



DEADWOOD MANAGEMENT PROVISIONS IN THE EU

REGULATORY COUNTRY CLUSTERS



SUPERB
Upscaling Forest Restoration



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National forest legislation has a long history in many European Member States (EU-MS) and has had a significant impact on the governance of forests across Europe over time. The EU Nature Restoration Regulation (NRR) stipulates directly applicable and legally binding forest restoration targets and indicators, making a transposition into national legislation redundant. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that a certain degree of compatibility with national forest legislation will be crucial to ensure a successful and coherent implementation of National Forest Restoration Plans (NRPs) and progress towards the selected forest ecosystem restoration indicators. Incoherencies between the NRR forest ecosystem restoration targets and indicators and national legal forest frameworks on the other hand are likely to pose a challenge to a successful implementation in the years to come.

Against this backdrop, we conducted in-depth analyses of national forest laws and related legislation and, based on that, create forest restoration policy maps to provide an overview on how certain forest ecosystem indicators and respective management practices included in the NRR are currently regulated or promoted in different EU countries. These policy maps summarize if and to what extent national forest laws and related legislation refer to the forest ecosystem indicators stipulated by the NRR by building country categories based on the findings from the legal analysis. Based on this, conclusions are drawn on the status of vertical coherence of EU forest restoration policy, particularly as stipulated under the NRR, and the national forest regulatory frameworks of the EU-MS. This policy coherence assessment is expected to inform the development of supportive forest policy and legal frameworks both at the EU and national levels, thereby supporting the development and implementation of the NRPs in the years to come.

This report presents the key findings from the analysis of regulatory provisions across the 27 EU Member States (plus the United Kingdom) concerning **deadwood** management, the amount of which has significantly increased over the past 25 years, most likely due to the increasing occurrence of forest disturbances (Forest Europe, 2020).



KEY FINDINGS

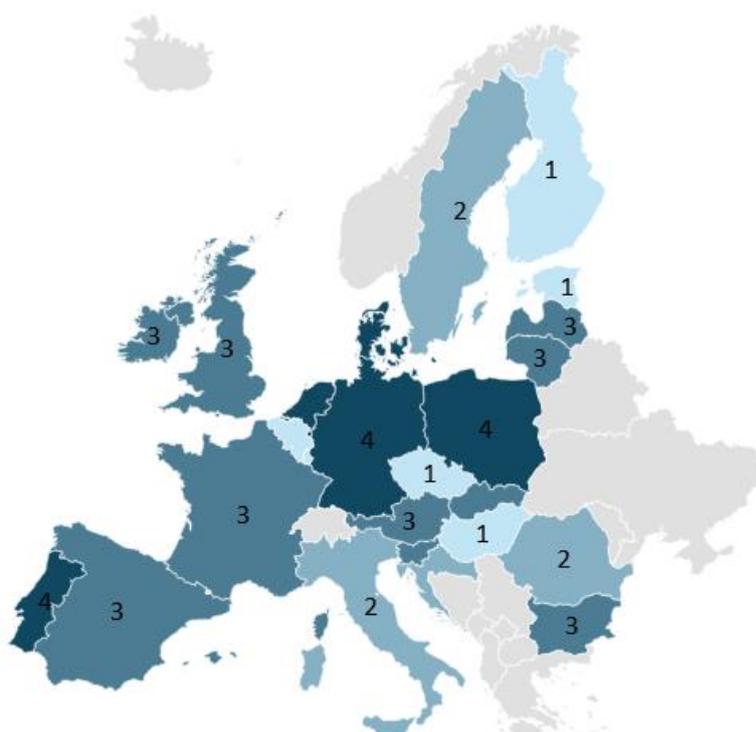
Retaining sufficient standing and lying deadwood in different decay stages in forest ecosystems can play an important role in conserving and restoring forest biodiversity since many species depend on deadwood for larval development, foraging, or nesting (Löfroth et al. 2023). While many European Member States have observed increasing trends in the accumulation of deadwood in forest ecosystems (Forest Europe, 2020), it remains a crucial indicator for the health and diversity of forest ecosystems. This is also acknowledged in the EU-NRR, which stipulates a further enhancement of standing and lying deadwood in forest ecosystems of the EU-MS under Article 12. At the same time, deadwood management has shown to be a controversial point of debate since particularly Southern European MS fear an increase of forest fire outbreaks and intensities due to an increase of highly flammable woody biomass. This resulted in the inclusion of a clause in the NRR requiring Member States to take into account the risks of forest fires based on local circumstances. To see if and to what extent national forest regulatory frameworks address the management of deadwood, national forest laws were screened to derive key provisions on this forest ecosystem restoration indicators.

The country categorisation based on deadwood management provisions also revealed 4 overarching country categories. Category 1 includes countries whose forest regulatory frameworks directly promote the retention of deadwood and habitat trees for biodiversity and nature conservation purposes with some legislative texts even stipulating deadwood amounts per hectare, suggesting concrete retention methods or stipulating quantitative thresholds (including diameter restrictions) on utilizable biomass. Category 2 comprises countries whose regulatory frameworks promote the retention of deadwood though without specifying retention methods or quantitative thresholds. Category 3 comprises countries whose forest regulatory frameworks refer to deadwood rather from a forest health perspective and make recommendations and provisions to remove deadwood (e.g. through sanitary fellings) to prevent the spreading of forest pests and related security risks. Category 4 comprises those countries whose overarching regulatory frameworks do not directly address deadwood management neither from a biodiversity conservation and restoration nor from a forest health perspective.

The findings from the analysis of national forest laws shows that the majority of regulatory frameworks in EU Member States address the role of deadwood management in forests, though from different perspectives. In addition, few national forest laws provide concrete recommendations, such as regarding biologically favorable amounts of deadwood or specific retention measures. In light of increasing forest disturbances in European forests and resulting damages, the role of deadwood management has taken a prominent role in policy and management debates. In particular, the role of extensive sanitary logging to minimize the further spread of pest infestations from damaged or infested timber, and to avoid economic losses resulting from an oversupply of (salvaged) timber on the market, which

could lead to price declines, has been a controversial topic of debate around European forests in recent years.

General developments in European forests show increasing trends of deadwood yet the mutual effects of deadwood accumulation and forest disturbances appear to be a crucial point to address in national policy and regulatory frameworks to further support favorable developments in deadwood accumulation for biodiversity restoration purposes and to reach forest restoration goals and commitments under the NRR.



Identified country categories regarding deadwood management provisions and recommendations

Description of country categories regarding deadwood management provisions and recommendations and identified country groups

Category 1: (Sub)National forest laws directly support the retention of deadwood for biodiversity conservation and restoration purposes (incl. provisions on deadwood amounts and minimum diameters of utilizable woody biomass).	Category 2: (Sub)National forest laws refer to deadwood management and retention for biodiversity purposes without providing concrete deadwood amounts or retention methods.	Category 3: (Sub)National forest laws specifically address deadwood management from the forest health and disturbance prevention perspective of forest.	Category 4: (Sub)National forest laws do not directly refer to the —management of standing or lying deadwood neither from a biodiversity protection and restoration nor form a forest health or disturbance prevention perspective.
Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg	Croatia, Italy, Romania, Sweden	Bulgaria, France, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Scotland, Slovenia, Spain	Cyprus, Denmark, Germany (federal level), Netherlands, Poland, Portugal

REFERENCES

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