



Communicating on Forests in Europe

***A Strategic Approach and
the Role of Forest Pedagogics***

What I will talk about

- The Forest Communicators Network (FCN)
 - What it is, what it does...
- The Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe
 - latest FCN product
 - Scope, why it is needed, main content, role of Forest Pedagogics...



Forest Communicators Network

- ***Established by UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission***
- ***Current mandate 2008 – 2013***
- ***ECE region (pan-Europe, USA and Canada)***

<http://live.unece.org/forests/information/fcn.html>



Forest Communicators Network

Overall Objectives

To improve the ability of the forest and forest products sector to communicate effectively, by

❖ providing a forum for international interaction and cooperation in forest related communication

❖ introducing and encouraging state of the art communication approaches



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Who is it?

***Participation is open to all
sharing the common objectives.
At present it involves 130 People
from governmental, non-governmental and privat
sector organisations
from 36 Countries and 21 Multilateral Organisations.***

<i>Leader:</i>	<i>Ingwald Gschwandtl</i>	<i>AT</i>
<i>Deputy Leaders:</i>	<i>Colin Morton</i>	<i>UK</i>
	<i>Kai Lintunen</i>	<i>FIN</i>
	<i>Tomas Kotovits</i>	<i>LV</i>
	<i>Marta Gaworska</i>	<i>CEPF</i>



Forest Communicators Network

How does it work

- ***Sharing information and expertise***
- ***Developing and promoting common approaches and concepts***
- ***Meetings***
- ***Strategic Task Force***
- ***Subgroups for specific issues***
 - ***Sub-Group on Forest Pedagogics***
- ***Workshops (Train the Trainers)***
- ***Publications***

- ***Next Annual Meeting: June 2011, Turkey***



Forest Communicators Network

Mandate 2008 to 2013

Expected Outputs, among others:

- ***European Forest Communication Strategy.***
- ***European Forest Pedagogic Concept, based on best practice examples, common principles and quality standards for forest related environmental education.***
- ***Contributions to the EU Forest Action Plan, in particular on forest related environmental education and on an EU forest communication strategy.***



Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe (1)

- developed by the FCN, at the request of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission
- based on best practices and latest research
- provides communication objectives, common key messages and approaches
- designed to be used by governments, public and private sector institutions and organisations and stakeholders at all levels, when formulating individual forest communication programs and strategies
- addresses the European part of the UNECE region
- understands 'forests' as ecosystems as well as the raw material inputs for forestry and related industry activities incorporating the economic, the environmental and the socio-cultural dimensions of sustainable forest management.



Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe (2)

The Process

- FCN established a Strategic Task Force to carry out ground work
- several meetings and workshops, including a workshop in Pardubice/Czech Republic in 2009, and FCN meetings in Gothenburg/Sweden 2010 and in Budapest/Hungary 2011
- Worked with EU Working Group and with the FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit for coherence and complementarity among different strategies
- Finalised in July 2011
- Will be presented to the UNECE Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission meeting in October 2011 in Antalya/Turkey



Why does the European region need strategic forest communication?

1. Forests mean different things to different people and this can create conflicts of interest resulting in mixed and confusing messages.
2. Forests are more and more affected by policies designed for a wide range of purposes. To foster coherence, it is essential to engage stakeholders at all levels in an open dialogue on forests.
3. There are significant gaps between the reality and public perception concerning forests. For example, people worry about deforestation in Europe, even though forest area in the European region continues to grow.
4. People have a strong emotional attachment to forests, but a lack of understanding of sustainable forest management may have perverse effects on society's ability to fully benefit from forests. It also may mean forests may never reach their full potential to mitigate climate change.
5. There are numerous institutions and organisations in the forest sector. There is no common message, no common voice.



Forests mean different things to different people



Conflicts of Interest
Mixed and confusing Messages



Many sectors and policies influence forests...



**Engage Stakeholders at all levels
in open dialogue**

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Significant Gaps between Facts and what People percieve!



