



EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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*Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*

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**2014/2223(INI)**

17.12.2014

## **DRAFT 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

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## 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. Takes the view that it is appropriate to make forest conservation and management incentives part of the strategy, and welcomes the Commission communication on a new European forest strategy, bearing in mind that – with due regard to the subsidiarity principle – there is a need for a comprehensive and consistent joint strategy to prevent and manage forest disasters;
2. Calls on Member States to consider including environmental services payments as forest management incentives; points out that sustainable forest management has a positive impact on fire prevention, biodiversity and conservation, and is crucial for economic development, especially in rural areas and remote regions;
3. Emphasises 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, are natural disasters that can be mitigated using forestry techniques and that, alongside improved forest management, there is a need to promote specific action such as the introduction of grazing or the establishment of agro-forestry areas – policies that ought to be recognised in both the first and second pillars (grazing areas and rural development respectively) of the common agricultural policy;
4. Takes the view that it is important to promote the implementation of the concept of the bioeconomy to boost the economic viability of forest value chains through innovation and technology transfer, and, to this end, provide more support for forest products other than timber;
5. Emphasises the need to make sure that forest materials are also re-used and used efficiently, as a way of cutting the EU's trade deficit, helping to reduce unsustainable management, protecting the environment and reducing deforestation in countries outside the EU;
6. Emphasises that it is important that forest management plans do not become an additional bureaucratic burden which impedes the sustainable use of Europe's forests; with that in mind, calls on Member States to review the implementation of the forest management plans, taking into account the proportionality and 'think small first' principles and providing for the use by managers of the responsibility declaration form.