

European Forest Institute

Activities' Report - Year 2023

Dr Carlo Calfapietra

1. Introduction

The European Forest Institute was established with the aim of enhancing international forest research and providing decision makers with unbiased forest-related information at a pan-European level. EFI has its Headquarters in Joensuu, Finland, and has offices in Barcelona, Bonn, Rome and Brussels, and project offices in Malaysia and China.

On 9 September 1993, 12 founding member organisations signed the Act of Constitution of the European Forest Institute. Thirty years later, the Institute has grown from a small association to an international organisation with 30 Member Countries, around 130 member organisations in 39 countries, and over 140 employees from 40 nationalities.

The governance of EFI has the following bodies: Council, Board, Scientific Advisory Board. The Council provides input into the strategic policy framework of EFI activities, ensuring that EFI services its original purpose. The Board consists of eight members, four of whom are elected by the EFI Council and four by EFI Associate Members (CNR is an associate member). The Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) contributes to the research and policy support activities of EFI.

The activities of EFI in the period 2022-2025 are organized in Programmes (Governance, Bioeconomy, Resilience) and research networks, that are aimed at supporting the Programmes. In 2023 The Facilities Mediterranean, International Partnerships, Policy Support, BioRegions, Genetic Resources have continued their activities and a new facility on BioCities was consolidated in Rome.

Main activities carried on by EFI during 2023 relevant for Italy and for CNR

The Biocities Facility, based in Rome, was officially inaugurated on 20 April 2023. The action of the Italian scientific community, coordinated by the Society of Silviculture and Forest Ecology (SISEF), significantly helped the choice of Italy and Rome for the location of this important Facility (approved by the Parliament and Senate and by three Ministries, and defined as an International Organization). The Facility is a global reference in generating and communicating relevant scientific knowledge on the potential of the circular bioeconomy concept to rethink urban areas, particularly based on forest-based solutions. The Facility is a leader in developing a new and holistic conceptual framework for the use of green infrastructures and biobased solutions in urban environments, to tackle climate change and other global challenges.

In 2023, the EFI Director Dr Marc Palahi stepped down due to a new prestigious commitment in a foundation supported by King Charles of England. The new EFI Director is Dr. Robert Mavsar, former deputy Director, which grants continuity to the ongoing activities

Robert soon consolidated the good relationships between EFI and EC by writing letters to the President Ursula von der Leyen and vice president Maroš Šefčovič.

EFI organized the EUFORE European stakeholder workshop for the co-creation of the European Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for forest-related research (Brussels, 13 December 2023), and the **Biocities winter school** (12-20 December 2023) in cooperation with SISEF, StudioBoeri Architetti and the Public Water Company Romagna Acque.

In addition, EFI organized a series of events tailored for policy makers and developed the Bioeconomy Gateway web portal, available since 21 March 2024, provides information on the latest research and development, innovation, and current trends related to circular bioeconomy.

The EFI week 2023 was organized in Lucca, to bring together EFI staff from all offices to connect, exchange knowledge and information and discuss the development of EFI (about 100 participants), with positive effects on the regional economy.

Finally, the EFINET project, coordinated by prof. Gherardo Chirici of the University of Florence, in which the Cnr was among the stakeholders, started in 2021 and finished in 2023. The EFINET project, financially supported by the EFI Network Fund, had the objective of proposing a framework for a pan-European forest monitoring system, to combine ground-based information with remote sensing.

2. Activities carried on by Dr. Giorgio Matteucci within EFI during 2023 and impact on the Italian scientific community

Connection and information exchange with EFI offices, sharing of information with Cnr and other Italian colleagues.

The previous focal point Dr Giorgio Matteucci participated in person to the Annual Assembly, including scientific and open events, that was held in Novi Sad in September 2023.

Support to EFI for the connection within the Italian community for the establishment of the Biocities Facility in Rome.

3. Evaluation of the participation in terms of benefits and membership cost

The fee is very cheap and has a very high “money for value” return in terms of scientific and lobbying activities for projects and technical/policy activities in the field of forest, wood and sustainability.

New opportunities will certainly emerge from the establishment of the Biocities Facility in Rome.

4. Evaluation of Italians’ attendance and how to improve interest and involvement

In EFI the Italian attendance is very active and considered, also with relevant roles in the governing bodies of the Institute.

5. Italian experts with important roles within the Union or within related Commissions and Programs (if known)

Since end of 2020, Italy is serving the relevant role of Chair of the EFI council. The Chair is Dr. Enrico Pompei of the General Directorate for Forest of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forest Policies (mandate: 2020-2023).

Prof. Marco Marchetti of University of Molise was the Chair of the evaluation panel for the selection of the new EFI Director.

Dr. Elena Paoletti, Research Director at CNR-IRET, already former member of the Scientific Advisory Board, started her service as Board member.

Dr. Silvano Fares, Director of CNR-ISAFOM, and prof. Gherardo Chirici, University of Florence, were appointed as SAB members from 2023.

The documents produced by the Network Fund “Biocities”, coordinated by Prof. Giuseppe Scarascia Mugnozza Università della Tuscia, were released.

Prof. Scarascia Mugnozza was nominated Responsible of the Biocities Facility in Roma.

6. If Union with CNR Commission, short summary about the 2023 CNR Commission activities

Not relevant

7. Notes (if any)

Not relevant

8. Conclusions

The participation of Cnr in EFI activities is surely relevant and as value return for the Institution and its researchers

Signature

