration of degraded forest ecosystems as nature-based solutions to build resilience in the Mediterranean region”, presented what the Mediterranean region can bring to the UN Decade and how it may support ongoing and future restoration activities. The concept note was finalized at the Seventh Mediterranean Forest Week in Antalya and was submitted by committee members on the UN Decade website on 31 March 2022.

12. The Mediterranean flagship proposal ensured fair geographical representation by having one country from each side of the Mediterranean region (eastern Mediterranean and southern Mediterranean). It focused on scaling up functional landscape restoration in selected areas of the Mediterranean region and contributing to the implementation of the UN Decade in accordance with regional and national commitments. Successful case studies from different Mediterranean countries were showcased so that restoration processes could be replicated in other Mediterranean environments.

13. The Mediterranean flagship was evaluated among the twelve proposals recommended to the Executive Board for receiving a targeted support from the Multi-Partner Trust Fund established in the context of the UN Decade. Targeted support is defined as demand-driven, catalytic support to provide specific and transformative technical assistance and support to the selected flagships. Consequently, a targeted support request was prepared and submitted on 2 June 2023 with the support of the Secretariat of *Silva Mediterranea*, entitled “Capitalizing good practices on post-fire restoration in the Mediterranean”.

## V. Preparation of the *Unasylya* special issue

14. *Unasylya* is a multilingual international journal of forestry and forest industries published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Published in English, French and Spanish, *Unasylya* presents news about forest science and policy. It covers all aspects of forestry, including policy and planning, the conservation and management of forest-based plants and animals, rural socioeconomic development, species improvement, industrial development, international trade and environmental considerations – including the role of forests and trees in maintaining a sustainable base for agricultural production and the effects of environmental change on forestry. *Unasylya* is addressed to a broad range of readers, namely policymakers, forest managers, technicians, researchers, students and teachers.

15. In 2013, the special issue of *Unasylya* 242, entitled “[A new Dynamic for Mediterranean Forests](#)”, underlined the strong technical basis and political will across the countries of the Mediterranean to find solutions to several threats affecting Mediterranean forests. These threats include climate change, with emphasis on the importance of establishing regional strategies such as the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests, as described in the publication.

16. During the Twenty-Fourth Session of *Silva Mediterranea* in March 2022, the committee suggested to the *Unasylya* Editorial Board to prepare a new special issue dedicated to Mediterranean forests to be launched in 2024 as a follow-up to *Unasylya* 242.

## IV. Preparation of the next edition of the State of Mediterranean Forests (SOMF)

17. The State of Mediterranean Forests (SoMF) is a publication that seeks to improve knowledge of Mediterranean forests. The first and second issues of SoMF were co-published in 2013 and 2018, respectively, by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Plan Bleu.

At its Twenty-Third Session in April 2019, *Silva Mediterranea* confirmed its interest in this publication and requested that FAO prepare the new issue with an expected publishing in 2024.

18. The new edition aims to provide an overview of the status of forest resources in the Mediterranean region based on the most recent available statistics and to showcase sound management, nature-based solutions and sustainable socioeconomic actions by reporting case studies and good practices. It will also report on recent advances and products in Mediterranean forest monitoring efforts, as well as research-oriented and innovative approaches.

## V. The Mediterranean Youth Taskforce

19. The Mediterranean Youth Task Force is the result of a highlighted need and agreement to involve more young people to participate in forest sector issues in the region during the Seventh Mediterranean Forest Week in Antalya, Türkiye, in March 2022. During the week, a Mediterranean Youth Dialogue was held, resulting in the [Mediterranean Youth Statement](#), which contains the main challenges and recommendations presented by young participants to all stakeholders in the region.

20. The newly launched Mediterranean Youth Task Force represents an effort to promote and guide a regional network of engaged young people (up to 35 years old) who are either from or living in the Mediterranean region and are either students, researchers, young professionals or have other active roles in the forest sector of the region. It aims to be a self-led group supported by both the *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat and the Mediterranean Facility of the European Forest Institute ([EFIMED](#)). Active members of the taskforce will have reserved place in any events, workshops, or international conferences of both the [European Forest Institute](#) and *Silva Mediterranea*.