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NEW EU FOREST STRATEGY WELCOMED BY EUROPEAN WOOD INDUSTRIES

The European woodworking industries find much to welcome in the new EU forest strategy passed today by the European Parliament.

‘A new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 – Sustainable Forest Management in Europe’ is clear in its recognition of the ability of wood products to both store carbon and substitute for more carbon intensive materials. At the same time these wood products are both renewable and recyclable.

CEI-Bois & EOS particularly welcome the recognition that “wood is the only significant natural renewable resource that has the potential to replace some very energy-intensive materials, such as cement and plastics, and will be in greater demand in the future”.

Like the Parliament, the European woodworking industries are keen for wood to be used as efficiently as possible given its value and importance in helping to deliver the Green Deal and the EU’s 2050 carbon neutrality objective.

The new strategy is right to acknowledge there are concerns around a reliable and sustainable wood supply, a situation exacerbated by Russia’s war on Ukraine, hence - like the Parliament - the woodworking industries believe that locally and sustainably produced wood will be needed to meet this demand. Our industries echo the EU Parliament in underlining the importance of a reliable and sustainable supply of wood and forest-based biomass along with the need to quantify any effects on the availability of wood following the implementation of measures under the new forest strategy.

In addition the new forest strategy rightly acknowledges wood’s important role in helping deliver the wider bioeconomy. However wood can only make its “optimal contribution to the circular economy and climate-neutrality” if there are “strong incentives to innovate in the fields of bio-based materials and fuels that replace fossil-based ones”. As co-creator and co-funder of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform, the European wood working industries join the EU Parliament in “inviting the Commission to develop comprehensive forest-focused programmes involving different functions and parts of the forest-sector value chain and including living labs to test and demonstrate solutions to key challenges, building on existing and proven platforms such as the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform”.

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In welcoming this report Sampsa Auvinen, chair of CEI-Bois, noted: *“It is very good to see that the EU Parliament has recognised the central role that the European wood working industries can play in helping deliver the Green Deal, in particular wood’s notable ability to both store carbon in the built environment and to substitute for other construction materials that have a very high carbon footprint.”*

Herbert Joebstl, President of EOS, added, *“Members States should now create the right conditions to boost the entire sustainable forest bioeconomy and fully recognise the positive EU climate-change mitigation effects of increased carbon storage in harvested wood products and material substitution from increased wood construction”.*

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