

## 5 KEY MESSAGES

**From European forest owners**  
for the EU legislative period 2014-2019



## KEY MESSAGE 1

### Promoting sustainable forest management (SFM) and the competitiveness of the forest sector



Europe's forests are an integral element of a wide and diverse cultural landscape and are, in most cases, managed. The EU should acknowledge the concepts of multi-functionality and sustainable forest management (SFM)

as key solutions for combining various objectives. Segregated approaches which can often be found in other regions of the world, where having strict nature conservation on one side of a road and high yield timber production on the other, are not suitable for the diverse, cultural landscape in Europe which has been developed over hundreds of years and which is today marked by complex ecosystem and ownership patterns.

SFM is a dynamic concept, balancing the different economic, social and environmental dimensions. SFM aims to ensure that forests provide society – now and in the future – with manifold goods and services. This includes not only the sustained production

of wood as an important renewable raw material, but also all the other various non-wood goods and ecosystem services. SFM requires deliberate human intervention in order to safeguard the durability of vital, healthy and productive forest ecosystems. Europe's forest owners and managers invest considerable resources in SFM. Such investments are only possible if the forest sector remains competitive. Though forestry is a matter of Members States competency, the EU should help to maintain and further develop a supportive framework for a competitive and economic viable forest sector.

**77% of Europe's forests have a forest management plan or equivalent. 50% of the forests are certified.**

## KEY MESSAGE 2

### The EU's increasing forest resources enable an increased use of wood



The use and management of forests in the EU is based on internationally-recognised sustainability principles that reflect the dynamics of working with natural processes. The area of forest available for wood supply has increased by more than 4 million hectares since the year 2000, which corresponds to the land area of

Denmark. At the same time the growing stock in EU forests has grown by over 12%, to almost 22 billion cubic meters, while only around 60% of the annual growth is being harvested.

The growing and underutilised forest resources in the EU provide a good basis for strengthening forest-related livelihoods and allow an increased use of wood. Deforestation – a topic dominating global forest discussions – is therefore not a problem within the EU. On the contrary, the current under-use of EU forest resources can lead to unfavourable age structures of forests and, thus, significantly weaken growing conditions and the various services forests provide. Furthermore, the increasing dependency of raw material imports from overseas and the under use of domestic resources, due to further restrictions in land use and management, should be critically reviewed in the light of an envisaged European sustainable resource policy.

About **40%** of the **land** area within the EU is **covered by forests**, of which approximately **60%** is **privately owned**.

### KEY MESSAGE 3


## Forests in the EU significantly contribute to the economic well-being of Europe



Forest issues have not traditionally attracted a great deal of interest in the EU. However, this has changed dramatically during recent years when biodiversity, climate change and energy security, amongst other issues, have become key concerns among EU decision makers. Together with this development, forests have come on to the EU's agenda as a concrete solution provider to these challenges. In addition, forests have traditionally been a key part of the EU's environmental policy.


Moreover, the socio-economic importance of forests is high, but often underestimated. Businesses working with forests and wood – of which most are small and medium-sized enterprises – are often located in rural areas, where

**Forests** and forest-based industries employ around **4 million people**, deliver goods with a total value of **500 billion EUR** and make up about **8%** of the **EU's manufacturing GDP**.



they contribute significantly to the local economy, employment and infrastructure.

Despite these facts, forest-related economic and industrial policies remain at a disadvantage in the EU. **Forests and wood-processing industries have a lot to offer to the EU's economic growth, employment and human well-being.** Unleashing this potential requires, however, a wider recognition of the economic importance of the forest sector and respective legislative initiatives, which help to strengthen the forest sectors' contribution to sustainable development.



#### KEY MESSAGE 4

### European forests are essential for biodiversity and the provision of multiple other ecosystem services



European forests are essential for the conservation of Europe's biodiversity. Forests protected under Natura 2000 include various types of semi-natural habitats. Most of them are characterised by a long history of forest management.

