

Sustainable forest management and products from wood is an important part of a greener economy and EU 2020

EUSTAFOR (European State Forest Organization) represents:

- **28 State Forest Organizations in Europe with 110 000 employees**
- **48 million hectares, or 30% of EU forest**
- **A sustainable annual increment of 155 million m³**
- **A sustainable annual harvest of 115 million m³**
- **Management of more than 10 million ha protected forest**

EUSTAFOR welcomes the proposal in the EU 2020 strategy for a greener economy where wood and forestry must be included.

In order to succeed in creating a greener and competitive economy EU needs to emphasise the role of renewable raw material and energy. Mobilization of a growing forest resource in the EU is a key component of the future EU 2020 strategy for a greener economy. Sustainably managed forests provide wood products that can increasingly contribute to climate mitigation, through carbon sequestered or stored as well as avoided emissions when substituting energy intensive materials.

From EU 2020: "In developing a new vision and direction for EU policy, we need to recognise that conserving energy, natural resources and raw materials, using them more efficiently and increasing productivity will be the key drivers of the future competitiveness of our industry and our economies."

The 176 million hectares of forests (FAO) in the EU provide an important renewable resource. Today approximately 60 % of the annual growth in the European forests is used. Inventories have shown that there is still a sustainable potential left to mobilize additional renewable wood raw material from the forests within the union.

With sustainable forest management we have the possibility to further increase the forest growth and thereby counteract climate change with increased carbon sequestration as well as production of wood raw material which can be used to substitute other less sustainable products including fossil fuels.

Europe leads the way when it comes to effective and efficient use of the forest resource and can continue to do so – creating valuable timber for construction, biomass for paper and energy, conserving valuable biotopes, creating possibilities for recreation and creating new products. This creates economic growth, jobs, biodiversity and other values.

From EU 2020: "Europe needs a strengthened and competitive industrial base, a modern service sector and a thriving agriculture, rural economy, and maritime sector. As 'first mover' in building this society of the future, Europe can derive important benefits by developing competitive, innovative products, rolling out the infrastructures of the future, entering new markets and creating new, high-quality jobs."

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Sustainable forest management is the base for Europe's world leading forest and wood industry which generates considerable economic values and it also significantly supports rural economy.

Europe now has the possibility to take the lead in developing other innovative green products based on wood raw material such as green chemicals from bio refineries, a new generation biofuel for transports (see Biofuels in the European Union, A vision for 2030 and beyond), cloth (viscose), bio composites as a raw material for different manufacturing industries, LCD screens, functional packaging, tire cords, nanofibres and so on.

It is important to continue supporting research for products from forests which gives both a greener society and new jobs.

EUSTAFOR members practice sustainable forest management under forestry acts and are certified in approved certification systems.

In order to stimulate an increased use of renewable products, it is crucial that regulations in the European market regarding for instance sustainability criteria are equal for different products. We must not come to a market situation where products from renewable resources have relatively higher costs due to biased regulations, because this could lead to a negative development where consumers opt for cheaper less sustainable alternatives.

From EU 2020: "The EU should compete more effectively and increase its productivity by a lower and more efficient consumption of non-renewable energy and resources" and "Knowledge is the engine for sustainable growth."

In a change to a greener economy policy developers and decision makers should not forget the importance and necessity of changes in human behaviour. The real changes usually occur when we all as individuals change our way of thinking, perceiving and acting, choosing our way of life.

With that in mind and the results from different surveys showing that EU citizens to a large extent believe that there is deforestation in Europe and that wood is not a sustainable product, it will be hard and slow to change behaviour which leads to citizens choosing sustainable products like wood.

Therefore we, as the European State Forest Association, believe it is necessary to include education on sustainable materials and their use in the knowledge package.

Sustainable forest management and forestry will play a major role in creating a greener economy.

EUSTAFOR and its members are ready and willing to actively support the political process to guarantee a greener economy while considering renewable resources as a key success factor to get the future EU 2020 strategy implemented.

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