Facts on forests in Europe



Good stories to tell

- *Forest area increasing*
- *Growing stock increasing*
- *Vitality and health improved*
- *Biodiversity is supported by SFM*

Challenges

- *Climate change*
- *Fires, storms, pests*
- *Economic viability*



What people think about forests...



EU-wide Public Opinion Survey

June 2009

11.106 citizens

**across all 27 EU-Member States
(CATI telephone interviews)**

Gender:

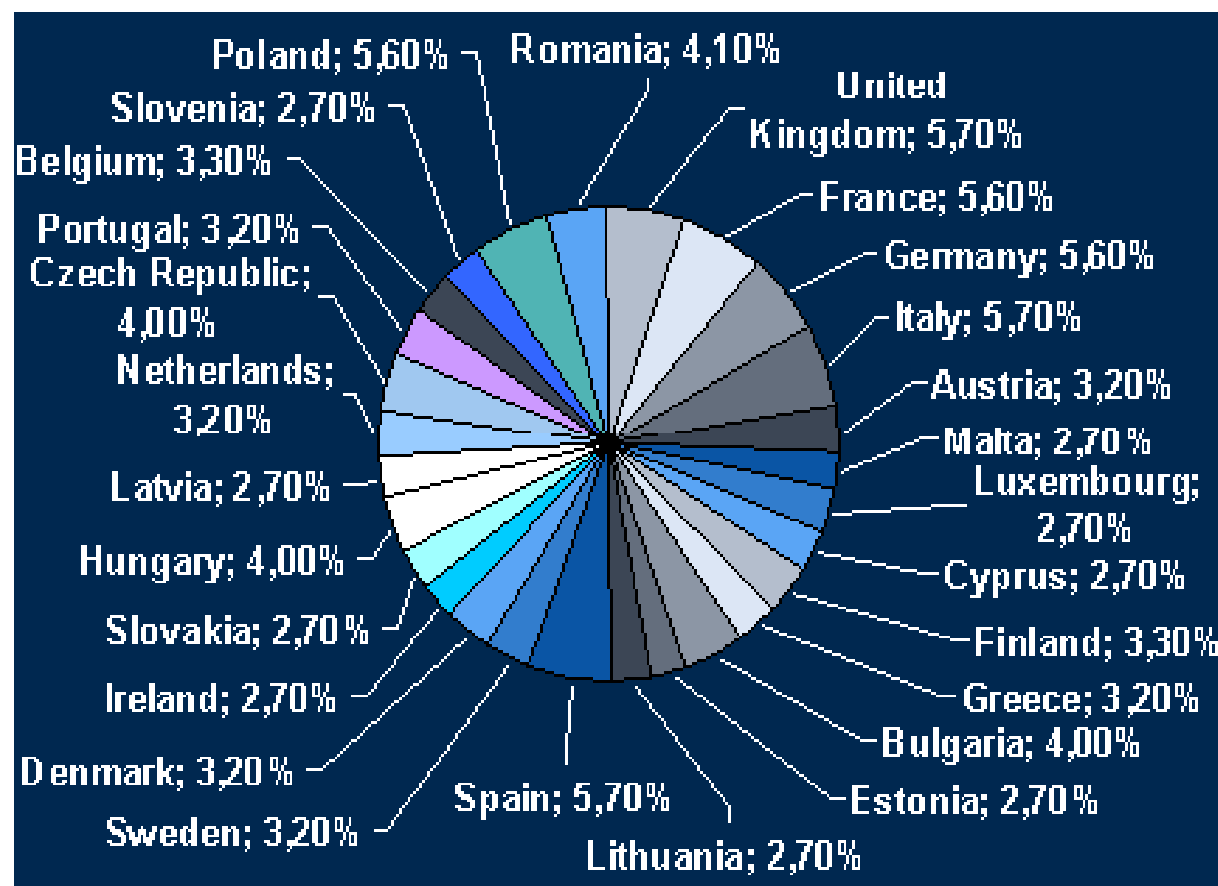
- 56,6% female and 43,4% male.

Age:

- 35,6% older than 55;
- 31,9% between 40-54;
- 23,1% between 25 and 39; and
- 9,4% between 18 and 24.

