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Koli Forum to outline a future for Europe based on natural resources

– The long-term prosperity of Europe depends on the extent to which the continent recognises the importance of considering natural resources as a basis for development and decision-making, according to the initiators, backers and keynote speakers of the Koli Forum, a new major international event to be held in Finland in October 2009. The most prominent among them is the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, President **Martti Ahtisaari**.

The prestigious invitational conference taking place from 22-24 October 2009 brings together top European opinion-leaders from the spheres of business, science, politics and culture. Against the backdrop of Koli National Park, they will search out the best solutions for a future that considers natural resources. The results of the Forum will be published as the Theses of Koli.

– There is little of more importance at this moment than the discovery of new, socially and economically sustainable solutions that will point the way for long-term future development says **Pekka Hallberg**, President of the Supreme Administrative Court of Finland and Chairman of the Koli Forum Advisory Board. His idea of a Koli Forum has won broad support from a wide range of opinion-leaders.

Together with Mr Hallberg, President Martti Ahtisaari is the host of the Koli Forum. President Ahtisaari will give the opening address at the Forum. One of the keynote speakers is **Jorma Ollila**, Non-Executive Chairman of Royal Dutch Shell plc. and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Nokia Corporation.

Climate change and energy as main themes

The first Koli Forum will discuss the availability of raw materials for energy production, priorities in decision-making and Europe's competitiveness with respect to climate change mitigation and the promotion of renewable energy. The aim is to provide decision-makers with reliable information, a variety of perspectives and a different rationale to form a basis for sound decisions.

– The forest sector can play a key role in the implementation of the European Union programme for climate change mitigation, says **Timo Karjalainen**, Professor of International Forestry at the Finnish Forest Research Institute and Secretary General of the first Koli Forum.

– As a user of natural resources, the forest sector is facing a difficult challenge on the one hand, but on the other is being presented with a great opportunity as the use of renewable energy increases in Europe.

The Forum will discuss issues related to climate change, energy and competitiveness taking examples from the forest sector. The forest sector is a natural choice as a theme for the first Koli Forum, since Finland is renowned for its know-how in this area. Moreover, the region hosting the forum, North Karelia, represents a cluster of know-how in the forest sector.

European opinion-leaders retracing the steps of Jean Sibelius

– Numerous seminars are held throughout the world, but what makes the Koli Forum different is its pluralism and social-inclusiveness, says Dr **Pentti Hyttinen**, Executive Director of the Regional Council of North Karelia.

– Several of Finland's great artists, such as the painter Eero Järnefelt, the novelist Juhani Aho and the composer Jean Sibelius sought inspiration in the landscape of Koli. Now European opinion-leaders will be gathering on Koli Hill in the same spirit, looking out towards the future.

Those responsible for content production for the Forum are the European Forest Institute, the University of Joensuu Forest Foresight Unit and the Finnish Forest Research Institute.

The sponsors of the Forum are the Finnish Foundation for Economic Education, the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Finnish Forest Industries Federation, the Finnish Forest Foundation, Josek Oy and the Regional Council of North Karelia. The Finnish Forest Research Institute acts as the Secretariat-General of the Koli Forum 2009.

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WHAT IS THE KOLI FORUM?

- The biennial Koli Forum brings together top European opinion leaders from the spheres of business, science, politics and culture to search out the best solutions for a future that considers natural resources.
- The Forum provides new knowledge for survival as well as perspectives for long-term constructive discussion.
- The Koli Forum influences the decision-makers who shape our common future. In order to make sound decisions, it is essential that decision-makers have access to reliable information, varied perspectives and a different rationale.
- The Koli Forum will be held from 22–24 October 2009 in Koli, Finland.
- For further details and newsletter subscriptions, please visit www.koliforum.fi