

**Question for written answer E-003382/2016
to the Commission**

Rule 130

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Subject: Forests as an additional means of offsetting CO₂ emissions

The Member States' forests are the EU's principal carbon sinks. According to the FAO's report on the State of Europe's Forests 2015, they capture 9% of CO₂ emissions.

Despite this, however, the role of forests is not included as a means of offsetting CO₂ in any of the emissions allocation schemes, although it can be a key factor in mitigating the effects of the increase in CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Although the surface area of the EU that is covered by forests has increased overall, some Member States appear on the lists of countries with the largest increases in deforestation in 2015.

Given that action to offset emissions only makes environmental sense if genuine efforts to cut emissions are made beforehand:

1. Will the Commission include CO₂ capture by the EU's forests as an additional means of offsetting CO₂ emissions?
2. What forest protection arrangements will the Commission be introducing as an additional way of offsetting CO₂ emissions in the new schemes for cutting emissions in the EU?