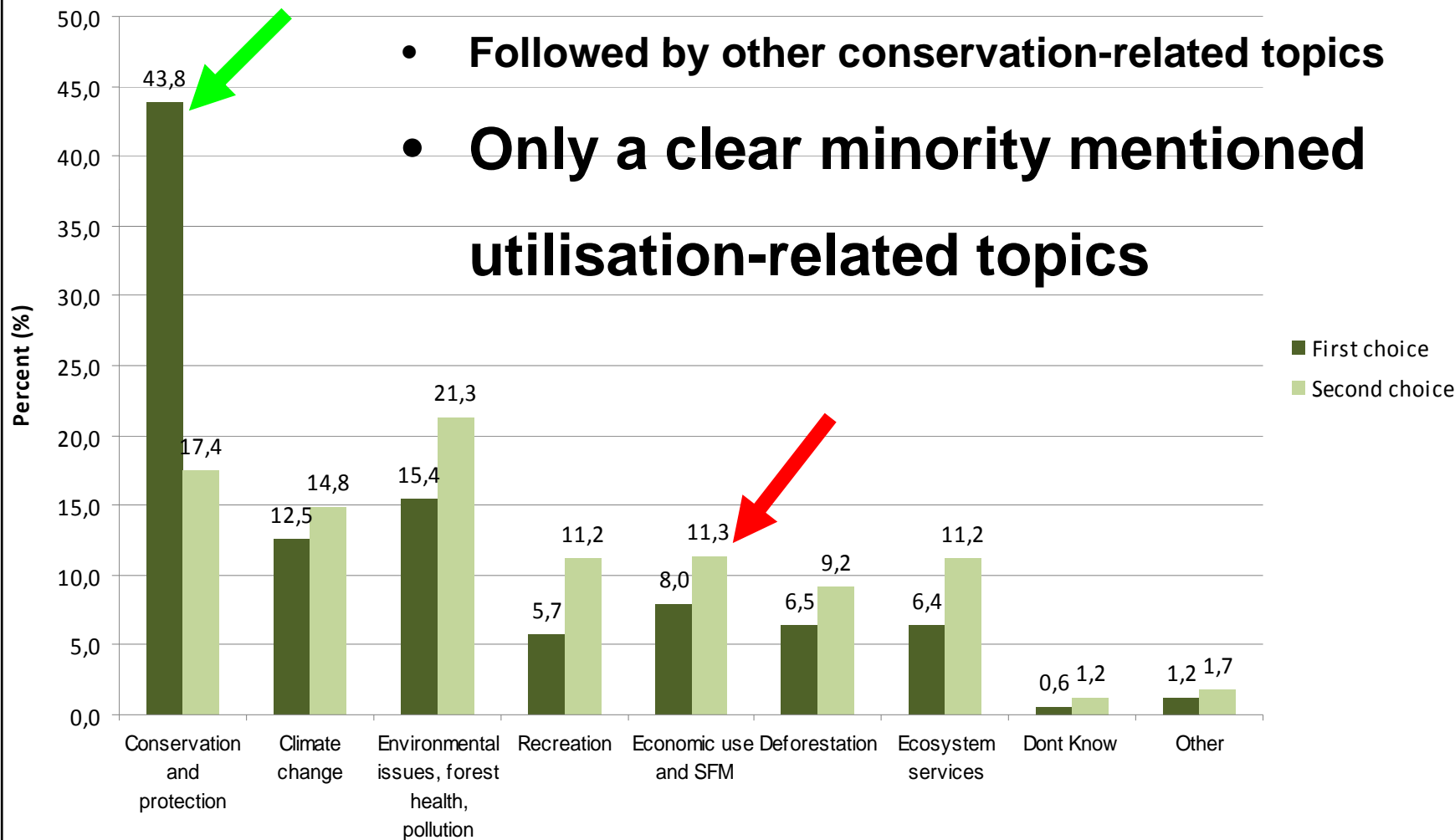
Rurality:

- 26,5% from rural areas;
- 51,1% from towns or small cities,
- 22,3% from large cities.



