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JOINT STATEMENT

The EESC calls for coherence, certainty and clarity from the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030

European forest owners and managers welcome the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) Opinion on the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 adopted today. The Opinion draws conclusions similar to those expressed by the forest sector and Member States in the European Council. It underlines the necessity for a holistic and balanced approach to forests and their management as well as the key role of European forest owners and managers in the Strategy.

European forest owners and managers have identified the following points presented in the EESC's Opinion on the EU Forest Strategy for 2030 as crucial in order for the Strategy to deliver in a balanced and holistic manner on all the expectations from the society towards forests:

- The EESC calls for coherence, certainty, stability, clarity and consistency in the policy and regulatory framework. It is crucial not to introduce initiatives that overlap or contradict with existing widely adopted sustainability definitions, principles, criteria, indicators, guidelines and schemes.
- The EESC stresses the need for a holistic view of the role played by forests and the forest-based bioeconomy in climate change mitigation, so as to ensure the best combination of sequestration, storage and substitution to achieve a post-fossil-fuel economy.
- The EESC stresses the importance of making decisions at the right level, in accordance with competences and the principle of subsidiarity. As forests differ a lot across the EU, there are no one-size-fits-all solutions, and forest management and forest management planning are best addressed at national level.
- The EESC underlines that all in all, the implications of the strategy are unclear and some of its initiatives may weaken forest-based value chains and jeopardise jobs, especially in rural areas, by limiting sustainable wood harvesting.

Along the EESC Opinion and the EU Council Conclusions, it has become even clearer that the Strategy adopted by the Commission raises serious concerns. As the next step, European forest owners and managers call on the Commission to take concrete action in clarifying all these points and questions and truly involve all relevant parties, so to ensure a holistic view of the role played by forests in the transition towards future-fit Europe.