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REPORT

on ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’
(2014/2223(INI))

Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

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Safety

(*) Associated committee - Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

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(*) Associated committee - Rule 54 of the Rules of Procedure

MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’ (2014/2223(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’ (COM(2013)0659),
- having regard to the Commission staff working documents (SWD(2013)0342) and (SWD(2013)0343), appended to that communication,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 19 May 2014 on the new EU Forest Strategy,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 30 January 2014 entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 10 July 2014 on the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2006 on the implementation of a European Union forestry strategy¹,
- having regard to Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environmental Action Programme to 2020 - ‘Living well, within the limits of our planet’,
- having regard to the Europe 2020 strategy, including the Innovation Union and Resource Efficient Europe initiatives,
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘An EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change’ (COM(2013)0216),
- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020’ (COM(2011)0244),
- having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,

¹ Texts adopted, P6_TA(2006)0068.

- having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the opinions of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (A8-0126/2015),
- A. whereas the European Union has no competence to elaborate a common forestry policy but some of the Union's policies may have implications for national forestry policies, while it is the Member States who decide the political approaches to forestry and forests;
- B. whereas, although this is clearly an area of Member State responsibility, there are potential advantages for forest-based businesses in better and more active coordination and in a higher profile for this important economic sector, which guarantees jobs at European level, particularly in rural areas, while protecting ecosystems and offering ecological advantages for all, without prejudicing the responsibility of the Member States;
- C. whereas timber is a renewable resource often under-exploited in Europe and the intelligent and sustainable use of this raw material needs to be ensured, including by the development and exchange of know-how;
- D. whereas forests are a source of unique flora, fauna and fungi;
- E. whereas the size and features of forests differ greatly, with some Member States having more than half their territories covered by forests; whereas sustainably managed forests are enormously important in terms of adding value at local, regional, European and international level, guaranteeing jobs in rural areas and contributing to a bioeconomy-based society, representing a benefit for human health, especially in structurally disadvantaged regions, while at the same time making a vital contribution to environmental and climate protection as well as to biodiversity;
- F. whereas forest biomass is a very important source of renewable energy; whereas European forests currently absorb and store around 10 % of EU carbon emissions and thus contribute markedly to climate change mitigation efforts;
- G. whereas, owing to the urbanisation of our society, EU citizens feel less of a connection to the forest, and have little knowledge of forestry or of its impact on prosperity, jobs, climate, environment, human health and the whole value chain together with the link with the wider ecosystems;
- H. whereas a growing number of EU policies are placing increasing demands on forests; whereas these demands need to be carefully balanced, and demand for new uses of wood in the bioeconomy and for bioenergy must be accompanied by resource efficiency, use of new technology and respect for the limits of sustainable supply;
- I. whereas European forestry is characterised by sustainable management and long-term planning, and whereas the principle of sustainability should be even more strongly emphasised at all levels, from local to global, in order to create jobs, protect biodiversity, mitigate climate change and combat desertification;

- J. whereas it is necessary to highlight the economic, social and environmental role of forests, also in the context of the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage and the promotion of sustainable (eco)tourism;
- K. whereas an increasing world population means a growing demand for energy, and therefore forests should play a more important role in the EU's future energy mix;

General – the importance of forests, forestry and forest-based sector for the economy and society

1. Welcomes the Commission communication on a new EU forest strategy and the accompanying working documents, and stresses that an EU forest strategy must focus on the sustainable management of forests and their multifunctional role from the economic, social and environmental viewpoints and must ensure better coordination and communication of Community policies directly or indirectly linked to forestry; points out, in this context, that an increasing number of European policy initiatives in areas such as economic and employment policy, energy policy and environmental and climate policy require a greater contribution from the forestry sector;
2. Underlines the need to determine the value of forest ecosystem services more systematically and to take it into consideration in decision-making in both public and private sectors;
3. Notes that only mountain forests that are healthy and stable are able to perform to a full extent their functions of protecting humans and nature by counteracting the flow of avalanches and mudslides and serving as a natural protection against floods; stresses that in this connection in particular, transnational communication is indispensable;
4. Stresses in this connection that any attempt to make forestry a matter of EU policy should be resisted and that the sector's local and regional basis and the competence of the Member States in this area must be respected while seeking coherence between the respective competences of the EU and the Member States;
5. Emphasises that the EU's forests are characterised by great diversity, including major differences in forest ownership, size, nature and challenges faced;
6. Stresses that the EU forest strategy must take into account the fact that forests cover more than half of the territory of some Member States and that sustainably managed forests are enormously important in adding value at local and regional level and in guaranteeing jobs in rural areas, while at the same time making a vital contribution to the environment;
7. Underlines the particularly valuable role of stable mixed forests including native species of trees suited to local conditions, as well as the essential role that mixed forests play in ecosystems and their contribution to biodiversity;
8. Calls on the Member States to support the efforts of forest owners to preserve and also to create native mixed forests typical of the area;

9. Expresses its disappointment with the fact that the working conditions of forest workers are not included as a point of reference in the proposed strategy, and requests the Commission to take intelligent work organisation, high standards in technology and quality jobs into account;
10. Notes that the forest sector currently employs over 3 million European citizens, and stresses that its long-term competitiveness will only be achieved with a skilled workforce;
11. Considers that the EU Forest Strategy should set the conditions to enable the EU to have relevant training facilities and a workforce which is fully aware of the current challenges and threats faced by the forest sector, but also of the safety rules inherent in forest management;
12. Emphasises the need for a comprehensive and holistic joint strategy, and welcomes the recognition of the economic, environmental and social role and benefits of forests and the forest based-sector in the EU;
13. Believes that this recognition provides a strong basis for supporting the EU forestry sector, inter alia in preventing and managing forest disasters, improving resource efficiency, increasing competitiveness, boosting employment, strengthening forest-based industries and preserving ecological functions;
14. Stresses the significant role that the bioeconomy plays in terms of achieving the Commission's new priorities of growth, employment and investment;
15. Acknowledges that the EU has a role to play in supporting national policies to achieve active, multifunctional and sustainable forest management, including the management of different forest types, and in strengthening cooperation to tackle transboundary challenges such as forest fires, climate change and natural disasters, or invasive alien species;
16. Takes the view that the strategy needs to take greater account of the problem of tree diseases such as oak decline, which is ravaging cork-oak plantations in Portugal, France and Spain and is also affecting Special Protection Areas and biosphere reserves;
17. Stresses that the predicted growth in demand for wood represents both an opportunity and a challenge for forests and all forest-based sectors, especially as drought, fires, storms and pests are expected to damage forests more frequently and more severely as a result of climate change; in this context, emphasises the need to protect forests from these growing threats and to reconcile their productive and protective functions;
18. Welcomes action to increase forest cover, especially with native species, in areas not suitable for food production and in particular in close proximity to urban areas, with a view to mitigating adverse heat effects, reducing pollution and enhancing links between people and forests;
19. Gives its full support to the Commission's efforts to promote forest-related employment and the generation of prosperity in Europe in a sustainable manner;