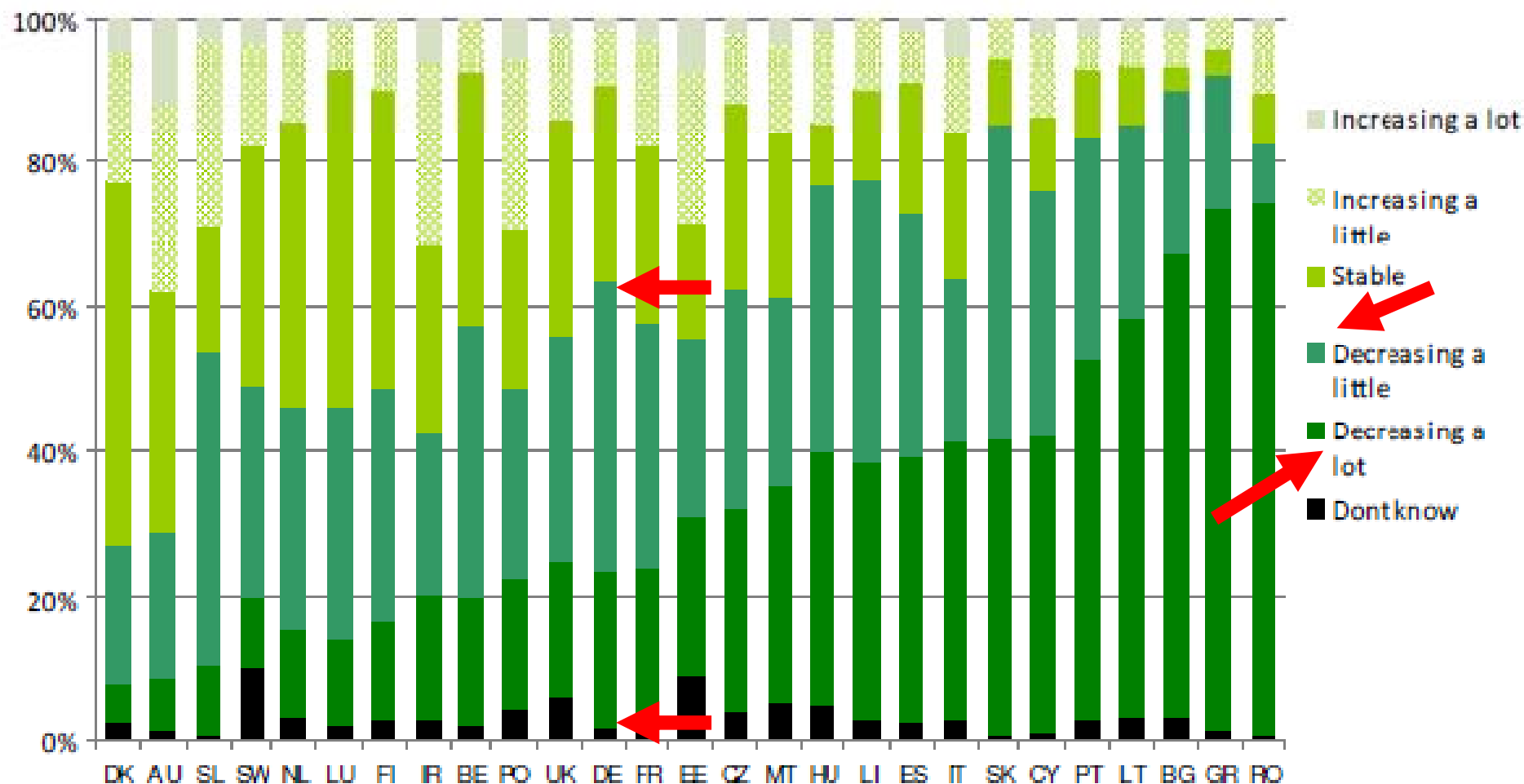
Key concerns regarding forests

- **“conservation and protection”**
the by far most important topic
- **Followed by other conservation-related topics**
- **Only a clear minority mentioned
utilisation-related topics**