Europe's forests are effective carbon sinks and vital for combatting climate change and, along with wood products, can reduce CO<sub>2</sub>. Furthermore, they act as a natural filter, helping to ensure the supply of clean drinking water and O<sub>2</sub>. They also protect land and infrastructures against natural hazards such as floods, erosion, landslides or avalanches. In addition to a variety of non-wood products such as game, berries or mushrooms, Europe's forests provide ideal

settings for outdoor recreation, particularly in densely populated areas.

All these services are provided to an increasingly demanding and consumer society, often without any concrete financial valuation, marketing, support or compensation.

The EU should focus on policies which support the provision of different services but also ensure an adequate financial valuing, marketing or support and compensation for possible lost revenues. Those who own, manage and take care of Europe's forests have a key responsibility. **To secure coherence and a successful implementation of**

**European forests** represent around **half of the area** designated as **Natura 2000** sites, covering approximately **23% of the total forestland in Europe.**

the various environmental forest-related policies, the acknowledgement of ownership rights as well as early participation of forest owners in the various policy processes is crucial.

## KEY MESSAGE 5

### Renewable wood a solid basis for the bioeconomy



The world population is projected to reach 9 billion by the year 2050, which necessarily increases global consumption. Together with this development, the role of renewable natural resources and solutions based on them will increase significantly.

EU-produced wood is a sustainable, renewable, climate-friendly and recyclable raw material. Wood is a concrete alternative to fossil fuel-based products and energy and it is possible to replace all fossil fuel-based products with wood-based variants. In addition to this, the specific characteristics of wood allow for a wide range of other environmental and climate-friendly materials and products.

The EU should pay special attention to policies which specifically promote the use of renewable natural resources and their contribution to the EU bioeconomy. Renewable raw materials and related products should be a

priority and their use should be enhanced by setting clear targets, inter alia, in green public procurement policies. The EU should pay more attention to the multiple options of using wood for different products and purposes, ranging from paper, packaging, tissue paper, furniture, carpentry and construction materials from solid wood and wood-based panels to textile fibres, biofuels, bioenergy and specialist chemicals. The EU should support further investments towards new innovative biobased products and technologies, which significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and should acknowledge and promote the forest and forest-based sector as a key actor in a future biobased society.

Around **90% of Europe's wood requirements** are provided by **sustainably managed EU forests**.

For more information about our Key Messages, feel free to contact us by email: [office@cepf-eu.org](mailto:office@cepf-eu.org)

## OVERALL OBJECTIVES of European forest owners

European forest owners aim **to contribute to the development, implementation and promotion of sustainable and active forest management**, in order to safeguard economically- viable, socially-acceptable and ecologically-sustainable forestry in Europe as well as globally.

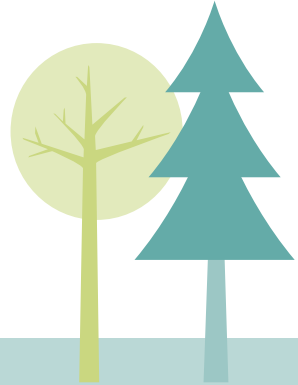
European forest owners aim **to maintain and enhance healthy and vital forest ecosystems**, which continue to provide a diverse spectrum of goods and services to society and the environment. They aim **to achieve a balance between the multiple uses of forest** by implementing and further developing the concept of multi-functionality and sustainable forest management.

European forest owners aim **to enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector and ensure that sustainable income can be generated by the multiple goods and services that the forests and their management provide.** Only a competitive and economically-viable forest sector is able to fulfil its multi-functional role.

European forest owners aim **to secure the acknowledgement of property rights.** Secured property rights guarantee a long-term commitment and sound and sustainable land management, adding to the prosperity and diversity of Europe's landscape. An adequate balance between property rights and social responsibility is crucial and should be maintained when developing different forest-relevant policies.



*Experience the variety of Europe's forests  
and the people who live in them...*



The Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF) is the umbrella association of national forest owner organizations in Europe. It works as the representative of family forestry in Europe, by promoting the values of sustainable forest management, private property ownership and the economic viability of the forest holding. CEPF serves the interests of approximately 16 million forest owners. They are private individuals, families and cooperatives that take care of approximately 60% of the European forest area.



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