



## Strengthening Mountain Forests in Europe

### Joint final declaration by the Project Partners and the Observers of the project INTERREG III C Network - Mountain - Forest

#### Preamble

The international project Network – Mountain – Forest of the European Union was launched in 2003. The objective of the project was the establishment of a multinational network for the development and support of a common mountain forest policy for the alpine area and for extra-alpine mountain regions in Europe. For this purpose the condition and the diverse functions of mountain forests were recorded and analysed. From the outcome, recommendations for the preservation and tending of those forests were deduced. Partners in the project were Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia, and Italy; Bulgaria, Greece, Slovakia and Liechtenstein participated as Observers.

#### Recommendations

The Partners and the Observers agree that the preservation of the mountain forest as a near-natural living environment and, as far as necessary, the enhancement of its stability, have to be given the highest priority within the framework of their mountain forest policies. They further agree that, being integral components of the sustainable development of mountain areas, mountain forest tending and management are irreplaceable and also require joint transnational efforts. Due to the fact that the European Union requests a competitive forest and timber sector, transnational activities are moreover gaining special importance.

For this reason the below-listed goals are to be implemented jointly:

- Adoption of the Mountain Forest Protocol by the European Union
- Speedy introduction of the most urgent tending measures on an area of 1 million hectares of mountain forests in Europe
- Establishment of a European mountain forest forum taking into consideration the existing structures, in particular the EU Forest Action Plan
- Conducting a European Mountain Forest Campaign
- Creating a European financial instrument "Mountain Forest" based on the principles of the Mountain Forest Protocol
- Analysis of the efficiency of the functional mountain forest management by means of a simple monitoring based on existing inventories
- Functional mountain forest management as a contribution to the cost-efficient integrated natural hazard management
- Establishing strategic partnerships between forest owners and forest users
- Development of forest management strategies which are adjusted to climate change
- Initiation of a European exchange programme for the ongoing professional education and training of mountain forest experts

Lindau, October 2007  
To the Partners and Observers

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