

Policy Paper

The New European Forest Strategy – Short Version

Forestry Federation of Baden-Württemberg

In order to take advantage of the enormous opportunities and potentials of sustainable forest management for achieving the ambitious EU climate protection targets and making our forests fit for climate change at the same time, the draft EU Forest Strategy should be improved in key points:

- Forests take a critical role in fighting the climate change: they are massive carbon sinks and wood products stocks carbon well after trees left the forest thanks the substitution effect.
- Forest management and nature conservation belong together. No nature conservation without forest management. The principle is multifunctional forest management. In this, set-aside is ONE function among others.
- Forest management must always be considered under the given regional climatic, site and cultural conditions. EU regulations must take this into account. Ex: Large clear-cuts permitted in sparsely populated northern Europe, where there is a spatial separation between utilised and protected areas. In Germany, very dense settlement, high demands of the population for an integrative approach to forests. For this reason, standardising EU regulations for the whole of Europe is not relevant.
- Sustainable forest management is much more than just timber production. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create financial incentives for the provision of ecosystem services. With the help of a fundamentally new financing system, forest enterprises must be put in a position to provide ecosystem and public goods services as additional forest services alongside the classic production of raw wood.
- The most important target group of EU-wide forestry advice/support must be the structurally disadvantaged small private forest. Through financial support for advice/management, they must be enabled throughout the EU to manage their forest holdings in such a way that the multitude of functions are fulfilled.
- EU funding to promote sustainable forest management and the forest sector as a whole i.e. including public forest must be significantly expanded.
- Research on the adaptation of forests to the changing climate conditions, on the practical application of forest products and on the development of novel wood and forest products should be massively promoted.

Gemeinsam für einen starken Wald.

The New EU Forest Strategy – LWV Position Paper

Landeswaldverband Baden-Württemberg – Forestry Federation of Baden-Württemberg

The new EU Forest Strategy is part of the European Green Deal, in which the Commission sets out the growth strategy towards a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy in the EU. We fully support the goals of zero net greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and decoupling economic growth from resource use.

Therefore it's regrettable that forests and sustainable forest management, as one of the most important key factors in achieving this goal, are not mentioned in the European Green Deal and an essential pillar of the bioeconomy.

It is also not purposeful to treat the EU Forest Strategy as a component of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. If we want to meet the challenges of climate change and achieve the transformation to a greenhouse gas emission-free economy, sustainable forest management should have the same priority as the protection of biodiversity.

In order to take advantage of the enormous opportunities and potentials of sustainable forest management for achieving the ambitious EU climate protection targets and making our forests fit for climate change at the same time, the draft EU Forest Strategy should be improved in key points.

1. Effective, holistic climate and forest protection is only possible on the base of largely area-wide sustainable and multifunctional forest management. Only this form of integrative forest management provides the renewable raw material wood in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner, provides a maximum of different services for society, safeguards biodiversity and makes an effective contribution to the fight against climate change.
2. A focus on non-use or set-aside does not do justice to the goal of forest conservation, especially in the light of climate change. In many countries, a representative network of protected forests still exists. This network only needs to be expanded where there are still deficits for certain forest formations. This includes the last European primary forests, for which there is as yet no special protection status. The forest strategy should provide clear framework conditions both in the definition of such forests and in their designation. It is not sufficient to stay in this overcome system of static nature conservation goals.
In the context of climate change and the resulting rapidly changing forest ecosystems, existing conservation targets need to be reconsidered and new holistic strategies for forest ecosystems need to be developed. Among other things, leave more room for natural dynamics.
3. There is still a conflict of objectives between area-wide sustainable forest management as a key to the goal "Climate Neutral Europe 2050" and the existing as well targeted nature conservation requirements for forests (EU biodiversity strategy). Multifunctional concepts are needed, not a competition of ideologies. Forest management and nature conservation must solve this conflict of goals on an equal footing and without ideology. The EU forest strategy and the EU biodiversity strategy must formulate coherent and equal strategic goals.

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4. Sustainable and nature-compatible management of all forests is not possible without a sufficient number of professional forest managers. Professional forestry personnel is indispensable to advise, support and manage on site, to moderate the diverse demands on the forest and to implement them in a professional and balanced manner. The most important target group of the EU-wide forestry for consulting and supporting should be the structurally disadvantaged small private forest. Through financial support for advice and management, the small private forest owners must be enabled throughout the EU to manage their forest holdings in a way that the multitude of functions are fulfilled.

5. Forests in Europe will be massively affected by climate change. Even if the 1.5°C target will be reached there is also a need beside the preservation of our native tree species to search for new tree species (Eurasian and non-European tree species) and their mixing with native species. Introducing such climate resilient tree species in mixture with existing native tree species will make forests fit for climate change.

6. The Green Deal will only succeed with a massive expansion and a most efficient circular use of wood and forest products from sustainable forest management. The raw material wood has a key position in the transformation to a CO₂ emission-free EU economy (bioeconomy). In future, the use of wood products must be prioritized in competition with products from non-sustainable origins. CO₂-intensive competing products must become less attractive through a higher price.

7. EU funds for the promotion of sustainable forest management and the entire forestry sector must be significantly expanded. The goal of significantly increasing the proportion of forests in the EU through afforestation measures is essential for additional carbon storage. The creation of sufficient financial incentives for the initial afforestation of previously non-forested areas is a decisive key action in fighting climate change. Land will not be converted to permanent forestation until the opportunity costs of income from previous land use are fully compensated.

8. Sustainable forest management is much more than just timber production. Therefore, there is an urgent need to create financial incentives for the provision of ecosystem services. On one hand, the climate crisis is causing massive damage to forests and requires enormous investments in reforestation. On the other hand, the ecosystem services provided by forests are becoming increasingly important (groundwater recharge, biodiversity, local climate, recreation, education, health, and many more). With help of a fundamentally new financing system, forest owners must be enabled to provide ecosystem and community services as additional forest services besides the classic raw wood production.

9. Adapted forest-compatible game populations are an indispensable basis for natural and artificial renewal of diverse and stable (mixed) forests.

10. Research on the adaptation of forests to the changing climate conditions, on the practical application of forest products and on the development of novel wood and forest products should be massively promoted.

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