



12. Mai 2026

Dear Mr. Grünig,

We read your recent study, *"Climate change will increase forest disturbances in Europe throughout the 21st century,"* with great interest. Your findings on the projected increase in wildfires and insect outbreaks provide a significant contribution to our understanding of future forest dynamics.

However, we were surprised to find that anthropogenic drivers—specifically intensive forestry and land-use changes—were not more prominently addressed. While we understand the study focuses on climate-induced changes, data suggests that logging and management-related deforestation account for a significant percentage of canopy loss. Without contextualising climate impacts against this [82% figure for human-caused disturbance](#), the study risks leading to the conclusion that forest degradation is solely a climate issue.

Of particular interest are your forecasts for future forest damage in the Alps and Alpine foothills. These projections coincide precisely with current forestry plans to prioritise these regions for energy wood extraction.

We are concerned that by attributing disturbances primarily to climate without addressing management intensity, the study may inadvertently provide a scientific justification for "salvage logging" or clearcutting in areas where maintaining closed canopies might actually be the more resilient path. Empirical evidence as well as our own evaluations show that minimally managed forests with closed canopies exhibit significantly higher resilience to drought and pests compared to heavily managed stands.

Given the potential for such research to influence policy, we are curious about the following:

- Was the exclusion of management factors (such as the preservation of old-growth stands and closed canopies) a result of the modeling scope?
- How do you view the role of closed-canopy resilience in the specific context of the Alpine regions mentioned, where energy wood demands are increasing?

Thank you for your time and for your contribution to this critical discussion. We look forward to your statement.

Kind regards,

Claudia Zenhäusern
Communication officer