20. Stresses the important role of the sustainable production and use of timber and other forest-based materials such as cork and wood derivatives including textile fibres for the development of sustainable economic models and the creation of green jobs;
21. Calls on the Commission to analyse the difficulties in the downstream supply chain related to increased demand from third countries, particularly for roundwoods, and to support this sector;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives to encourage the increasingly large group of female forest owners to obtain special advice and support in relation to the active and sustainable management of their forests;
23. Stresses that around 60 % of the EU's forests are private, with about 16 million private forest owners, and underlines in this context the importance of ownership and property rights and supports all measures enabling stakeholder groups to participate in a dialogue on reinforcing and implementing sustainable forest management and improve the exchange of information;
24. Notes that forest owners are key actors in rural areas, and welcomes in this connection the recognition of the role of forestry and agro-forestry in the Rural Development Programme of the 2014-2020 CAP;
25. Considers that the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy would be enhanced if supported by appropriate coordination with available EU funding, including from the EAFRD;
26. Stresses the opportunity for Member States and regions to make use of the available funding under their respective rural development programmes, to support sustainable forest management and boost agro-forestry and to deliver public environmental goods such as producing oxygen, sinking carbon and protecting crops against climate effects, as well as stimulating local economies and creating green jobs;
27. Recognises the need for improved transportation and logistics for forest management and extraction of timber; calls on the Member States, therefore, to develop sustainable logistics and logging systems having a reduced negative effect on climate, including the use of trucks and ships powered by sustainable biofuel as well as extended use of railways; encourages the use of EU Structural Funds and Rural Development Programmes for those purposes;
28. Recognises the role of forests in society in relation to the physical and mental health of citizens and that public goods delivered by forests are of high environmental and recreational value and contribute to quality of life, in particular with regard to oxygen supply, carbon sequestration, air filtration, water storage and filtration, erosion control and avalanche protection, as well as providing a place for outdoor activities;
29. Encourages public transport links between urban areas and forests in order to facilitate access to forests and woodland;

30. Highlights the importance of other forest-related activities, e.g. the harvesting of non-wood forest products such as mushrooms or soft fruit, as well as grazing and beekeeping;
31. Calls on the Commission to promote economic activities which can serve as a source of raw materials for the pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industries and be used as an alternative way of dealing with unemployment and rural depopulation, and also to promote the products of those activities as beneficial for human health;

Resource efficiency – timber as a sustainable raw material (sustainable forest management)

32. Stresses that both the use of timber and other harvested wood products as renewable and climate-friendly raw materials on the one hand, and sustainable forest management on the other, have an important role to play in the achievement of the EU's socio-political goals such as the energy transition, climate mitigation and adaptation, and the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy targets and biodiversity targets; notes that lack of active forest management would be inimical to these goals;
33. Stresses that managed forests have a higher CO₂ absorption capacity than unmanaged forests, and underlines the importance of sustainable forest management in maximising the carbon sequestration potential of EU forests;
34. Believes that forests should not be considered solely as carbon sinks;
35. Emphasises the need to make sure that forest resources and wood materials are used and reused efficiently, as a means of cutting the EU's trade deficit, improving the self-sufficiency of the EU in wood, boosting the competitiveness of its forest sector, helping reduce unsustainable forest management, protecting the environment, and reducing deforestation in countries outside the EU;
36. Expressly supports the resource-efficient use of timber as a renewable, versatile raw material with limited availability, and opposes legally binding rules for prioritising the uses of wood, as this not only restricts the energy market and the development of new and innovative uses of biomass, but is also impossible to enforce in many remote and rural areas, if only for infrastructure reasons;
37. Supports an open, market-oriented approach and freedom for all market participants by giving priority to locally sourced wood in order to minimise the carbon footprint created by overseas transport, and stimulate sustainable local production;
38. Considers it imperative, given that some of the Union's biggest biomass resources are found in its most sparsely populated and remote regions, that the strategy should also take full account of the specificities of those regions;
39. Recognises the value of wood for energy purposes, as a means of combating energy poverty, contributing to the renewable energy targets of the 2030 climate and energy framework, and opening up new business opportunities;

40. Considers that the new forest strategy must enable greater cooperation on the issue of the structuring of the timber industry and the regrouping of operators, with a view to ensuring better use of the forest resource;
41. Takes the view that sustainable forest management must be based on generally acknowledged and accepted principles and tools, such as criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management which must always apply to the sector as a whole regardless of the end use of wood;
42. Supports the Commission's intention to develop, together with the Member States and stakeholders, an ambitious, objective and demonstrable set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of forests, stressing that these criteria should be aligned with the requirements of Forest Europe (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe)¹, which form a pan-European basis for uniform reporting on sustainable forest management and a basis for sustainability certification, taking into account the diversity of forest types across Europe;
43. Acknowledges that the growing demand for forest-based materials, primarily as a result of the rise in the number of biomass-based renewable energies, calls for new ways of increasing the availability of timber to ensure the sustainable exploitation of forests;
44. Notes the significant progress made in the negotiations within Forest Europe towards a 'European Forest Convention'² as a binding framework for sustainable forest management and for improving the balance of interests in forest policy, and calls on the Member States and the Commission to make all necessary efforts to resume these negotiations and drive them forward to a successful conclusion;
45. Takes the view that forest management plans or equivalent instruments can be important strategic instruments for the implementation of concrete measures at the level of individual businesses, for long-term planning and for the implementation of sustainable forest management in European forests; emphasises, however, that the implementation of the concrete measures contained in these plans at the forest holding level must remain subject to national regulations;
46. Calls on the Member States, in line with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, to monitor and promote the implementation of the forest management plans without creating unnecessary administrative burdens;
47. Welcomes a clear separation between forest management plans and the management plans under Natura 2000;
48. Points out that forestry management plans are only a condition for receiving EU rural development funds for beneficiaries above a certain holding size, and that forests below the threshold size are exempt; furthermore notes that equivalent instruments can also be approved;