Public perception on forest area development

National comparison: public perception on total forest area development

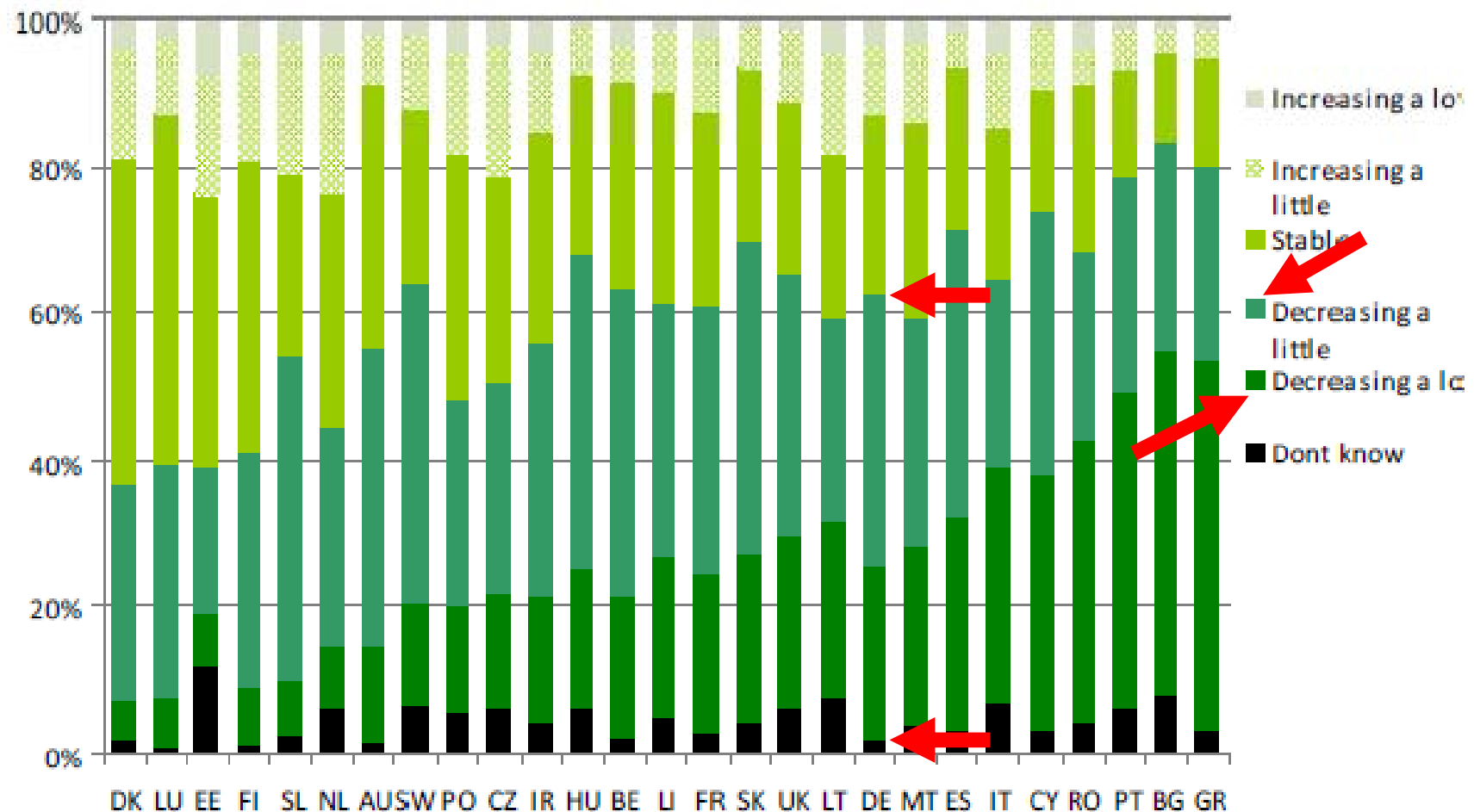


[Source: ECORYS]



