

Advancing sustainable resource management through community engagement in Eastern Partnership Countries

Armenia, Georgia, Moldova & Ukraine

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FOREST-RELATED CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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sustainable development
on our finite planet

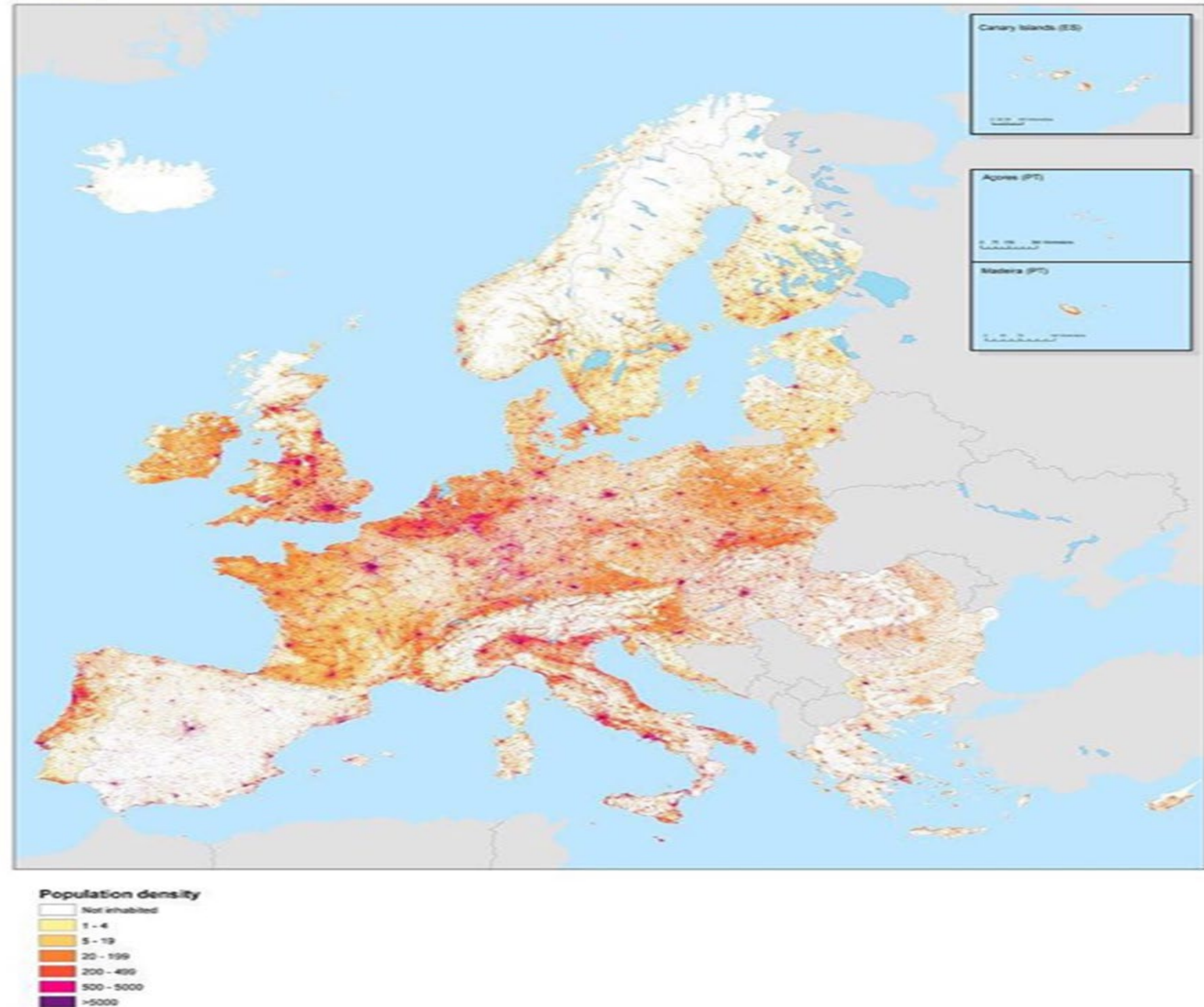


EU4Environment
Green Economy in Eastern Partner Countries

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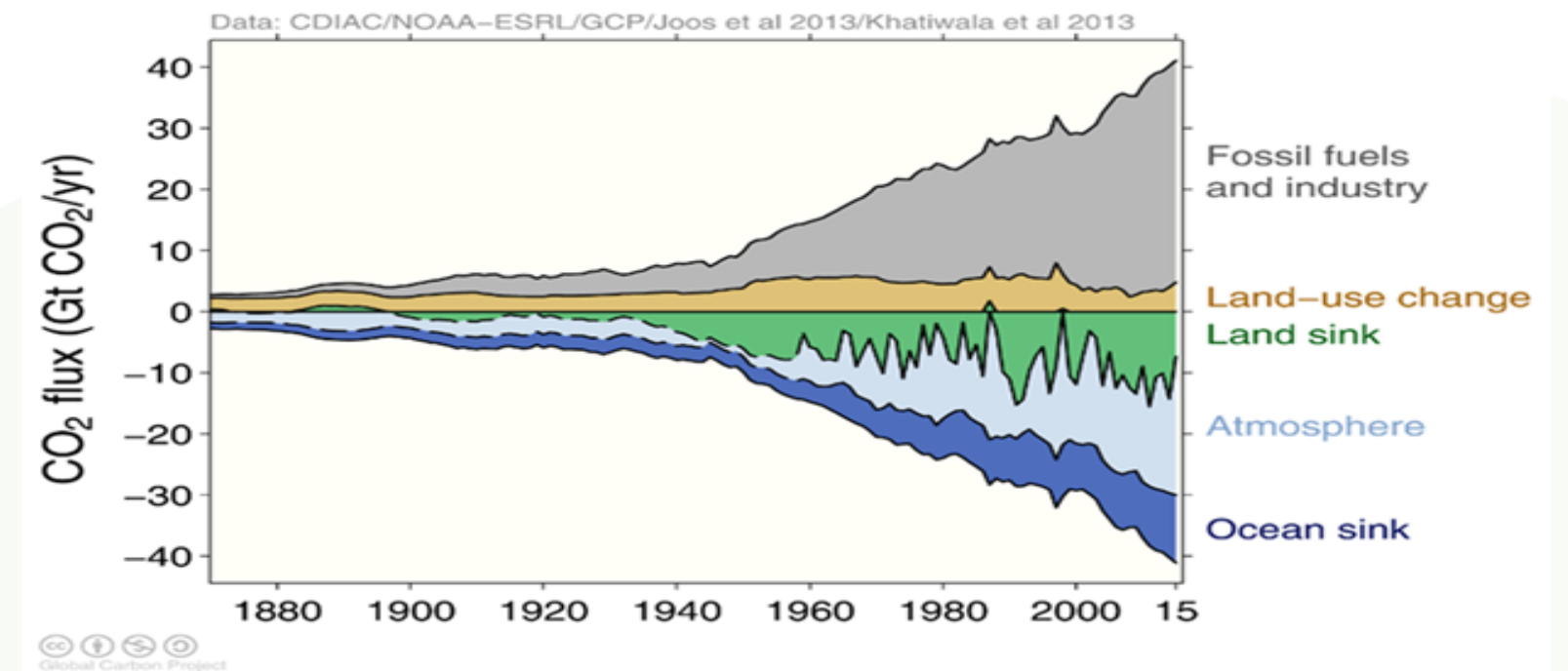
Contents

- Present challenges
- Opportunities
- Conclusions



Present challenges

- Forests are key for the climate (forest C-stocks, temporary stocks, substitution), biodiversity, keeping the spatial balance and cultural landscapes, soil protection, water regulation, etc.
- But all these contribution happen for free and are systematically free-riddled:
 - EU water Directive (2000): foresees full recovery of costs (but not of services)
 - EU-LULUCF: limits to forest management, especially in S & FIN in order to match C-neutrality in 2050 in the Benelux (NL) without compensatory mechanisms
 - Additionality allows to plant new forests through voluntary markets but the rest of the contributions are for free, especially for the areas that never deforested or recovered decades ago (additionality ethical questionable)