¹ Forest Europe - Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe: <http://www.foresteurope.org/>

² See: <http://www.forestnegotiations.org/>

49. Calls on the Member States to make full use of this existing flexibility when implementing legislation, especially to benefit smaller operators;
50. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives and support new business models, such as production cooperatives, that seek to encourage small private forest owners to manage their forests actively and sustainably;
51. Maintains that in order to implement the strategy in the proper way it is essential to have a specific long-term action plan emphasising the importance of mobilisation and sustainable use of forest timber, with the aim of creating added value and jobs, while providing means of strengthening private forestry businesses and supporting organised groupings of forest owners;
52. Underlines that efficient resource management should include support programmes for the afforestation of land areas that are not fit for agriculture, as well as for the creation of shelter belts;

Research and development – education and training

53. Considers that priority should be given to the practical application of research, since the whole sector can benefit from new ideas and the forest-based industries have great potential for growth; also considers that further investments in innovation in the sector can create new production niches and more efficient processes that would ensure smarter use of available resources and could minimise negative impacts on forest resources;
54. Calls on the Commission to assess, from the point of view of forestry and wood working priorities, the European R&D programmes (Horizon 2020) and the programme for the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) and, where appropriate, to develop new instruments for the forest-based sector and promote targeted research into cost-effective solutions for new and innovative timber products to support the development of the sustainable wood-based bioeconomy;
55. Welcomes the benefits of sharing best practices and existing knowledge on forests between Member States, and calls on the Member States and the Commission to support exchanges between industry, scientists and producers;
56. Stresses the importance of supporting EU framework programmes for research, development and innovation for achieving smart and sustainable growth, higher added-value products, cleaner technology and a high degree of technological advance, in particular in relation to refined biofuels and industrial building using wood, along with the automotive and textile sectors;
57. Recalls that, according to the Commission, in 2009 the bioeconomy represented a market estimated to be worth over EUR 2 trillion, providing 20 million jobs and accounting for 9 % of total employment in the EU;
58. Notes that every euro invested in bioeconomy research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will generate about EUR 10 in added value; stresses that forests play a crucial role

in the bioeconomy now and will continue to do so in the future;

59. Considers that the substitution of oil-based or heat-intensive raw materials by timber and harvested wood products should be encouraged, in line with progress in research and technology, and that this can positively contribute to further gains in terms of climate change mitigation as well as job creation;
60. Stresses the need to carry out a cost assessment of all EU legislation affecting the value chains of forest-based industries, with a view to cutting out all unnecessary and burdensome bureaucracy and creating an enabling framework in order to increase the industries' long-term competitiveness in a sustainable manner, and also to support the principle that legislative proposals affecting the forestry sector and the value chains of forest-based industries should be thoroughly evaluated by means of an impact assessment;
61. Takes the view that extending the forest-related knowledge basis is of crucial importance to research and that reliable information is essential for the implementation of the forest strategy;
62. Notes the availability of information and monitoring resources via the Copernicus programme and other space initiatives at European level, and recommends increasing the use of these resources and tools;
63. Notes that national forest inventories represent a comprehensive monitoring tool for assessing forestry stocks and take regional considerations into account while also responding to demands for less red tape and lower costs;
64. Welcomes the Commission's efforts to establish a European forest information system based on national data and initiatives to improve the comparability of new and existing data, and hopes in this regard to see a reinforcement of the analysis of data on the economy and employment in the forest and woodworking sectors;
65. Recommends, in particular, that there should be more long-term data sets to help the understanding of trends in forestry and its adaptation to climate change;
66. Takes the view that a skilled and well-trained workforce is essential for the successful implementation of sustainable forest management, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to devise measures and, where possible, to use existing European instruments such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European training programmes (ET2020) to support generation renewal and compensate for the skilled workforce shortage in the forests;
67. Calls on the Commission to support the preparation of information campaigns for the sector aimed at raising awareness of the opportunities it offers for tackling unemployment and depopulation, as well as increasing its attractiveness to young people;
68. Takes the view that training programmes should be developed, particularly for new

entrants and young foresters as well as for existing employees in the construction industry, in order to increase their awareness of the opportunities created by the use of wood, so that the transfer of knowledge regarding sustainable forest management and its downstream industries is ensured;

69. Recognises that sustainable management for the entire life-cycle of forest products can make a significant contribution towards achieving green economy objectives, in particular those linked to climate change mitigation policies and efficient use of resources;
70. Considers that Member States should promote the sustainable use of forest products in the construction sector, including application to the construction of more affordable houses built from sustainably sourced raw materials;
71. Points out the importance of traditional high-value uses that still have huge growth potential, such as using wood in construction and packaging;
72. Notes that current technological developments enable construction of high-capacity housing developments made mostly of wood, thus significantly limiting CO₂ emissions in the building sector;
73. Points out that rules on the use of wood for building purposes differ from one Member State to another; calls, therefore, for a commitment to adopt EU rules promoting the wider use of wood in buildings;
74. Calls on the Member States to develop initiatives to support knowledge and technology transfer and to fully utilise existing EU programmes supporting research and innovation in forestry and the forest-based sector;
75. Notes that there are significant gaps in scientific and technological research relating to the adaptation of forestry to climate change, including research into the impact of increasing pests and diseases which pose a serious threat to Europe's forests and forest-based sectors;
76. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to act to raise awareness of the economic, environmental and social role of European forests and forestry and the importance of the sustainable forest-based bioeconomy and of wood as one of the EU's crucial renewable raw materials;
77. Considers it important to encourage scientific research work oriented towards rational use of biomass and the development of fast-growing energy crops, and to create a model providing an economic incentive for the use of biomass waste;

Global challenges - environment and climate change

78. Stresses that sustainable forest management has a positive impact on biodiversity and climate change mitigation and can diminish the risks of forest fires, pest damage and disease;

