

Press release

Renewable, biogenic carbon should be favoured by the future EU certification scheme for carbon removals

Brussels, 6 October 2022

In advance of the release of the EU's certification scheme for carbon removals, the first to be developed at international scale by a public body, Cepi presented a position paper outlining its views on this important tool to reach the European Union's net zero carbon goals. It stresses the important role that the pulp and paper industry already plays in building a biogenic carbon cycle through its value chain, and how differentiated certification tools could better support its further development.

Wood-based products have a capacity to store carbon and substitute fossil-based materials and energy. This contributes to forests and forest-based products having an overall positive net climate effect of -806 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent annually. This corresponds to avoiding **20% of all EU fossil emissions**.

Forests can improve their carbon sink capacity through active management, as practiced by the pulp and paper industry and the forest managers it works with. Sustainable forest management practices have also contributed to the expansion of European forests over the past centuries. This involves the harvesting of trees before their natural decay results in the release of greenhouse gases. Wood harvested in such a way can however store carbon for longer periods if turned into products, and recycling can further prolong this storage capacity. Other 'carbon cycles' are based on the capture and re-use of carbon from finite, fossil resources. Cepi proposes a clear, science-based **differentiation between these and the renewable carbon that is part of biogenic carbon cycles**, as already defined in international standards.

A differentiation between carbon sources through separate certificates would support renewable, bio-based products and materials in substituting of fossil-based ones. This substitution effect holds the potential to considerably lower EU emissions in the future. A clear definition and separation of renewable carbon should be part of a predictable **framework to enable the investments needed to reach climate neutrality**. Such a framework would make bio-based industries an essential part of the EU's global climate policy, ensuring security of supply and access to sustainable, home-grown raw materials.

The crucial role of carbon removals has been recognised in scenarios developed by the United Nations' mandated Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). However, Cepi joins the IPCC and the overwhelming majority of the climate community in underlining that carbon removals should not replace efforts to reduce fossil emissions. Although Cepi supports the development of a carbon certification system for afforestation projects and ones supporting reforestation after disturbances, it considers that as a **solution to remove and store carbon from the atmosphere it cannot be used to offset delayed emissions reductions in other sectors**.

Download [Cepi's position paper on the EU certification of carbon removals](#).

Quotes

"Sustainable biogenic carbon cycles are already intrinsically embedded in the activities of our industry's value chain. There is the potential to scale up, and biogenic carbon has inherent advantages, notably in substituting emissions from fossil sources. EU policy should favour biogenic carbon."

Jori Ringman, Director General – Cepi (Confederation of the European Paper Industries)

Notes to editor:

For press inquiries to Cepi, please contact Piotr Pogorzelski, Media Relations Manager, at

E: p.popogorzelski@cepi.org

T: +32.4.95.12.67.88

For more information on Industry commitments, please consult

[Cepi's Sustainable Product Pledge](#),

[Cepi's Pledge to support the 3 billion trees initiative](#).

[The 4evergreen cross-industry alliance](#).

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: 85% of our raw materials are sourced in Europe and certified as sustainable, 92% of the water we use is returned in good condition to the environment. We are the world champion in recycling at the rate of 71.4%. At the forefront of the decarbonisation and industrial transformation of our economy, we embrace digitalisation and bring 21 billion value addition to the European economy and €4.5 billion investments annually. Through its 18 national associations, Cepi gathers 490 companies operating 885 mills across Europe and directly employing more than 179,000 people.

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