

## European Forest Policy

Forest Committee

### The issue

Unlike other types of land use in Europe, forestry is not covered anywhere in the founding Treaties of the European Community. In fact, with the exception of a Council Resolution on Forestry Strategy for Europe made in December 1998, there are hardly any dedicated policy instruments on forestry at European level. Over the years, this has led to a situation where non-forest policies anchored in other parts of the Treaties related to agriculture or the environment, for example, directly or indirectly impact on forestry.

The recently published Forest Action Plan of the European Commission at least has ambitions to set out concrete measures on forestry issues. It has four main objectives. Three of these are aimed at the triple bottom line of sustainability, while the fourth deals with coordination and communication. But the foundations of any dedicated legal basis are still missing.

### Impacts on the industry

In the absence of any coordinated or coherent European forest policy, the sector and its related industries are subject to numerous and sometimes contradictory policies. These are currently handled by no less than eight different DGs, e.g. climate change policy (carbon sinks, European Climate Change Programme); energy policy (Renewable Energy Directive, etc.); product policy (Eco-labels, Green Public Procurement); environment policy (Biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources, etc.); trade policy (Forest Law, Enforcement, Governance and Trade) and rural development policy (afforestation of agricultural land, energy crops, etc.).

As a result, the least considered aspect of forests and forestry policy in Europe is related to the economics of the sector, while every aspect of the environmental function is scrutinized over and over again. Taken together, all these policies can make the availability and mobilisation of wood as raw material increasingly difficult.

### CEPI's position

- CEPI would welcome a European Forestry Policy as long as it was not a subsidy-based policy like CAP. This would provide a framework for clear institutional leadership and would establish a level playing field within the EU.
- In the short-term, CEPI takes the opportunity of chairing the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork of DG AGRI to convey its messages to the Commission and secure that any action being taken addresses relevant forest-related issues.
- The Ministerial Conferences on Protection of Forests in Europe (known as "Helsinki Process") represents another opportunity to raise forest-related issues of interest for the industry in front of the policy-makers.

### Additional information

- CEPI will continue to coordinate with CEPF and CEI-Bois on these issues. CEPI is also reviving a "Forestry" working group within the European Parliament, and is chairing the official European Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork
- Moreover, as was initiated by the Austrian Presidency, in the future stakeholders will be given a chance to directly address national governments through the Forest Standing Committee (three thematic working groups in place) and the Forest Directors' meetings
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