



Joint press release

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LULUCF: Forestry, paper and agri-sectors team up in favor of a dynamic forest reference level

The Environment Committee (ENVI) of the European Parliament today adopted the draft report of the Committee's Rapporteur, **MEP Norbert Lins**, on the regulation of Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF). The policy is of utmost importance for the forest and agricultural sectors as it defines the climate benefits of forest management and the use of wood.

A key element of the regulation is how to account for emissions and removals from forests. As a part of the 2030 Climate and Energy Framework, the European Commission proposed new EU LULUCF accounting rules for forests using a "Forest Reference Level" based on past (1990-2009) management practices and intensity.

Today, the ENVI Committee decided to continue this approach by voting in favor of a compromise to compare forest management intensity in 2020-2030 to the historical period of 2000-2012.

The approach of comparing future forest use to historical management intensity has been heavily criticized by the forest and agricultural sectors. The latter point to the fact that, in order to take advantage of the full potential of long-term benefits from sustainably managed forests and harvested wood products as regards climate change mitigation and adaptation, Forest Reference Levels must take into consideration the most recent data on forest resources and relevant policies. While the efforts made by the EP Committee are to be acknowledged, substantial work is still needed to improve the proposal.

"We should not penalize countries that did not use the full sustainable potential of their forests in the past. Member States should be able to use their growing forests for developing a fossil-free bioeconomy and forest owners should be enabled to continue investing in sustainable forest management – the best long-term strategy to maintain the carbon sink and ensure the climate benefits of forests," says **Emma Berglund**, Secretary General of CEPPF.

"Forest resources are growing in Europe and we should promote the use of sustainably-sourced wood from European forests to reach the climate and energy targets and to develop a sustainable bioeconomy. In fact, the EU Forest Strategy calls for management, growth and the use of forests, and this goes far beyond just considering them as a carbon stock," says **Piotr Borkowski**, Executive Director of EUSTAFOR.

"A dynamic Forest Reference Level is essential for ensuring investments are made where it matters most: in sustainable forest management. Let's keep Europe's forests on a pro-growth trajectory that both maintains Europe's forest carbon sink and unleashes the true potential of its bioeconomy," says **Sylvain Lhôte**, Director General at CEPI.

"Use of wood from sustainably managed forests is THE key to concretely tackle climate change. European regulators must have the ambition to set a coherent and lively Forest Reference Level to maintain the forests carbon sink and ensure proper material availability that will allow the society to fully benefit from the carbon storage offered by Harvested Wood Products," says **Patrizio Antonicoli**, Secretary General of CEI-Bois.

"We seriously regret the vote in the Environment Committee," underlines the Chair of the Copa & Cogeca Environment Working Party, **Liisa Pietola**. "It is a loss for the rural community's growth and jobs and the climate. Countries are suffering more and more from extreme weather events and forest fires, and this will penalise them further. We are the only sectors that remove emissions from the atmosphere. The opinion of the Agriculture Committee was completely ignored."

The umbrella organizations of the forest, paper and agricultural sectors in Brussels urge all MEPs to look at the big picture concerning the climate change mitigation and adaptation of forestry. In the transition period from a fossil-based society, all outlets of forestry are needed and benefits should be examined in the long term.

EUSTAFOR, Copa and Cogeca, CEPF, CEPI and CEI-Bois remain confident that the upcoming discussions in the European Parliament and Council will have a positive impact on the further development of the proposal.

For further information, please contact:

Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF):
Secretary General, Emma Berglund - emma.berglund@cepf-eu.org

European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR):
Policy Advisor, Salvatore Martire: salvatore.martire@eustafor.eu
Communications Director, Juha Makinen: juha.makinen@eustafor.eu

European Farmers and European Agri-Cooperatives (Copa and Cogeca):
Senior Policy Advisor, Evangelos Koumentakos - Evangelos.Koumentakos@copa-cogeca.eu
Press Officer, Amanda Cheesley - Amanda.cheesley@copa-cogeca.eu

Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI):
Director General, Sylvain Lhôte - s.lhote@cepi.org
Press Officer, Ben Kennard – b.kennard@cepi.org

European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois):
Secretary General, Patrizio Antonicoli - patrizio.antonicoli@cei-bois.org