79. Points out that other issues should be studied further, in particular the problem of overpopulation of herbivores, forest health and facilitating sustainable timber production, Forest Genetic Resources (FGR), measures to prevent and fight forest fires and avoid soil erosion, and the recovery of vegetation cover;
80. Recognises that short rotation forestry could provide sustainable wooden biomass while providing the necessary territory maintenance, thus reducing the risks of soil erosion and landslides on set-aside or abandoned land;
81. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take specific action with a view to achieving Aichi Target 5, under which the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, should be at least halved by 2020 and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation should be significantly reduced;
82. Notes that the bioeconomy, as a core element of smart, green growth in Europe, is necessary for the realisation of the objectives of the flagship initiatives 'Innovation Union' and 'Resource Efficient Europe' under the Europe 2020 strategy, and that timber as a raw material has a significant role to play in making progress towards a bio-based economy;
83. Takes the view that it is important to promote the implementation of the concept of the bioeconomy, while respecting the sustainability boundaries of raw material supply, in order to boost the economic viability of forest value chains through innovation and technology transfer;
84. Calls for more support for diverse forest products, ensuring that the different demands on forest products are balanced and evaluated against the sustainable supply potential and the other ecosystem functions and services provided by forests;
85. Expresses serious concern at the pace of world deforestation, particularly in developing countries and often from illegal logging;
86. Supports mechanisms that promote the global development of forestry towards more sustainable use, and in this connection refers in particular to the EU Timber Directive¹, which aims to combat illegal logging and the placing of illegal timber on the European market from third-country imports, as well as to the authorisation system for timber imports to the EU (FLEGT)² and to voluntary partnership agreements;
87. Calls on the Commission to publish the awaited review of the functioning and effectiveness of the EU Timber Regulation, and stresses that a new regulation should be proportionate and should look at ways of reducing unnecessary costs and reporting requirements for Europe's woodland owners and foresters without compromising the aim of the regulation;

¹ Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market.

² Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 of 20 December 2005 on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community (FLEGT = Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade).

88. Takes the view, given the challenges posed by global warming and climate change, that ecosystems and populations of species must be healthy, biologically diverse and robust in order to be resilient;
89. Highlights the opportunities provided by the Natura 2000 sites where, thanks to their extraordinary natural resources, it is possible to produce forest-based products and services of high environmental and cultural quality;
90. Underlines the importance of healthy forest ecosystems offering habitats for animals and plants, but stresses that well-meaning legislation such as the EU Habitats Directive affects land management decisions and must be implemented proportionately;
91. Recognises the role of forests in the development of related sectors, and insists in this respect on the importance of supporting melliferous tree growers, which in turn helps the pollination process;
92. Takes the view that certain issues affect the forestry industry at global level, particularly illegal felling, and therefore calls on the Commission to reinforce support for the forestry industry among the associated international bodies;
93. Notes that demand for biomass, particularly wood, is rising, and therefore welcomes the efforts of the Commission and Member States to support developing countries in their measures to improve forestry policy and forestry legislation, particularly by way of REDD⁺¹ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation);
94. Invites the Commission to develop an action plan on deforestation and forest degradation in order to address the objectives set out in its communication on deforestation, as called for by the Seventh Environmental Action Programme; considers it important to provide for not only the conservation and management of existing forests but also the reforestation of deforested areas;
95. Considers that separate reference must also be made to the need for widespread reforestation in areas that have been affected by recurring forest fires;

Implementation and reporting

96. Stresses that the implementation of the EU's forest strategy should be a multiannual coordinated process in which the views of Parliament should be taken into account and that the strategy should be implemented efficiently, coherently and with minimal red tape;
97. Regrets that the implementation process has partly begun before Parliament has adopted its position, and considers that this is not in line with the aim of better coordination of forest-related policies as stated by the Commission in its Strategy text;
98. Takes the view that the new strategy should establish links between the strategies and funding plans of the EU and of the Member States, and reinforce cohesion in terms of

¹ Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation:
<http://unfccc.int/methods/redd/items/7377.php>

planning, funding and the implementation of cross-sector activities;

99. Calls for an inclusive, well-structured and balanced implementation of the strategy;
100. Takes the view, therefore, that the mandate of the Standing Forestry Committee should be strengthened and better resourced to enable the Commission to fully use the expertise from the Member States whilst implementing the new EU Forest Strategy at EU level; calls on the Commission to consult the Standing Forestry Committee with sufficient notice before submitting any initiative or draft text that will impact on the management of forests and the timber industry;
101. Emphasises the important role of the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork and other relevant stakeholders, and calls for their proper involvement in the strategy's implementation;
102. Takes the view that the transverse nature of forestry issues requires internal cooperation among the various Commission departments when considering any measure which may impact on the specific nature of sustainable forest management and associated industries; therefore calls on DG Environment, DG Climate Action, DG Agri, DG Energy, DG Research and Innovation and other DGs concerned to work together strategically in order to ensure effective implementation of the strategy through enhanced coordination and communication;
103. Considers that, in view of the Commission's list of priorities on growth, employment and investment, priority should also be given in implementing the new EU forest strategy to promoting the competitiveness and sustainability of the forest sector, supporting both rural and urban areas, expanding the knowledge basis, protecting forests and preserving their ecosystems, promoting coordination and communication, and increasing the sustainable use of wood and non-wood forest products;
104. Calls on the Commission to supplement the strategy with a robust action plan containing specific measures, and to report to Parliament annually on the progress made in the implementation of specific actions under the strategy;
105. Advocates the convening of an expanded AGRI-ENVI-ITRE committee to permit a balanced discussion on progress in the implementation of the new EU forest strategy;
106. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Forests and forestry provide a number of additional benefits to the economy while at the same time ensuring a good quality of life, sustainability, jobs and added value. The forestry sector employs over 3.5 million people throughout Europe and is thus the continent's third largest employer, just behind the metal and food industries. Over 451 820 forest-based businesses contribute 7% to economic growth, while felling only 60% of annual new-grown timber in the process.

Timber is an important resource of major economic significance for rural areas. The attentive care and management of European forests by forest-based businesses and over 16 million forest owners ensures that the forests can continue to perform their ecological, economic and social functions in a sustainable manner. Over 50% of European forests are in private ownership.

Sustainable forest management means guaranteeing the long-term safety of the forest for future generations. Indeed, this was the underlying principle of the UN Environmental Conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992: *Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and choose their own life style.*

Guided by these figures and principles, the rapporteur is presenting a report which seeks to further strengthen forests and the forest-based sector in their social, economic and ecological roles and focus on timber as a sustainable raw material and an important resource for Europe.