Public perception on biodiversity development

National differences: public perceptions regarding the development of forest biodiversity



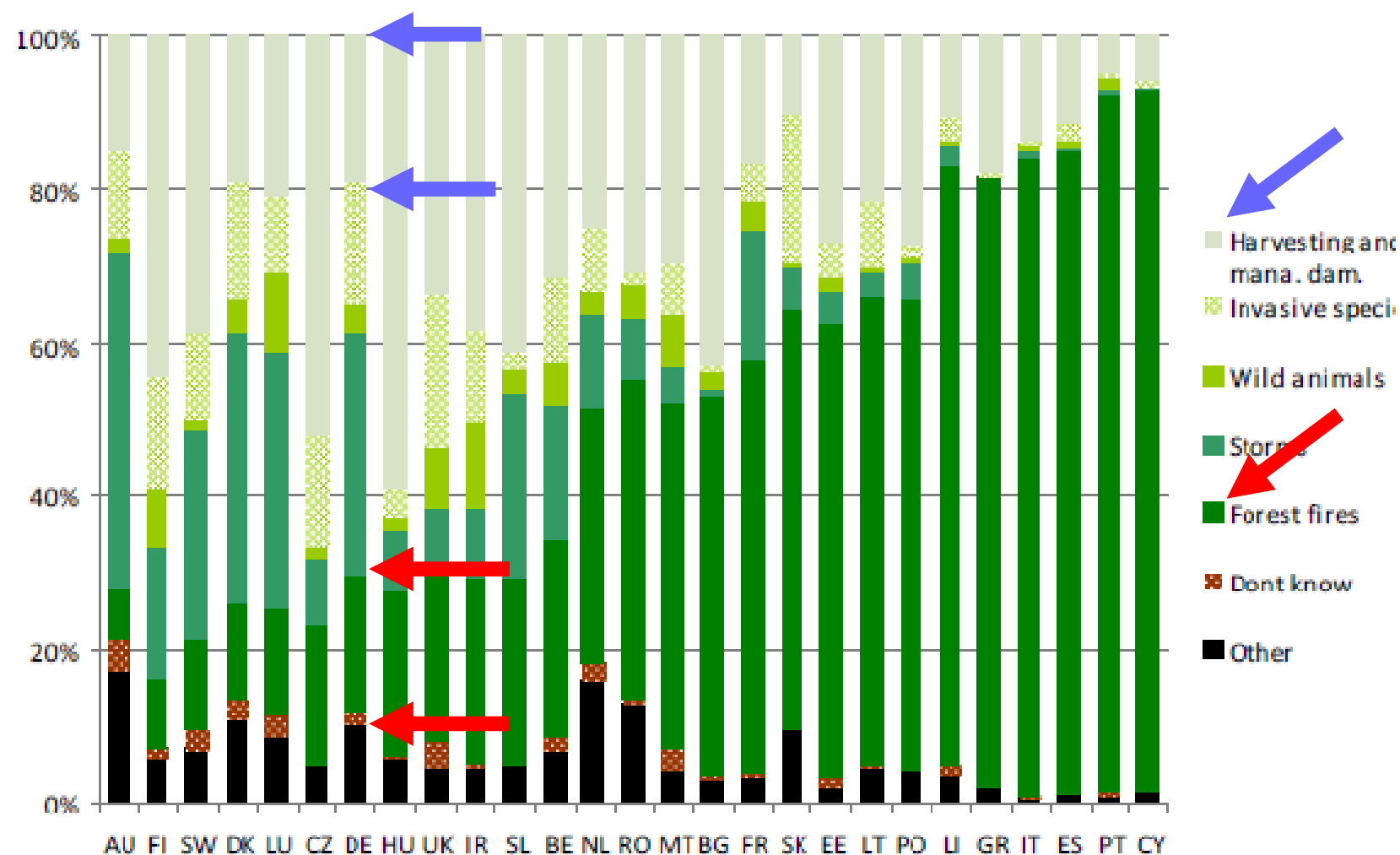
[Source: ECORYS]

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Public perception on damages and threats to forests

National differences: public perception on damages and threats to forests



[Source: ECORYS]



...the link to nature is increasingly media-generated and media-fed...



