

Central-East European Regional Office – EFICEEC launched

The latest EFI Regional Office to open its doors is the Central-East European Regional Office – EFICEEC in Vienna, Austria. EFICEEC will strengthen implementation of the EFI's strategy 2022; and it is foreseen as a catalyst to foster networking, research, information, advocacy, and capacity building on a regional scale in the Central-East Europe. The launch of EFICEEC was held on 12 April at the BOKU University. More than 60 distinguished guests joined the opening ceremony.

EFICEEC receives base-funding from the University of Natural Resources and Applied Sciences, Vienna (BOKU), the Austrian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment, and Water Management, the Austrian Ministry of Science and Research, and the City of Vienna. EFICEEC Regional Office is located in Vienna and hosted by the BOKU University and it has a network of 11 core partners and 17 network partners from 11 countries. In addition to providing funding, core partners are committing personnel and infrastructure to EFICEEC.

Following the activities from EFI's Project Centre INNOFORCE, EFI's Regional Office EFICEEC is expanded towards an inter-disciplinary focal point that builds on three work areas:

1. "Forest sector policy and economics" continues activities in forest policy analysis, innovation research, and sustainability research.
2. "Land Use Change" is dedicated to land use modelling with special regard to climate change and bio-energy.
3. "Forest Ecosystem Management" is dealing with forest management under changing environmental and societal conditions with special focus on mountain forests.



Martin Faiss

Back row from left: Gerhard Mannsberger (Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, Austria), Martin H. Gerzabek (Institute of Soil Science, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences – BOKU, Vienna) Karl Högl (Head of Institute of Forest, Environmental and Natural Resource Policy, BOKU); (front row) Július Novotný (Ministry of Agriculture of the Slovak Republic), Risto Päivinen (Director, EFI), Hubert Hasenauer (Head of Institute of Silviculture, BOKU) at the launch event of EFICEEC.

Bernhard Wolfslehner to lead EFICEEC



Martin Flaiss

Dr. Bernhard Wolfslehner, PhD (Forestry) has been appointed Head of Office of the Central-East European Regional Office of the European Forest Institute (EFI). Dr. Wolfslehner started his term May 1, 2010. EFICEEC has its premises at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna.

Dr. Wolfslehner has worked previously as Researcher at the Institute of Silviculture, University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna where he has been involved in a number of international projects as a leader or co-leader. He has also worked as an advisor for the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests (MCPFE) as well as in the Austrian Forest Dialogue. He has been also involved in the establishment of the EFI-CEEC since 2009.

Dr. Wolfslehner's expertise covers the fields of sustainable forest management, criteria and indicators (C&I), non-timber forest products and services, biological diversity, and multi-criteria decision support.

EFICEEC expected to act as a local catalyst

Prof. Dr. Július Novotný, the Director General of the Forestry and Wood Processing Section at the Ministry of Agriculture in the Slovak Republic, where do you see the role of EFICEEC in the development of forestry sciences and forest and land-use policy and practice in Central Eastern Europe?

"The Central Eastern Europe has a long history and rich tradition in forestry and forest research. Collaboration and partnership are the key factors for the progress of forest research in the CEE region. The CEE forest research has ambitions to be strong, more successful and fully competitive in the European research scene and therefore the countries and forest research institutes in the region are motivated to build new networks and collaborative partnerships.

I believe that EFI Regional Offices are a very important new tool for strong and pragmatic cooperation and collaboration at the regional level. The main benefits will come from building institutional networks amongst forest related research institutions. The main profit for the region is the fact that EFICEEC will act as a catalyst in developing research and capacity building projects and increase the potential for funding, which is of key

importance. EFICEEC should promote and support to build strong multidisciplinary research teams which will be able to prepare excellent research project important for forestry in the CEE region and apply for EU funds based on EU research funding system.

The thematic orientation EFICEEC is very relevant for the forestry policy makers in Central Eastern European region. Forest sector policy and economics, land use change in the context of climate change and bioenergy, mountain forests and forestry are extremely important topics for the regional forestry sector. Proposed main thematic issues are very strongly reflected in National forest programs in the majority of CEE countries.

The result of high quality research in forestry is needed for progress in forestry sector. Policy makers want to use the intellectual capacity of research institutes and universities to bring new knowledge and ideas in to the national forestry policies, making the role of regional research teams valuable.

I am convinced that EFICEEC will prove to be valuable for all parties. These Regional Office activities can be very important for the development of forestry sciences and for forest and land-use policy and practice overall."

"EFICEEC is an important tool for strong and pragmatic collaboration in the region."