
Feedback on the post-2020 Forest Strategy Roadmap

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The European Woodworking Industry stresses the need for an independent and self-standing EU Forest Strategy for the post-2020 period, built on a comprehensive understanding of Sustainable Forest Management. This also means that **coordination with all actors of the value chain, including the forest-based industry**, is key to enable the European forests and forest-based Industries to tap into their potential of climate change mitigation and sustainable job creation, in line with the 2050 climate-neutrality objective of the EU.

The role of the Strategy should be to create **coherence between all the policies** directly and indirectly affecting forests, forestry and wood-based products, and to coordinate contribution from forests, forestry and wood-based products to multiple European Green Deal objectives (climate, biodiversity, jobs, resilient EU economy, green growth, rural development).

This vision of a post-2020 Strategy is in line with the [Council Conclusions](#) adopted in November 2020. The [Parliament position](#) is equally clear. In elaborating the new Strategy the Commission should listen to the strong signals from Council and Parliament and redress the focus, which in the Roadmap is mainly on environmental aspects, on **all three pillars of sustainability** (environmental, social and economic sustainability).

The Strategy must be built on correct starting points, such as:

- Assessment of the actual state of European forests. The main pressure on European forests is not increased harvesting rates. It is mainly climate change and related forest disturbances and to some extent urbanization.
- European forests differ a lot. There is therefore no one-size-fits-all solution. Instead measures are by definition national, regional or local.
- Production and protection objectives are not in contradiction, they can be combined.

The European Parliament also recognises that *“stepping up the circular bio-economy is an essential approach to achieving a low-carbon society in the implementation of the Green Deal”* (Sarvamaa Report). Forest-based bioeconomies have also been adopted as the national forest strategies in many European countries. The Woodworking Industry hopes that the European Commission may follow the same path and include the role of forest circular bioeconomy as pillar in the forestry Strategy. The EU Woodworking Industry only uses legally harvested products originated from sustainable managed forests.

Recommendations:

- The Woodworking Industry **calls for a long-term Forestry strategy that provides a sustainable wood supply, supports efficient wood and by-products processing**, facilitate well-organized **collection and re-use** of wood material at products' end-of-life.

- The Industry asks that the new Strategy **recognises the climate benefit of the whole forest-based value chain through the carbon sink, storage (in the forest and in the products) and substitution effects**, also in light with the **increased 2030 climate target plan**. This potential should be reflected in the Forest Strategy and synergies in this direction should be explored.

Sustainable wood products have a strongly underestimated contribution to climate change mitigation, in particular through increased use in the construction sector. Wood products offer the potential to **decarbonise the building sector**, both in new construction and renovations, thanks to the storage effect and the capacity to replace energy-intensive materials. Now we can quantify and communicate the stored carbon in wood at product level. We can also take this a step further and also see how increasing quantities of timber in our national building stocks, can increase the benefit of that carbon storage benefit. This is in line with the announcement to produce **by 2023 a roadmap leading up to 2050 for reducing whole life-cycle carbon emissions in building** (from the **Renovation wave strategy** published on 14 October 2020).

- The European Wood Industry calls for a Forestry Strategy that provides responses to the challenges **climate change adaptation and mitigation** of the forests and enable them to continue fulfilling their functions.
- The EU forest strategy should promote the consumption of sustainable forest biomass, enhance forest **product innovation** in order to generate **high value-added products**, and facilitate the link between EU research programmes and commercialisation.
- Additionally, the Forestry Strategy shall:
 - Reduce the risks that threaten jobs and economic strength, particularly in rural areas.
 - Reduce bureaucratic procedures to encourage forest enterprise activities.
- Finally, for the Strategy to be a successful policy tool, the forest owner needs to be at the core of the Strategy, and their present work on Sustainable Forest Management must be acknowledged. To create engagement, it is essential to adopt a bottom-up perspective, not a top-down one.

CEI-Bois, the European Confederation of the Woodworking Industries, numbers 16 national organizations, 4 European Sector Federations as well as 1 Private Industrial Group. It is the organization backing the interests of the whole industrial European wood sector: close to 180.000 companies generating an annual turnover of 152 billion euros and employing 1 million workers in the EU.