European Council Position on Climate Change Major Step Forward

European paper industry welcomes the leadership taken by the EU in recognising the role played by the forest products industries.

European leaders at the recent European Council meeting set out a clear and concise position on climate change and what the European Union expects from the Copenhagen discussions in December. It confirmed the earlier conclusions of the Environment Council of 21 October.

The European paper industry welcomes this approach and is pleased to see a real understanding of what is at stake for European industry and encourages the European leaders to maintain this position during the negotiations.

“We believe that the European Council’s support of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 4th assessment report which concluded that a sustainable forest management strategy, aimed at maintaining or increasing carbon stocks, while producing an annual sustained yield of timber, will generate the largest climate change mitigation benefit, is a major recognition for our sector” said Teresa Presas, managing director of CEPI.

“We are pleased to note that the Council reiterates the role the forest products sector can play globally in meeting the challenges that lie ahead and that it considers early actions by our industry as part of the solution to mitigate climate change,” she added.

Including harvested wood products in a global agreement and making reference to sustainably produced wood products as a climate friendly material are positive steps forward. Developing the robust, transparent and consistent data and methodologies needed will require much work in the coming year.
Besides forestry, the EU targets, financing and carbon leakage positions which are also of great interest to the EU pulp and paper industry.

More than ever, Europe needs to reconcile competitiveness and sustainability for its industry to thrive in a global market. Meeting this challenge depends largely on policy makers and their decisions in Copenhagen and beyond. A comparable burden between our European companies and their global competitors is the only way forward.

The pulp and paper industry practices sustainable forest management, pursues security of energy supply through renewable energy, and optimises resources through the highest recycling rates in the world. It is a significant provider of employment, and adds economic value through the constant harnessing and updating of new technologies. Our industry model and its natural cycle may hold the path to reach society’s aims for business responsibility, climate change solutions, sustainable use of natural resources, expanded use of renewable resources and markets that respect nature.

“We urge the European Union to remain strong and to keep its position to ensure that Europe maintains its global position whilst delivering clear leadership on climate change,” concluded Ms Presas.

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For more information, please contact:

Daniela Haiduc, CEPI Communication Manager, at d.haiduc@cepi.org or +32 2 627 49 15

Notes to the Editor

CEPI aisbl - The Confederation of European Paper Industries

The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) is a Brussels-based non-profit making organisation regrouping the European pulp and paper industry and championing this industry’s achievements and the benefits of its products. Its mission is to promote the member’s business sector by taking specific actions notably, by monitoring and analysing activities and initiatives in the areas of industry, environment, energy, forestry, recycling, fiscal policies and competitiveness in general. Through CEPI, the paper industry increases its visibility and acts on emerging issues, making expert and constructive contributions on behalf of the industry.

Through its 18 member countries (16 European Union members plus Norway and Switzerland) CEPI represents some 800 pulp, paper and board producing companies across Europe, ranging from small and medium sized companies to multi-nationals, and 1200 paper mills. Together they represent 27% of world production.