



Brussels, 27 June 2013

**JOINT STATEMENT
THE ROLE OF FOREST IN THE EU BIOECONOMY**

IN RESPONSE TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT REPORT ON INNOVATING FOR
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: A BIOECONOMY FOR EUROPE;
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Forests cover about 40% of Europe's territory and play a crucial role in rural development. While providing around 3.5 million jobs in rural areas, Europe's forests are a sustainable source of timber and deliver multiple goods and ecosystem services such as biodiversity, drinking water, or recreation spaces.

Europe's forests already make a great contribution to the bio-based economy. The future Bioeconomy Strategy should acknowledge this and further strengthen the opportunities forests can offer when taking further steps towards a low carbon economy. The EU Bioeconomy Strategy should therefore:

- Provide concrete enabling framework for enhancing the use of renewable natural resources;
- Promote the use of wood for products and energy;
- Enhance the research and innovation to support above-mentioned objectives;
- Support rural development.

The following numbering refers to the sections in the European Parliament draft report that resulted after the vote in the Committee on Environment on the 29 May¹.

Promote wood use for products and energy

CEPF and Copa-Cogeca like to underline that when moving towards Bioeconomy and reducing dependency on fossil fuels, the promotion of wood as renewable, domestic natural resource is essential. The EU has rich forest resources, which could be utilized more efficiently in order to create well being in Europe, while at the same time contributing to climate change mitigation. Thereby encouragement towards **second-generation biofuels**, also from lingo-cellulosic and cellulosic materials (**paragraph 13**), is essential. This would support meeting the 10% target set for biofuels in the Renewable Energy Directive. Furthermore the **bureaucracy** that currently is hindering the development of biorefineries should be decreased (**paragraph 32**).

According to the latest EUROSTAT statistical report on forests, forestry and forest sector in the EU² only 63% of annual increment is harvested. Combining this fact with the decreasing demand for industrial wood in Europe - especially in pulp and paper industry – the EU should rather be worried about adequate investments in wood processing industry than shortcoming in the wood supply. The cascading use principle ignores these facts and fails to take into consideration the vast potential of raising bioenergy industry especially in areas that have no market for the woody raw material they produce. Due to the complexity of issues such as **lifetime of a product** and determining when

¹<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A7-2013-201&language=EN>

raw materials “should be” used (**paragraph 40**), the principle of **cascading use** should not be given any legal basis (**paragraph 28**). The principle of cascading use should be a voluntary principal only. The spectrum of different value added products based on wood raw material, including energy, should not be defined by law, but should be a matter of demand and open markets.

To reduce its **dependency on non-renewables**, it is essential to raise the profile of the European forest sector and bio-based industries as wood offers a domestic, carbon neutral and renewable important alternative for the use of fossil based materials (**paragraph 43**).

As the need of additional legally binding **sustainability criteria for solid biomass** (**paragraphs 37, 44 and 51**) is currently investigated by the Commission, the Bioeconomy Strategy should focus to examine the future possibilities related to European forests from a more holistic perspective. The European forest owners are not in favour to introduce any additional criteria for the sustainability of biomass, and like to stress once again that the biomass from forests at EU level is sustainably produced.

Enhance research and innovation

Investment in research and innovation are essential to further develop the bio-based economy and create new or improve certain processes and products. Adequate financial resources need to be deployed for knowledge transfer and to improve the various skills and technologies needed. (**paragraph 36**). Furthermore, coherence between different funds used at national and EU level is crucial.

We consider also that the research programmes should be made more attractive for small and medium-sized business in order to make the best use of their innovation potential. (**paragraph 30**) Furthermore, a greater focus on user- and solution-oriented research, targeting real issues by addressing the real needs, is essential .

Support the rural development

The European forest owners believe that the EU’s Bioeconomy Strategy should enhance the economic and competitive viability of forestry and rural areas whilst preserving cultural landscapes and protecting and fostering ecosystem services. Recognition and improvement of synergies along the value chain and active **inclusion of producers** is essential when strengthening the competitiveness and development of rural areas (**paragraph 41**).

Considering the current economic situation within the EU it is important to recognize and further strengthen the role of Bioeconomy in **creating jobs** and generating income, particularly in rural areas (**paragraph 7**). As new opportunities are emerging, sufficient mechanisms to develop new infrastructure and optimize value chains, e.g. based on wood raw material, should be made available to further strengthen the positive effects of Bioeconomy on **employment in rural areas** (**paragraph 31**).

CEPF and Copa-Cogeca are committed to further promote and help to develop the concept of Bioeconomy, which provides multiple new opportunities for green growth³ within Europe. The European forest sector is certainly one of the key elements in this context.

¹<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&mode=XML&reference=A7-2013-201&language=EN>

²Forestry in the EU and the world - A statistical portrait. Eurostat 2011.
http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-31-11-137/EN/KS-31-11-137-EN.PDF

³Green growth - the implementation of measures which enable farmers and forest owners to improve their efficiency and productivity in an environmentally sustainable way and in a way which helps combat climate change.