

## FOREST EUROPE FACTS

### Social Aspects in Green Economy

Forests and sustainable forest management are essential in the transition to a green economy that would improve human well-being and social equity, while significantly reduce environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

In Europe, thanks to sustainable forest management, the forest sector already displays many of the characteristics of a green economy and has the potential to play a major role in the emerging sustainable economy, like contributing to a low-carbon green economy, or increasing provision of wood, non-wood products and ecosystem services in a sustainable way.

From an economical point of view, the forest sector, including the subsectors of forestry, wood industry, and pulp and paper industry, contributes on average to 1 per cent of the GDP (gross domestic product), a number that is decreasing over time. However, during the last few years, most regions have shown an increase in net added value and net entrepreneurial income from forestry enterprises. Other forests services and products have increased, like the commerce of wood for energy consumption recreational activities, and cultural and spiritual values.

In terms of employment, around 4 million people work in the European forest sector, a number that is decreasing. The forestry workforce is ageing, and it is a challenge to recruit new workers. Accident rates are still high and few improvements have been made in the last decade.

FOREST EUROPE works to propose a pan-European approach to raise awareness and contributes to the decision making process to underline forest contributions to the world economy. It also wants to contribute with a proposal on how to enhance employment and social aspects, especially in rural areas, through sustainable forest management in a green economy

#### Renewable materials and energy

Wood is renewable, durable and versatile and has been used for millennia all over the world. Wood and wood-based products have many applications - from construction and furniture-making to paper production and heating.



Wood products and bioenergy from forests can play a major role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. More wood is needed to satisfy society's growing need for renewable materials and energy. All wood production should be based on sustainability principles. The FOREST EUROPE's policy for sustainable forest management can contribute to ensure this.

Since 1990 FOREST EUROPE has developed policy tools for promoting and implementing sustainable forest management in the pan-European region. These common principles and practices recognise the multiple functions of forests and help to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives. The concept of sustainable forest management in Europe includes guidelines and criteria that secure the supply of wood from sustainable sources as well as multiple other forest-related goods and services.

#### Monitoring and mobilising sustainable wood resources

Responding to environmental challenges like climate change, FOREST EUROPE signatory countries are committed to enhance sustainable wood production and supply. FOREST EUROPE, in close cooperation with the UNECE and FAO, improves information on wood resources and consumption in Europe and promotes knowledge and understanding of the conditions necessary for supply of wood from legal and sustainable sources.

**FOREST EUROPE develops common strategies for its 46 participating countries and the European Union on how to protect and sustainably manage forests. It aims at maximising the contribution of Europe's forests to the ecological, social and economic well-being of the continent and across the globe.**



FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit Oslo published a brochure based on the report "Good practice guidance on sustainable mobilisation of wood in Europe" that provides a range of examples of successful and sustainable means of mobilising wood, targeted at policy makers and practitioners (<http://foresteurope.org/WoodMobilisationGuidanceReport>).

### **Increased production and consumption of wood**

Forest's in Europe are growing at a high rate, the only exception being Central-West Europe where catastrophic events, mainly storms, have significantly influenced the negative rate between 2005 and 2010. Harvesting of wood has decreased in all Europe. Less than 2/3 of the increment is removed from the growing stock by fellings.

In 2010, more than 878 million cubic metres of roundwood were produced. The overall value of marketed roundwood is still increasing and reached EUR 21.1 billion in 2010. Europe's forests continue to be one of the main roundwood producers in the world. The demand for wood fuel is increasing at a high rate in many European countries.



*FOREST EUROPE Signatory Countries*

More information and detailed data can be found in the report State of Europe's Forests 2011 on the FOREST EUROPE website: [www.foresteurope.org](http://www.foresteurope.org) and [http://www.foresteurope.org/eng/State\\_of\\_Europes\\_Forests\\_Report\\_2011/Report/](http://www.foresteurope.org/eng/State_of_Europes_Forests_Report_2011/Report/)

### **FOREST EUROPE - The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe**

FOREST EUROPE is the pan-European policy process for the sustainable management of the continent's forests. It develops common strategies for its 46 participating countries and the European Union on how to protect and sustainably manage forests. More than 40 international organisations and countries from other regions are observers. Founded in 1990, the continuous cooperation of FOREST EUROPE has led to achievements such as the guidelines and criteria for sustainable forest management.

With the Oslo Ministerial Decision 'European Forests 2020', FOREST EUROPE has adopted a new mission and vision for forest in Europe, where they contribute effectively to sustainable development, through ensuring human well-being, a healthy environment and economic development in Europe and across the globe. Moreover, ministers took a historical decision and launched negotiations on a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe.

High-priority topics are to step up efforts and further consolidate the pan-European policies and tools for sustainable forest management, improve the basis for forest monitoring and harmonized reporting systems, strength efforts for good governance and forest law enforcement, develop a common approach to valuation of forest ecosystem services and foster its use, and negotiate a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.

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