

Huw Irranca-Davies MS

Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs

17 July 2024

Dear Huw,

UK/European Forest Institute (EFI): Host Country Agreement

During our meeting on 26 June 2024, we considered the UK/European Forest Institute (EFI): Host Country Agreement as part of our scrutiny of international agreements within our remit.

The agreement relates to the establishment of a UK presence for EFI, which is an international organisation established by European states. The agreement provides EFI with the privileges and immunities necessary for it to function effectively within the UK.

We acknowledge that the agreement falls within reserved competence of international relations, which includes relations with territories outside the UK, and that the conferral of privileges and immunities under international law are not devolved.

Nevertheless, we also noted that EFI's activities relate to forestry, an area of devolved competence of significant interest to us. We noted that EFI appears to have links to Bangor University and that Natural Resources Wales became a member the European State Forest Association, EUSTAFOR, in 2020.

On this basis, we agreed to write to you to seek more information on the potential opportunities afforded to Wales by the agreement.

We would welcome the Welsh Government's view on:

- the establishment of EFI in the UK, including how Wales may benefit from its presence in future;
- the relationship between Welsh agencies, research organisations and EFI;
- whether the Welsh Government was consulted on the agreement's development; and

- information on any intergovernmental work taking place, or due to take place jointly with EFI, including in relation to its intended focus to improve global forest governance.

I should be grateful for a response as soon as possible, and by 14 August at the latest.

Yours sincerely,



Llyr Gruffydd MS,
Chair, Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg | We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.