Forests in the media



A Reporter at Large

The Stolen Forests

Inside the covert war on illegal logging.



Sex – Crime – Disaster Concspiracy – (Fun)

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Implications for future forest communication

Key Area 1:

The need for a clear message presented in a neutral manner that allows the public to make appropriate distinctions depending on the relevant specific issues and challenges, including forest area, biodiversity and damages, for various geographic contexts (i.e. local forest, European forests, forests worldwide).

Key Area 2:

The need for stressing the important role of forests and wood in tackling climate change.

Key Area 3:

The need for addressing specific audiences.

- **Young people**
- Differentiated approach for Nordic/Baltic versus South East regions
- Women
- Non-differential approach for rural and urban areas



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3. There are **significant gaps between the reality and public perception** concerning forests. For example, people worry about deforestation in Europe, even though forest area in the European region continues to grow.
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Emotional attachment,
but a lack of understanding of SFM



The Forest Sector is divers



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Many actors, but... no common message, no common voice



Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe

aims to help achieving better informed decision making on matters relevant to forests and forestry

by closing the gap between perception and facts on forests and forestry in the wider European region.



Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe

Communication Objectives

1. To increase understanding that forests are vital to life on Earth and must be managed sustainably.
2. To promote understanding that sustainably managed forests provide a multitude of goods and services.
3. To raise awareness of the positive state of European forests and also of the threats and challenges they face.
4. To increase the use of sustainably produced wood and other forest products as climate friendly materials and renewable energy sources.



Key Messages

- 1. Forests are vital to maintaining life on Earth. Action needs to be taken to halt global deforestation and contribute to forest restoration.***
- 2. When managed wisely and sustainably, forests provide an endless renewable supply of materials and energy, as well as other environmental and social benefits.***
- 3. Europe's forests are sustainably managed, growing in size and substance, are generally in good health, but need further help to counter increasing threats – largely from climate change, storms, fire, pests, and disease.***
- 4. Europe's environmental footprint can be reduced by using sustainably produced wood and other forest derived products.***



Dialogue Partners

- decision makers from various sectors relevant to forests, like climate change, energy providers, agriculture, forest-based industries, construction industry, environment, tourism
- opinion formers, like journalists, bloggers, teachers and celebrities
- forest-related stakeholders
- stakeholders from other sectors
- **young people**
- civil society organisations



How to deliver the messages (1)

Institutions and organisations should

- translate the strategic framework into different languages and cultural contexts
- build communication activities around the key messages
- seek strategic co-operations and partnerships
- form groups for adapting the framework and its implementation to sub-regional needs (such as the Mediterranean, Alpine, and Boreal sub-regions)
- capitalise on existing international days related to forests and support efforts to formally recognise a UN International Day of Forests
- seize the opportunity to create dialogue and reach diverse groups through different forms of media, such as facebook, twitter, blogs and other social media



How to deliver the messages (2)

- build communication capacities in the forest sector, including by integrating communication into forestry education curricula
- consider mechanisms for funding communication activities
- **raise the profile of forests and forestry in school programs, including through forest pedagogic activities**
- consider establishing a regular collaborative communication campaign throughout Europe with time wise and message wise concerted actions at all levels
- ensure coherent and complementary implementation of different forest-related communication strategies and programs, such as the forest communication strategies of FOREST EUROPE and the EU



