
Press release

New Cepi study

Forest-based products as important as forest sink for climate mitigation

Brussels, 19 June 2020

Cepi, the Confederation of European Paper Industries, presented today its new study on the [“Climate effect of the forest-based sector in the European Union”](#) on occasion of a public webinar with the participation of the European Commission Directorate for Agriculture (DG AGRI).

For the first time, a scientific study quantifies the “substitution effect” which consists of preventing CO2 emissions moving away from fossil-based materials, and couples it with existing data on process emissions, CO2 removed by the forest and the CO2 stored in forest products.

Dr Holmgren, the study author and former Director General of the Center for International Forestry Research, presented the study key findings: *“The results show that forests and forest-based products remove a net of 806 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalents annually. This corresponds to 20% of all fossil emissions in the European Union”*. He explained that the circular bioeconomy model allows for a better calculation of the positive climate impact by considering the forests together with the circularity of the value chain.

Alfonso Gutierrez-Teira, Head of Sector for Forestry and Bioeconomy at DG AGRI, emphasized that it is crucial to align the European climate neutrality law with other planned legislation review namely LULUCF, Energy efficiency, Renewable Energy and the upcoming proposal on a new EU Adaptation Strategy.

Regarding the **EU Forest Strategy** planned for the first quarter of 2021, he said that there are many different pressures on forest that the European Commission will need to manage when drafting the strategy. He commented that it is essential to find a balance between 1) afforestation and forest restoration, 2) forest resilience and protection, 3) sustainable forest management of all European forests, 4) building the new EU growth model and contributing to the different dimensions of the Green Deal. Finally, he concluded that the new Cepi study helps the sector

contribute to the discussions and confirmed that the new EU Forest Strategy will take into account the role of the Forest-based industries.

During the webinar, **Cepi Director General Jori Ringman** highlighted the significance of the study results for EU policymaking: *"The radical thing about the substitution effect is that it is immediate and significant: unlike most other climate change mitigation options, increased substitution is available here and now. We need EU policies that support consumers to move from high-carbon products to low-carbon forest-based products. We need to keep fossil carbon in the ground and to make responsibly sourced bio-based raw materials more available and easier to access."*

Fanny-Pomme Langue, Secretary General at the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) highlighted that Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) is essential to contribute to the three main climate benefits – Sequestration, Storage and Substitution. *"SFM is the tool to maintain carbon sink while increasing carbon storage in EU forests and wood products and substituting fossil-based products and energy. It is also the solution to manage the growing risk and uncertainty related to natural disturbances."* she said.

According to **Margherita Miceli**, Policy Officer, European Confederation of Woodworking industries (CEI-Bois), with climate neutrality as a key goal of the European Green Deal, the study confirms that forest-based industries are one of the green and resilient European industrial ecosystems that can help build the transition towards a carbon-neutral economy by 2050.

Note to editor:

For more information about Cepi or the Holmgren study on the positive impact of the Forest-based industries, please contact Claire Couet, Public Affairs & Communications Director, at c.couet@cepi.org.

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 in good condition to the environment. We are the world champion in recycling at the rate of 71,6%. 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.

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