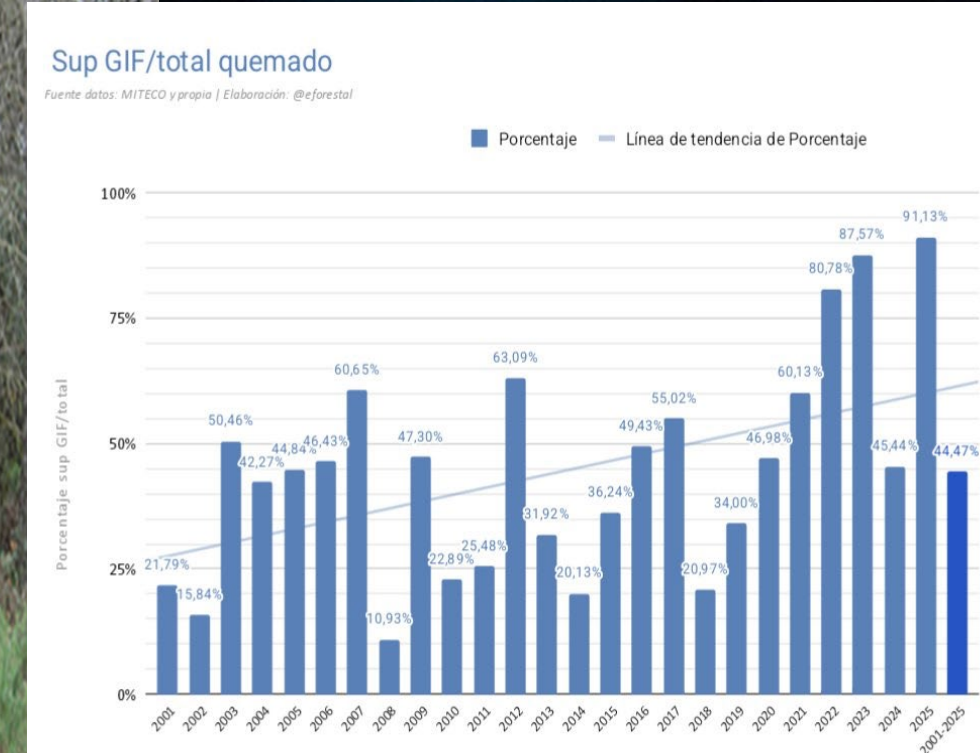
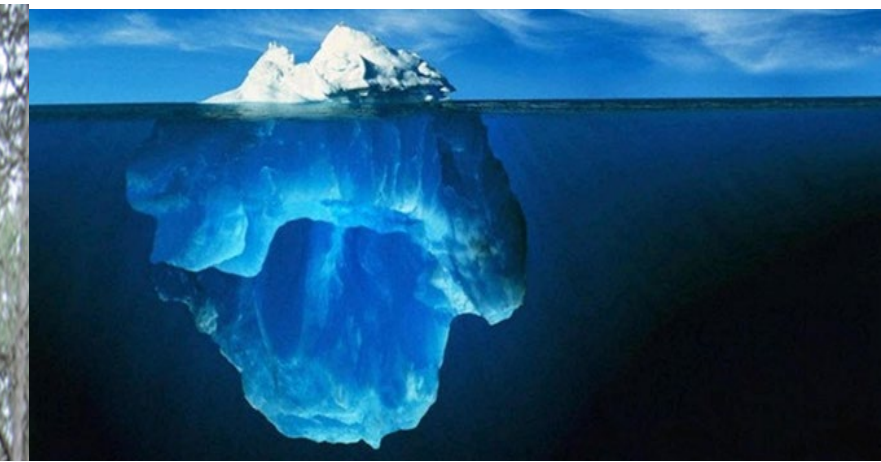
Present challenges

- EUDR: demonstration of non deforestation origin but no similar burden is applied to fossil fuels and minerals (iron, aluminum,...)
- Until 2020 EU declared itself incompetent on forest issues (CAP not applicable to forests -1% of funding through 2nd pillar) but since then through the environment subsidiary competence all kind of restrictions swap over
- Biodiversity preservation is based on old-fashioned non-intervention approaches (unmodified 1992 Directive) than have proven inefficient and expelling for rural communities that have preserved them for generations while the methodologies applied to measure conservation status are challengeable (1 of 4 criteria -: negative status)
- Abuse of EIA for rural activities expelling extensive grazing that is key for biodiversity + strict protection of big predators
- Reference levels for methane do not account that extensive prairies would be as well occupied by wild herbivores



Present challenges

- Forest fires are approached from a reactive and fire repression perspective that would be heavily criticized in health or security policies as old-fashioned and regressive overseeing the reflections that in North America and Australia mature since decades
- The broad consensus about the European cultural landscape is crumbling with an active minority betting de facto for land segregation
- Bigger metropolises and southern coasts/islands grow unsustainable while forest-dominated areas (mountains in the South, boreal forests in the north loose critical population and could collapse as living areas (socio-spatial regressive policies)
- Biomass use is questioned but Sweden is the single C-neutral EU country thanks to an active forest sector, extensive wood building, community heat biomass-based networks and significant hydro-power



Opportunities

- Bioeconomy: overcoming the recycling of present mineral-based economy by just circularity (energy cost of recycling metals or glass) and the positive spatial effects for rural areas sustaining its active land management
- Moving towards integrated rural land planning that embraces land use and eventual changes, water and forest fire prevention measures, tailored biodiversity protection (might be active), bundling infrastructure, soft connections, heritage recovery, etc.
- Planting trees shall never become an end by itself (assisted natural regeneration)



Opportunities

Moving towards devolution of state forests to communities be jointly or at family scale as far as the size allows while strengthening the access to markets, training and civil society growth

Incorporating finance and insurance sector

Rural actors (public, civil society) leaders need to develop:

- a) active communication strategies
- b) strategic thinking
- c) coordinating all the rural activities (agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, value chain,...)



Conclusions

- Rural people cannot become “stone guests” in their territories but need to become empowered actors and protagonists
- Policies need to be fair and not dictated by the urban majority driven by a elitist minority
- Rural territories need to integrate the productive activities, the environmental services they generate –not for free- and the reduction of fire- and water-related risks



THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

What will you do when we leave?

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