Given that many EU policy areas, such as energy, environmental and climate policy, have an impact on the management of the forests, the rapporteur considers it indispensable for the new EU forest strategy to focus on better coordination, so that forestry and the forests are given a higher profile among the individual European strategies and a coherent approach can be found. It is particularly alarming that the Commission's has separate, divergent policies in this area. With a view to simplification and better lawmaking, therefore, the Commission's own internal structures should be carefully examined. Strengthening the Standing Forestry Committee would go some way to counteracting these contradictions in the Commission.

The rapporteur also takes the view that no new bureaucratic obstacles should be created for forest owners and managers. She expressly opposes mandatory forest management programmes and rejects passing on to forest owners the responsibility for drawing up Natura 2000 plans. She also takes the view that sustainability criteria are equivalent to a quality criterion and should always apply across the whole sector. Accordingly, in view of the heterogeneous nature of European forests, there should be no 'one-size-fits-all' catalogue of criteria. In this connection the rapporteur strongly supports efforts aimed at drawing up a 'European Forest Convention' in the context of Forest Europe.

Furthermore, the rapporteur takes the view that in the interest of better coordination, particular priority should be given to research and development, because the whole forestry sector together with its downstream industries can benefit from new, efficient production opportunities and product ideas. In addition, the innovation potential and further development of the bio-economy and sustainable use of raw materials performs a crucial service for the

environment and the climate.

In addition to the undisputed importance of forestry for rural areas, the rapporteur is keen to make clear that forestry also takes place in towns, and that downstream industries in particular create many jobs in urban areas. The urbanisation of society is leading to a gradual loss of knowledge about forests and forestry and the contribution they make to prosperity and jobs. In line with the principle of bringing classrooms into the forest and vice versa, encouragement should therefore be given to initiatives that close the gap between town and forest.

Finally, the rapporteur wishes to stress once again that she is interested in implementing the EU forest strategy in a way which involves as little red tape as possible, which strengthens the forestry sector and does not burden it with new requirements.

25.2.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY(*)

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on a new EU forest strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector
(2014/2223(INI))

Rapporteur: Francesc Gambús

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission communication on a new European forest strategy and stresses the importance of making forest protection and management incentives a vital part of it; emphasises, bearing in mind the subsidiarity principle, the need for a comprehensive, holistic and consistent joint strategy to enhance the multifunctional role of forests and the forest sector in the EU in terms of the wide societal, economic and environmental benefits that they provide, as well as to prevent and manage forest disasters;
2. Acknowledges that Europe's forests are of immense value in terms of biodiversity and the ecosystem services that they provide, including but not limited to water retention, flood protection and, importantly, climate change mitigation, by absorbing and storing 10 % of the EU's carbon emissions; considers, therefore, that forests should benefit from a high level of protection and an improvement in the conservation status of forest species and habitats, in line with the objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy up to 2020 and the 7th EAP; highlights the opportunities provided in this respect by the Natura 2000 network, which includes a significant proportion of Europe's forests;
3. Stresses that the Union has agreed that by 2020 the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services, including pollination, must be halted, ecosystems and their services must be maintained and at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems should have been restored; adds that the Union has further agreed that forest management must be sustainable, forests, their biodiversity and the services they provide must be protected and,

as far as feasible, enhanced, and the resilience of forests to climate change, fires, storms, pests and diseases must be improved; emphasises, in addition, the need therefore to develop and implement a renewed Union Forest Strategy that addresses the multiple demands on, and benefits of, forests and contributes to a more strategic approach to protecting and enhancing forests, including through sustainable forest management¹;

4. Maintains that, in order to implement the strategy in the proper way, it is essential to have a specific long-term action plan emphasising the importance of mobilisation and sustainable use of forest timber, with the aim of creating added value and jobs, while providing means of strengthening private forestry businesses and supporting organised groupings of forest owners;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider introducing EU-wide targets for forest cover with a view to increasing current levels, curbing deforestation and improving the quality of existing forests and woodland; recommends increasing forest cover, especially in areas not suitable for food production and in particular in close proximity to urban areas in order to mitigate adverse heat effects, reduce pollution and enhance links between people and forests; stresses the need for careful planning in this regard; believes that forests should not be considered solely as carbon sinks to offset the rise of emissions in other sectors of the economy;
6. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take specific action with a view to achieving Aichi Target 5, whereby the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, should be at least halved by 2020 and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation significantly reduced²;
7. Considers that priority should be given to research because the whole sector can benefit from new ideas;
8. Encourages tree-planting in cities as a way of tackling environmental challenges associated with urban pollution and man-made landscapes, for example by providing shade in the summer and moderating air temperatures during heatwaves;
9. Welcomes the study assessing the impact of EU consumption on deforestation published by the Commission in July 2013; regrets that despite the request made by Parliament in its resolution of 23 April 2009³, the study does not deal with forest degradation; calls on the Commission to bring forward proposals to reduce the impacts identified in the study and contribute to EU and international environmental goals and commitments to sustainable development; calls on the Commission to publish an EU action plan on deforestation and forest degradation to this end, as called for by the 7th Environmental Action Programme⁴;
10. Calls on the Member States to consider including ecosystem services payments as forest

¹ Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 - 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'

² European Parliament resolution of 20 April 2012 on 'Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020' – Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0146.

³ European Parliament resolution of 23 April 2009 on addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss (OJ C 184E, 8.7.2010, p. 4).

⁴ Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013.

management incentives, bearing in mind the importance of wood as a renewable and climate-friendly raw material and the role of forest-based value chains; points out that sustainable forest management has a positive impact on biodiversity, on climate, and on forests' protection from and resilience to fires, storms, pests and diseases, and is crucial for economic development, especially in rural areas and remote regions;

11. Calls for greater attention to be paid to the expansion of forest coverage and to conserving and creating sustainable forest ecosystems by applying additional nature-friendly forestry methods; believes that rational use of forest resources should be ensured by supervising felling more effectively, optimising business operations, and employing all other effective means;

