

The Pan-European forest genetic resources conservation strategy aims to improve conservation of the genetic diversity of forest tree species across the continent. The goal is to maintain the evolutionary potential of forest trees in Europe.



WHAT IS EUFORGEN?

The European Forest Genetic Resources Programme (EUFORGEN) is a collaborative effort to promote conservation and sustainable use of forest genetic resources in Europe.

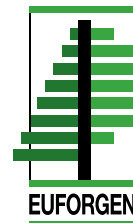
It was set up as the implementation mechanism of the Forest Europe process.

As of 2018, the programme had 27 member countries.



You can find the '*Pan-European strategy for genetic conservation of forest trees*' in the publications section of the EUFORGEN website.

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Drawings: Claudio Giordano and Giovanna Bernetti/EUFORGEN.



EUFORGEN Secretariat
c/o **European Forest Institute (EFI)**
Platz der Vereinten Nationen, 7
53113 Bonn, Germany
euforgen@efi.int
www.euforgen.org
twitter @EUFORGEN
EUFGIS <http://portal.eufgis.org/>



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**PAN-EUROPEAN STRATEGY
FOR GENETIC CONSERVATION
OF FOREST TREES**



BEYOND POLITICAL BORDERS

Effective conservation of forest genetic resources (FGR) – essential for forests to survive and adapt in the long term – requires all the countries across the distribution of a species to work together.

A country that wants to conserve forest genetic resources of a particular species will often discover that the species also grows in neighbouring countries. Clearly, for efficient and effective conservation, these countries should share similar conservation strategies.

GENETIC CONSERVATION UNITS

EUFGIS is an information system that provides geo-referenced data on the conservation of forest genetic resources in Europe. EUFGIS defines genetic conservation units (GCUs) as “forest stands or areas harbouring tree populations which have adapted to specific environmental conditions or have distinct characteristics”. EUFGIS also provides access to detailed data on GCUs in each country and according to EUFGIS, as of 2018 there were more than 3200 genetic conservation units that safeguard more than 4000 populations of about 100 tree species.

Together, these GCUs should represent the current genetic diversity of a species across the continent of Europe. The maintenance of evolutionary processes within these selected conservation populations is important to safeguard their potential for continuing adaptation.

THE STRATEGY

An analysis of the EUFGIS data revealed significant gaps in both the species covered and the geographical distribution of the conservation units within each species' range.

Based on this assessment, EUFORGEN developed a pan-European genetic conservation strategy for forest trees which calls for a core network of dynamic genetic conservation units for each targeted tree species. The strategy guides countries in planning and implementing their forest genetic resources conservation work.

The basic principle is to establish at least one genetic conservation unit in each environmental zone in each country where the species occurs.

The strategy is an ongoing effort: it will be improved as new knowledge and new perspectives are available.

PUTTING STRATEGY INTO PRACTICE

Simply agreeing on the strategy already changes approaches to forest genetic resources conservation in Europe.

The next step is implementation, which is the responsibility of each country. Many European countries have already started to implement the strategy by establishing conservation units in environmental zones where species are currently not sufficiently-well conserved.

EUFORGEN's role is to promote implementation and support countries in planning and carrying out their conservation efforts. EUFORGEN will also monitor and report on progress.

EUFORGEN is exploring collaboration with neighbouring countries who are not yet members, to find ways to improve the strategy so that all countries where relevant species occur can jointly conserve their genetic diversity.



The map above shows the distribution range of lime (*Tilia cordata*) trees in Europe with genetic conservation units. The strategy covers over 100 species, *Tilia cordata* is one of them. www.euforgen.org/species/tilia-cordata/