Dear Participants,

It is my pleasure to be here with you. I congratulate the organizing committee for this wonderful seminar.

I am Hasan Türkyılmaz; I am the President of the Chamber of Forest Engineers (OMO) of Turkey. I am here with Mr. Mehmet Üstünyer, the Member of the Steering Committee and Mr. İsmail Belen, the Coordinator for international relations.

Having almost 18.000 members, OMO is one of the most effective NGOs in Turkey related to forestry and forest based industry.

All the forest in Turkey are being managed by the State (by General Directorate of Forestry) in line with forest management plans. So some of our members work for the overnment besides the ones who are working privately.

Related to this Seminar, I believe that the concept, the key speakers and the main themes of the seminar have been determined correctly and they are in line with latest challenges we are facing.

Forest fires are affecting not only forests, but also the people, the infrastructure, flora and fauna, and actually the whole ecosystems completely.

The forest area burned was about 10.000 hectares in Turkey as an average of several past years. Nevertheless, the latest trends showed increases and in this year, in 2021, we lost about 200 000 hectares forest area because of wildlife fires. I really thank to countries as Poland who helped us during these difficult times.

Together with the forest fires, the floods and torrents are increasing steadily especially in the Black Sea Region. We lost almost a hundred people during a flood occurred because of heavy rainfall in that region very recently.

We do not have enough science-based evidence about the reasons of these events but it is clear that we should take the necessary steps including adaptation strategies as soon as possible.

One of the main factors of sustainable forest management is having trained-dedicated human resources. In this case, I am pleased to inform you that, in Turkey, we have 12 Forestry Faculty and as OMO we have close cooperation and connection with these faculties.

Regarding the New EU Forestry Strategy, I have the opinion that the New Strategy is mentioning several important issues. However, I believe some issues as non-wood forest products, forest and water-drought connection, the role of forest on food security including honey production and graizing, forest-citizen relation, forest based industries and nature based solutions including ecosystem restoration and watershed management should be mentioned more clearly and effectively.

At the last point of my speech, I would like to express my satisfaction on the activities of the Union of European Foresters (UEF). So I really congratulate the presidency, especially Mr. Michael Diemer for his leadership and Mr. Herve Nemoz Rajot for his dedication on organizing this seiner and the Congress in this wonderful place, Chartres. Sure, I also congratulate the Members of UEF and Ms. Helene Ducheim for moderating this seminar successfully.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to express once more that, as OMO we are willing and ready to support the activities of UEF in every level, including organization and hosting the upcoming meetings, conferences and seminars.

Thank you.

Hasan Türkyılmaz

30 September 2021

Chartres, France