12. Stresses that according to scientific research, managed forests have a higher CO₂ absorption capacity than unmanaged forests; recognises, therefore, the important role of managed forests in climate change mitigation efforts and in generating employment in rural areas; underlines the importance of sustainable forest management in maximising the carbon sequestration potential of EU forests¹;
13. Emphasises, recalling that to date there is no specific forest policy on the prevention of forest fires, that, particularly in the Mediterranean region, forest fires occur on a regular basis, and are both a cause and a consequence of climate change; points out that storms and forest fires and pests can be mitigated using improved and active forest management and forestry techniques through, for example, grazing and agro-forestry practices under the common agricultural policy;
14. Considers it important to provide for not only the conservation and management of existing forests but also the reforestation of deforested areas; considers that separate reference must also be made to the need for widespread reforestation in areas that have been affected by recurring forest fires;
15. Is concerned at the growing trend to consider forests from a predominantly economic perspective and to limit their value to the wood which they produce, disregarding the very significant environmental and social benefits which they also provide; underlines the need to determine the value of forest ecosystem services more systematically and to take it into consideration in public and private sector decision-making;
16. Highlights the need to strengthen and make full use of EU mechanisms aimed at tackling the transboundary pressures on forests arising from the spread of invasive alien species, pests and diseases;
17. Stresses, given that forests vary greatly in their size and features, with some Member States having more than half their territories covered by forests, that sustainably managed forests are enormously important in adding value at local and regional level and guaranteeing jobs in rural areas, while at the same time making a vital contribution to the environment;
18. Welcomes the reference in the new strategy to the problem of forest pests; takes the view, however, taking into account new legislation on invasive alien species and the potential impact they can have on forests, that the Commission should propose additional new financial instruments to help the affected areas combat particularly persistent invasive species or new invasive alien species;
19. Considers it imperative, given that some of the Union's largest biomass resources are found in its most sparsely populated and remote regions, that the strategy also takes full

¹ See the European Parliament resolution of 5 February 2014 on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies (Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0094): 'Stresses that active forestry, which increases growth and hence the absorption of carbon dioxide, is an important and cost-effective way of helping to attain the climate targets; notes that each extra cubic metre of forest produced by means of active cultivation absorbs approximately 1.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide; calls on the Commission and the Member States to devise incentives for owners of woods to contribute actively to increased climate benefits, for example by focusing on regional measures which increase lasting forest production and absorption of carbon dioxide'.

account of the specificities of those more sparsely populated and remote regions;

20. Takes the view that the strategy needs to take greater account of the problem of tree diseases such as oak decline, which is ravaging cork-oak plantations in Portugal, France and Spain, as well as affecting Special Protection Areas and biosphere reserves; considers that the Commission should have included effective measures and specific resources in the strategy, beyond those applying to rural development, with a view to combating tree diseases;
21. Stresses that the predicted growth in demand for wood is both an opportunity and a challenge to the forests and all forest-based sectors, especially as droughts, fires, storms, and pests are expected to damage forests more frequently and more severely as a result of climate change; recalls in this context the need to protect forests from these growing threats and to reconcile their productive and protective functions;
22. Stresses the need to clarify, as a matter of urgency, the greenhouse impacts of the various uses of forest biomass for energy and to identify the uses that can achieve the greatest mitigation benefits within policy-relevant timeframes;
23. Welcomes, with regard to fire prevention, the steps taken in some Member States to bring in temporary bans on building on land affected by fire so as to prevent arson being committed with a view to the subsequent development of the land;
24. Takes the view that it is important to promote the implementation of the concept of the bioeconomy, while respecting the sustainability boundaries of raw material supply, to boost the economic viability of forest value chains through innovation and technology transfer, and, to this end, to provide more support for diverse forest products, ensuring that the different demands on forest products are balanced and evaluated against the sustainable supply potential and the other ecosystem functions and services provided by forests; emphasises the significant role the bioeconomy plays in terms of achieving the Commission's new priorities of growth, employment and investment;
25. Considers that the substitution of oil-based or heat-intensive raw materials by timber and harvested wood products should be encouraged, in line with progress in research and technology, which can positively contribute to further gains in terms of climate change mitigation as well as job creation;
26. Stresses the important role of the sustainable production of timber and other materials, such as cork, green chemicals and textile fibres, for the development of sustainable economic models and the creation of green jobs;
27. Emphasises that in order to achieve the EU's climate objectives it is vital that wood is used in a resource-efficient way, in line with the cascading use principle; calls on the Commission to ensure efficient use of wood resources in EU climate and energy policies;
28. Reiterates its call on the Commission to propose sustainability criteria for solid and gaseous biomass, taking into account lifecycle greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the inefficient use of biomass resources; calls for the revision and restriction of the carbon neutrality assumption as regards biomass combustion under EU climate policy

instruments;

29. Emphasises the need to make sure that forest resources and wood materials are used and reused efficiently, as a way of cutting the EU's trade deficit, improving the self-sufficiency of the EU in wood and the competitiveness of its forest sector, helping to reduce unsustainable forest management, protecting the environment, and reducing deforestation in countries outside the EU;
30. Believes that the EU should prioritise the use of locally-sourced timber, harvested wood products or forest biomass, as opposed to wood imported from outside the EU, in order to minimise the carbon footprint caused by overseas transport and stimulate sustainable local production;
31. Expressly supports the resource-efficient use of wood, and opposes legally binding rules for prioritising the uses of wood, as this not only restricts the energy market and the development of new and innovative uses of biomass, but is also impossible to enforce in many remote and rural areas; in this connection, supports an open, market-oriented approach enabling different actors to develop the potential of advanced wood-based materials and chemicals, which are foreseen to play a major role in the EU bio-economy;
32. Expresses serious concerns over the pace of world deforestation, particularly in developing countries and often due to illegal logging; calls on the Commission and the Member States to comprehensively revise the EU Timber Directive as well as the FLEGT scheme for timber imports, with a view to curbing the illegal trade in timber which endangers forest ecosystems and negatively influences the competitiveness of European timber traders; suggests deploying or adjusting relevant public procurement rules which could encourage purchases of properly certified timber and harvested wood products;
33. Recalls that, by 2020 and in line with Sustainable Forest Management, forest management plans or equivalent instruments should be in place for all forests that are publicly owned and for forest holdings above a certain size that receive funding under the EU Rural Development Policy; calls on the Member States to monitor and promote the implementation of the forest management plans without creating unnecessary administrative burdens and taking into account the proportionality, subsidiarity and 'think small first' principles;
34. Stresses the need to address global challenges in global multilateral forums; urges the Commission to take a leading role in advancing globally sustainable forest policy in order to reduce unsustainable management practices and illegal trade, protect the environment and reduce global deforestation; calls to this end on the Commission to publish an EU action plan on deforestation and forest degradation, as called for by the 7th Environmental Action Programme ;¹
35. Points out that rules on the use of wood for building purposes differ from one Member State to another; calls, therefore, for a commitment to adopt EU rules promoting the wider use of wood in buildings;

¹ Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020.

