

From: [...]
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2022 11:21 AM
Subject: HT.5788 Organisation

Dear Sir or Madam,

thank you and warmly welcome the opportunity to provide feedback on the following two documents:

1. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

Guidelines for State aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas

The comments in *Chapter 2: Aid in the forestry sector* is to be welcomed in principle. Private forests in Germany and the EU are characterised by small-scale structures. The average farm size in the EU is around 13 ha, in Germany it is around 3 ha and in Bavaria around 2 ha. Accordingly, inter-company cooperation within the framework of 'forestry associations' (FWZ) as self-help facilities for forest owners is currently and above all increasingly important in the management of small and very small forest ownership. This is about preserving the diversity of forest owners, as this diversity also ensures diversity in forests. The aim and purpose of the support must be to build as autonomous and structurally efficient FEZs as possible. The economic viability of the FEZs can only be drawn from a wide range of services for the entire range of forest ownership. The main difference from agricultural groups is that forestry associations do not primarily act as marketing organisations. Forestry associations provide small and micro-private forests with a range of services, such as support/advice in forest management, training sessions and an information platform on topical policy issues which are essential in particular for the forthcoming forest conversion. The fact that climate change affects our forests requires that the owners of small and micro-forests (0.5 to 20 ha) in particular receive technical and technical support and advice from the forestry associations. The adaptation of forests to climate change and the development of climate-tolerant and resilient forest resources are a priority.

Support for FEZs is essential because:

- given the small-scale ownership structure, it can only optimise added value and structural development in rural areas;
- it is the only way to maintain the management of small-scale private forest and thus the multifunctional nature of forest and its diversity (biodiversity through small-scale ownership);
- the sustainable management of forests and their preservation has been defined by the Paris Agreement at the latest as an important tool for achieving climate change objectives;
- Small private forest without technical and financial support does not meet these objectives or other objectives such as functional and biodiversity, stability and performance of the beneficial, protective and recreational function;

In the case of long periods of forest development, it is crucial that the limitation of the aid to seven years is not sufficient to fulfil the above-mentioned tasks. Accordingly, it would be useful to **add the following** to *Chapter 2.6 Aid for cooperation in the*

forestry sector (566): “Aid must be limited to a maximum period of seven years, except in the case of activities referred to in point 561(**c**) (**new**) and (g) “.

2. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

Approval of a draft Commission Regulation declaring certain categories of aid in the agricultural and forestry sectors and in rural areas compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and repealing Commission Regulation (EU) No 702/2014

We expressly welcome the further development of the content of the exemption regulation referred to above. In particular, we would like to highlight **positively** the following points:

The content of **recital 46** indicates that the previous national support measures have already complied with the Commission's requirements. The exemption from notification is an important step towards reducing red tape and a significant gain of time compared to the notification procedure.

In the interests of *simplification and procedural economy*, the presentation in **recital 51** recognises the need for extensive EAFRD measures to be exempt from the notification requirement. This makes it possible to take account of the diversity of forests and their management in the Member States.

Article 11(1) is fully supported, as the 20-day scheme contributes significantly to legal certainty for the beneficiaries of the aid.

Yours sincerely,

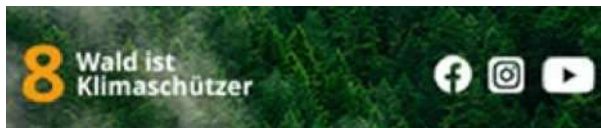
Andreas Täger
Managing Director

- WBV Westallgäu e.V.
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