Implementation, Evaluation and Review

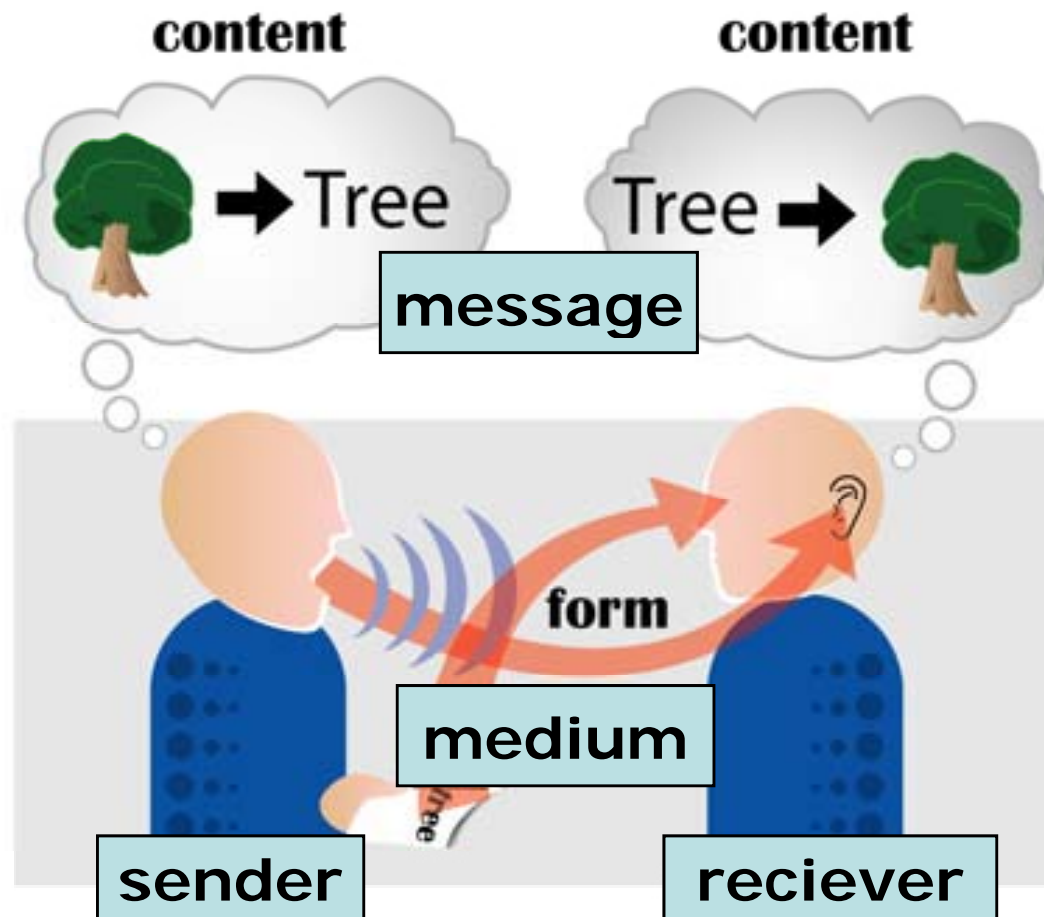
The framework is designed to be used by governments, public and private sector institutions and organisations and stakeholders at all levels, when formulating individual forest communication programs and strategies.

The UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO Forestry Commission for Europe oversee the implementation of the framework, and will manage regular evaluation, review and update.

UNECE and FAO will provide a forum for countries and stakeholders to discuss ways for best implementing the Strategic Framework, for financing and building capacity, for sharing best practices and exchange of information.



Communication is the process of attempting to convey information from a sender to a receiver with the use of a medium.



***‘Communication usually fails
except by accident.’*** Osmo A. Wiio



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General communication approach

- Communication is not just information providing; it is engaging systematically in two way information processes, which includes active listening to others.
- The messages must be understandable, credible and supportable. The forest sector may not be well known to some key target groups, or they might have strong preconceived ideas about the sector. Therefore, it may take time to gain the trust and respect of others. Reliability, accountability, honesty, openness and transparency, are key principles required to achieve this.
- It is important to put communication into business planning systems at the outset of activities and ensure adequate resources.



Forest Pedagogic

- Plays a key role in
 - establishing relationships and
 - building trust and confidencebetween people, forests and foresters at a very early stage.
- Needs full recognition and adequate support.
- FCN Sub-Group provides a basis for networking, and for
- developing and promoting a European Forest Pedagogics Concept.



Thank you for your patience!