36. Welcomes the Commission's emphasis on protecting and increasing the genetic diversity of forests, and underlines the capacity, as shown by recent research, of genetically diverse tree populations to adapt to climate change;
37. Recognises the positive effects of trees and forests on human physical and mental health, and encourages municipal authorities to maintain or improve public transport links between urban areas and forests in order to facilitate access to forests and woodland;
38. Calls on the Member States to include special biodiversity measures, notably specific measures for the conservation of protected species and natural habitats, in order to improve their status both within and beyond Natura 2000 areas when adopting and implementing their forest management plans;
39. Supports the Commission's intention to develop, together with the Member States and stakeholders, an ambitious, objective and demonstrable set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of forests, bearing in mind the work done in the framework of Forest Europe (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe) and taking into account the diversity of forest types across Europe; calls on the Commission to publish the awaited review of the functioning and effectiveness of the EU Timber Regulation;
40. Considers it important to encourage scientific research work oriented towards rational use of biomass and the development of fast-growing energy crops, and to create a model providing an economic incentive for the use of biomass waste;
41. Underlines the high recreational value of forests, as proven in public opinion surveys; recalls that this is one of the primary advantages of forests and woodlands for European citizens;
42. Recognises that short rotation forestry could provide sustainable wooden biomass while providing the necessary territory maintenance, thus reducing the risks of soil erosion and landslides on set-aside or abandoned land;
43. Notes with concern that rising demand for biomass, particularly wood, may spark widespread deforestation in developing countries, where greenhouse gas emissions are not accounted for under the Kyoto Protocol; points out that while this can impact on soil quality, water cycles and biodiversity, it increases strain on global agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Collaborative Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD);
44. Recognises that sustainable management for the entire life-cycle of forest products can make a significant contribution towards achieving green economy objectives, in particular those linked to climate change mitigation policies and efficient use of resources; considers that, to this end, Member States should promote the sustainable use of forest products in the construction sector;
45. Urges the Member States to design their forestry policies in such a way as to take full account of the importance of forests in terms of protecting biodiversity, preventing soil

erosion, ensuring carbon sequestration and air purification and maintaining the water cycle;

46. Calls for the strengthening of the harmonised monitoring of European forest resources, including all wood and non-wood forest products and services, as a basis for sound policymaking and decision-making serving sustainable forest management; considers that there is therefore a need for an instrument based on existing bodies and organisations and aimed at ensuring resilient future forests in Europe by reducing the impact of disturbances through absorbing forest risk into forest and land management.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	24.2.2015
Result of final vote	+: 63 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Margrete Auken, Pilar Ayuso, Zoltán Balczó, Catherine Bearder, Ivo Belet, Biljana Borzan, Lynn Boylan, Cristian-Silviu Buşoi, Nessa Childers, Birgit Collin-Langen, Mireille D'Ornano, Miriam Dalli, Seb Dance, Angélique Delahaye, Jørn Dohrmann, Ian Duncan, Stefan Eck, Bas Eickhout, Eleonora Evi, José Inácio Faria, Francesc Gambús, Elisabetta Gardini, Enrico Gasbarra, Gerben-Jan Gerbrandy, Jens Gieseke, Sylvie Goddyn, Matthias Groote, Françoise Grossetête, Andrzej Grzyb, Jytte Guteland, György Hölvényi, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Jean-François Jalkh, Karin Kadenbach, Kateřina Konečná, Giovanni La Via, Peter Liese, Norbert Lins, Susanne Melior, Miroslav Mikolášik, Massimo Paolucci, Piernicola Pedicini, Bolesław G. Piecha, Marcus Pretzell, Frédérique Ries, Michèle Rivasi, Daciana Octavia Sârbu, Annie Schreijer-Pierik, Davor Škrlec, Renate Sommer, Tibor Szanyi, Claudiu Ciprian Tănăsescu, Glenis Willmott, Jadwiga Wiśniewska
Substitutes present for the final vote	Paul Brannen, Nicola Caputo, Mark Demesmaeker, Esther Herranz García, Merja Kyllönen, Jo Leinen, Younous Omarjee, Marit Paulsen, Alojz Peterle, Sirpa Pietikäinen, Julia Reid, Bart Staes
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Andrew Lewer

24.2.2015

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRY, RESEARCH AND ENERGY

for the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

on a new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector
(2014/2223(INI))

Rapporteur: Marek Józef Gróbarczyk

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy calls on the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Stresses that the responsibility for forestry rests solely with the Member States, that the principle of subsidiarity must be upheld, that the differences in regional conditions, ownership models and priorities across the Member States must be respected, and that the EU should refrain from imposing any new market restrictions for forests and wood-based products in order to ensure the ownership principles and market freedom for the participants in the forest value chain;
2. Welcomes the adoption of the new Commission Communication on a new EU Forest Strategy (COM(2013)0659), as it provides a framework for coordinated action from Member States in promoting sustainable management of forests and in fulfilling their multifunctional role from an economic, social and environmental point of view;
3. Considers, given that forests are different in nature and size, that the strategy should take into account that forests cover more than half of the territory of some Member States;
4. Stresses, given that some of the Union's largest biomass resources are found in its most sparsely populated and remote regions, that it is imperative that the strategy also takes full account of the specificities of these more sparsely populated regions;
5. Acknowledges that the EU has a role to play in supporting national policies to achieve active, multifunctional and sustainable forest management, including the management of different forest types, and in strengthening cooperation in the face of increased cross-border threats such as forest fires, illegal logging, illegal timber import and pests; stresses the need to ensure coherence on forest-related issues across EU policies, in particular

those relating to agriculture, climate, biodiversity, renewable energy, water, soil, industry and competitiveness, research and innovation, and resource efficiency; in this respect, stresses the importance of Natura 2000 sites where, thanks to their extraordinary natural resources, products and services of high environmental and cultural quality can be produced on a continuous basis;

