
Position of the Woodworking Industry on the EU Green Deal

02 March 2020

- The European woodworking industry is fully behind the objectives of the European Green Deal. This is clearly displayed in our **Forest-based Industries 2050 Vision**, in which we commit to **climate neutrality, circular bioeconomy, resource efficiency, economic growth and employment creation**, and we lay out pathways to reach those goals in our sector.
- The momentum is high for our industry to help the EU to achieve these goals. The Green Deal Communication mostly mentions forests with a strong emphasis on preservation and restoration but does not elaborate on the **opportunities** that forests and the forest-based sector can offer. These are summarised in the concept of **circular bioeconomy**.
- The full **climate mitigation potential** of the forest sector is best achieved by taking into account both the action of forests and harvested wood products as a **carbon sink** and **carbon stock**, and the **substitution effect** of wood products. **Timber buildings** are key allies in decarbonising construction: 1 m³ of wood stores almost 0.9 ton of CO₂ and allows to save on average another 1ton of CO₂ compared to functionally equivalent materials.
- **Forest bioeconomy and circularity are closely linked**. Wood is a renewable resource. It is processed efficiently, as by-products and residues can be used for raw materials of other wood-based products or energy. It is reusable and recyclable: for example, in the wood packaging sector recovery, repair and reuse of wooden pallets are already standard industrial practices.
- **Bioeconomy brings jobs and growth** in rural, peri-urban and urban areas: 170.000 companies in the EU belong to the woodworking industry, which gives jobs to 1 million workers and adds 133 billion euros to the economy. The forest-based sector as a whole represents around 420.000 enterprises for a total turnover of over 520 billion euros and around 3,5 million workers. Dialogue between social partners and with education providers is key to retain skills and attract new ones.
- In light of the above, the woodworking industry is already a **strategic value chain** in virtue of its climate mitigation potential and contribution to growth, and its competitiveness should be ensured in the context of the new EU Industrial Strategy.
- For what concerns construction, the new Circular Economy Action plan should stimulate a transition towards whole-life carbon assessment of products, with a focus on construction products and buildings, as it would allow to get a true picture of a buildings' energy and carbon impact, including **embodied carbon**. The specific methods and tools chosen for LCA of construction products should rely on the standardisation work carried out in the CEN Technical Committee 350, and in particular on the EN15804 standard. This also provides the best platform for calculations in the standard at building level and potentially machine readable EPDs and Building Information Modelling (BIM).

- In order to fully exploit the potential of bioeconomy, while at the same time preventing the ever-increasing forest damages related to climate change disturbances (pests, storms, fires) the new **Forest Strategy** should keep **sustainable and active forest management** at its heart.
- On the same line of reasoning, before any addition of protected forest areas or new legislation are considered, better implementation of existing nature legislation is needed on already designated sites, based on participatory planning and management, and on appropriate financing. In general, targets in the upcoming **Biodiversity Strategy** should stay within realistic limits and based on best available scientific knowledge, also respecting local specificities and Member State subsidiarity on forest policy.

CEI-Bois, the European Confederation of the Woodworking Industries, numbers 18 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: more than 170.000 companies generating an annual turnover of 133 billion euros and employing 1 million workers in the EU.