



Brussels, 15th October 2018

Joint statement prior to the publication of the mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy

The forest-based sector welcomed the adoption of the new EU Forest Strategy¹ in 2013. As the representatives of forest owners, forestry contractors and managers and forest-based industry we consider important to have a clear and consistent reference for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the EU policy framework.

We expect that the mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy foreseen for this year will look into details on how various EU forest-related policies have supported the achievement of the 2020 forest objectives, namely:

"To ensure and demonstrate that all forests in the EU are managed according to sustainable forest management principles and that the EU's contribution to promoting sustainable forest management and reducing deforestation at global level is strengthened, thus:

- contributing to balancing various forest functions, meeting demands, and delivering vital ecosystem services
- providing a basis for forestry and the whole forest-based value chain to be competitive and viable contributors to the bio-based economy."

We do also believe that is important to assess the role of EU Forest Strategy in coordinating the contribution of forests and forest-based sector to EU climate and energy policy objectives, especially via increasing carbon storage in forests and forest-based products and substitution of non-renewable materials and energy. Furthermore, the strategy should embrace aspects related to the role of forests and forest management in supporting the transition towards bio and circular-economy.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/strategy_en

In the EU, forest policy is under Member States' competence. Taking this into account, we believe that it is crucial for the EU to have a strong co-ordination framework for forest-related EU policies and sustainable forest management after 2020. This framework should better focus on the contribution of the sector to climate change mitigation and adaptation, resource efficiency, growth and job creation, rural development, environment and forest resilience.

In addition, the review of the strategy should address the contribution of EU forests, forestry and forest-based products and energy to internationally agreed objectives, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Paris Agreement as well as to the Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 and the six Global Forest Goals therein.

The EU and its Member States should strengthen their support to the sector to face the increasing pressure from the continuous changes in climatic conditions and to minimize the negative impacts of pests, diseases, storms, forest fires and other phenomena amplified by the climate change. Furthermore, it should enable the sector to benefit from opportunities created by research and innovation, digitalisation and the use of new technologies and the further development of the forest-based bioeconomy in the EU.

Consequently, we call for an update of the EU Forest Strategy in order to further strengthen its role as a key reference framework for the EU to establish the links between forests and forest-based sector and other related policies as well as to better coordinate EU input to Forest Europe and the international forest agenda.

CEETAR – European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors

CEI-BOIS – European Confederation of the Woodworking Industries

CEJA – European Council of Young Farmers

CEPF – Confederation of European Forests Owners

CEPI – Confederation of European Paper Industries

COPA COGECA - European Farmers and European Agri-cooperatives

ELO – European Landowners' Organization

EUSTAFOR – European State Forest Association

FECOF - European Federation of Forest-Owning Communities

UEF – Union of European Foresters

USSE – L'Union des Sylviculteurs du Sud de l'Europe