6. Considers that the implementation of the new forestry strategy should compensate for the absence of specific provisions on forest policy in the EU Treaty, while respecting Member States' competences in this field, and should ensure coordinated positions between EU and Member State policies on the issues related to the forestry sector at international level;
7. Stresses the important role of the Commission in ensuring early and continuous dialogue between EU and Member State experts, as well as the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders, in order to facilitate coherence in policy formulation with regard to forests;
8. Supports Member States' commitment to implementing sustainable forest management in line with the Forest Europe criteria and indicators as one of the key elements of the current policy framework for forests in Europe;
9. Welcomes the prioritisation of the three pillars of sustainability (economic, social and environmental) as a strong basis from which to support the fundamental role of forests and resource efficiency, increase competitiveness, boost employment and strengthen the role of forestry and forest-based industries and the preservation of ecological cycles in the green economy; recognises its role in society in relation to the health of citizens;
10. Recalls that, according to the Commission, in 2009 the bioeconomy represented a market estimated to be worth over EUR 2 trillion, providing 20 million jobs and accounting for 9 % of total employment in the EU; notes that every euro invested in bioeconomy research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will generate about EUR 10 in added value; stresses that forests play a crucial role in the bioeconomy now and will continue to do so in the future;
11. Considers that the objective included in the EU Forest Strategy of enhancing the contribution of forests and the forest sector to rural development, biodiversity, sustainable growth and job creation must take full account of the economic, social, cultural and environmental goods and services provided by forests, including recreation and tourism services, and in particular the important role that well-managed forests and wood-based material play in reducing CO₂ emissions, storing carbon and moving towards a bioeconomy, which are important elements of EU climate policy;
12. Recalls that forest biomass is a very important source of renewable energy and notes that European forests currently absorb and store around 10 % of EU carbon emissions and thus contribute markedly to climate change mitigation;
13. Considers that the substitution of oil-based or heat-intensive raw materials by timber and harvested wood products should be encouraged, in line with progress in research and technology, which can positively contribute to further gains in terms of climate change mitigation as well as job creation;

14. Stresses the need to carry out a cost assessment of all EU legislation affecting the value chains of forest-based industries, with a view to cutting out all unnecessary and burdensome bureaucracy and creating an enabling framework to increase industry's long-term competitiveness in a sustainable manner, and equally to support the principle that legislative proposals affecting the forestry sector and the value chains of forest-based industries should be thoroughly assessed by an impact assessment;
15. Considers that the EU Forest Strategy will be better implemented if supported by appropriate coordination with available or future EU funding, including the EAFRD;
16. Observes the availability of information and monitoring resources via the Copernicus programme and other space initiatives at European level, and recommends increasing the use of these resources and tools;
17. Is of the opinion that promotion of more diverse uses of wood should go hand in hand with investment in education systems for young people, and training for existing employees in the construction industry in order to increase their awareness of the opportunities created by the use of wood as well as to provide them with necessary skills;
18. Welcomes the setting up of a Forest Information System for Europe to support the sharing of data, best practices and existing knowledge on forests between the Member States; recognises that collecting data and information on the multifunctional role of forests and forest resources from the national databases will be of benefit to the sector and calls on the Commission to support its integration into a European data platform; welcomes the benefits of sharing best practices and existing knowledge on forests between the Member States, but stresses that such activity should not result in increased demand on budgetary resources;
19. Stresses that the long-term competitiveness of the forest sector will be achieved only with a skilled workforce; notes that the sector currently employs over 3 million European citizens; considers that the EU Forest Strategy should then set the conditions to enable the EU to have relevant training facilities and a workforce which is fully aware of the current challenges and threats of the forest sector, but also of the safety rules inherent in forest management;
20. Stresses the support that the EU framework programmes for research, development and innovation can provide in achieving smart and sustainable growth, higher added-value products, cleaner technology and a high degree of technology, in particular in refined biofuels and industrial building in wood, but also the automotive and textile industries, while not forgetting those traditional high-value usages that still have huge growth potential, such as using wood in construction and packaging.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	24.2.2015
Result of final vote	+: 56 -: 4 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Zigmantas Balčytis, Nicolas Bay, Reinhard Bütikofer, Jerzy Buzek, Soledad Cabezón Ruiz, Philippe De Backer, Pilar del Castillo Vera, Pablo Echenique, Christian Ehler, Peter Eriksson, Fredrick Federley, Ashley Fox, Adam Gierek, Theresa Griffin, Marek Józef Gróbarczyk, András Gyürk, Kaja Kallas, Barbara Kappel, Krišjānis Kariņš, Seán Kelly, Jeppe Kofod, Miapetra Kumpula-Natri, Janusz Lewandowski, Paloma López Bermejo, Ernest Maragall, Edouard Martin, Angelika Mlinar, Csaba Molnár, Nadine Morano, Dan Nica, Angelika Niebler, Morten Helveg Petersen, Miroslav Poche, Herbert Reul, Paul Rübig, Algirdas Saudargas, Jean-Luc Schaffhauser, Neoklis Sylikiotis, Antonio Tajani, Dario Tamburrano, Patrizia Toia, Evžen Tošenovský, Claude Turmes, Vladimir Urutchev, Adina-Ioana Vălean, Henna Virkkunen, Anna Záborská, Flavio Zanonato, Carlos Zorrinho
Substitutes present for the final vote	Cornelia Ernst, Françoise Grossetête, Benedek Jávor, Constanze Krehl, Vladimír Maňka, Marian-Jean Marinescu, Morten Messerschmidt, Clare Moody, Paul Tang, Pavel Telička
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Rosa D'Amato

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	24.3.2015
Result of final vote	+: 34 -: 5 0: 4
Members present for the final vote	John Stuart Agnew, Clara Eugenia Aguilera García, Eric Andrieu, Richard Ashworth, José Bové, Paul Brannen, Daniel Buda, Nicola Caputo, Matt Carthy, Viorica Dăncilă, Michel Dantin, Paolo De Castro, Albert Deß, Herbert Dorfmann, Norbert Erdős, Luke Ming Flanagan, Martin Häusling, Anja Hazekamp, Esther Herranz García, Jan Huitema, Peter Jahr, Jarosław Kalinowski, Elisabeth Köstinger, Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, Philippe Loiseau, Mairead McGuinness, Nuno Melo, Giulia Moi, Ulrike Müller, James Nicholson, Maria Noichl, Marit Paulsen, Marijana Petir, Laurențiu Rebegea, Jens Rohde, Bronis Ropè, Jordi Sebastià, Lidia Senra Rodríguez, Czesław Adam Siekierski, Marc Tarabella
Substitutes present for the final vote	Bas Belder
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Rosa D'Amato, Stanisław Ozóg