

Press release

The European Pulp and Paper industry welcomes the COP26 Global Leaders Pledge to end deforestation by 2030 and the G20 Commitment to plant 1 trillion trees

Brussels, November 3rd, 2021.

The European pulp and paper industry welcomes the two recent announcements on forests and climate made by global leaders, who are currently gathered at the COP26 in Glasgow. It already supports these commitments with concrete action, working hand in hand with the EU Commission's services, and building on its track record for reforestation, sustainable forest management and the promotion of sustainable forestry practices worldwide. These actions could eventually be at the root of the development of a new and more sustainable industrial model, based on the substitution of carbon-intensive products for more climate friendly ones. Europe's forests systemic importance to the EU's global climate ambitions should not be underestimated.

On Sunday, G20 leaders released a declaration which included a statement of support to the aspirational goal of planting 1 trillion trees, notably with the stated objective to "create new carbon sinks", thus increasing the Earth capacity to pull climate change enhancing gas from the atmosphere. Yesterday, leaders of more than 100 countries gathered at the COP26 pledged to end deforestation by 2030. This included Brazil and China, for the first time in such an international commitment.

While both announcements essentially reinforce pre-existing agreements by expanding their geographical reach, these are welcome steps in the global fight against deforestation, and towards an economic model that is compliant with the goals of the Paris Agreement. **A consistent international policy framework for the forest-based sector based on these new commitments, and linking a ban on deforestation with sustainable forest management and reforestation, would enable a transition towards a fossil-free economy where forests could play a major part.**

The pulp and paper industry greatly contributes to managing European forests sustainably. The forest owners forming the backbone of this 'forest economy' are supporting the growth of **the European forests by 612 million m³ annually and these forests in turn remove the equivalent of 10% of Europe's greenhouse gas emissions.**

The main source of deforestation has, from a statistical standpoint, nothing to do with pulp and paper. Deforestation is, for 80% of it, driven by the expansion of farming, which typically results in an increase in global greenhouse gas emissions. By comparison, **forest extracted fibre-based products hold the potential to replace CO₂-intensive materials with alternatives that are good for the climate.** Such products include many substitutes to well-established everyday items made of plastics or cotton, from clothing to packaging, hygiene products and medical applications. Moreover, 67% of the production in the pulp and paper industry is based on recycled material, further contributing to 'closing carbon cycles' and keeping CO₂ out of the atmosphere.

However, in the face of the global challenge that is climate change, efforts at EU-level only are not enough. While forest cover is increasing in Europe, other continents suffer from the effects of deforestation. Which is why the pulp and paper industry is also active in promoting sustainable forest management practices throughout the world, and supports the European Commission's efforts to act against the import of commodities to the EU that are associated with deforestation.

Quotes:

“The whole forest economy is a sector where the basic principle is, and has been for the past 300 years, to extract less than nature provides,” says Jori Ringman, Director General at Cepi, the Brussels-based confederation of the pulp and paper industry. “The most recent pledges by the international community are directly connected to the EU’s ambition of enhancing of the carbon sink function of forests whilst optimising the overall contribution of forest by harvesting and using wood in climate-friendly products. These are steps in the right direction.”

Note to editor:

For press inquiries, please contact Ana Díaz Cordero, EU Public Affairs Manager, at a.diaz-cordero@cepi.org

To learn more about fibre-based alternatives, have a look at these videos:

[All green products start with #Greensource: climate neutrality with Europe's forest fibre industry](#)

[Textiles: part of sustainable pulp and paper industry by Cepi, Sodra, Sappi, Metsa Spring & Lenzing](#)

For information about Cepi's contribution to the Three Billion Trees Objective you can download our paper on the topic:

[Contribution to 3 billion trees objective](#)

For more statistics on the paper and pulp industry in Europe and worldwide, please refer to the latest version of our yearly report:

[Key statistics 2020](#)

About Cepi:

Cepi is the European association representing the paper industry. We offer a wide range of renewable and recyclable wood-based fibre solutions to EU citizens: from packaging to textile, hygiene and tissue products, printing and graphic papers as well as speciality papers, but also bio-chemicals for food and pharmaceuticals, bio-composites and bioenergy.

We are a responsible industry: 92% of our raw materials are sourced in Europe and certified as sustainable, 91% of the water we use is returned to the environment, in good condition. We are the world champion in recycling at the rate of 72%. At the forefront of the decarbonisation and industrial transformation of our economy, we embrace digitalisation and bring 20 billion value addition to the European economy and €5.5 billion investments annually.

More information about our sustainability performance [here](#).

Through its 18 national associations, Cepi gathers 500 companies operating 895 mills across Europe and directly employing more than 180,000 people.