

Bioenergy Europe statistical report 2020 on biomass supply published

Brussels, 12 November 2020 - Bioenergy Europe is pleased to announce the sixth chapter of its [Statistical Report 2020](#) looking at the current state of play of biomass supply, forest and land management, and the potential of agricultural biomass in the coming years.

Bioenergy is the main renewable energy source in the EU and its use diversifies Europe's energy supply, creates growth, jobs, and lowers greenhouse gas emissions.

The main feedstock used by the bioenergy sector is woody biomass, currently covering 69% of sector's supply. Agricultural biomass and biomass from waste represent smaller portions, accounting for 30% combined.

The state of our forests, biodiversity preservation and the role of Sustainable Forest Management are high on the current EU policy agenda, with bioenergy often indicated as the main driver of deforestation.

Based on the latest figures published by FAO, Bioenergy Europe's statistical report highlights that in 2020 Europe was covered by approximately 183 million hectares of forests and other wooded land (162 are forest), corresponding to 43% of its land area. The report highlights the positive trends when it come net forest gain with an increase of forest area by 6,3 %, between 1990 and 2020, equivalent to an increase of the size of 1,3 football fields every minute.

Despite a sensible decrease of the rate of *forest area expansion*, EU28 forest stock has been growing in the past decades with an overall *wood density* increasing sensibly over the years (from 130 m³ wood/ ha in 1990 to 174 m³/ha in 2020). Carbon stock in EU28 forests has increased impressively 23% between 1990 and 2020 (from 20,3 billion tonnes of carbon in 1990 to 24,9 billion tonnes of carbon in 2020).

Contrarily to the assumption that bioenergy is the main driver of deforestation in Europe, the report highlights that only 23% of the total forest harvested is diverted for energy purposes. These are tops and branches left after harvesting and thinning. This confirms a stable trend since 1990 and remains around one fourth of the total harvest in the EU28, despite a staggering triplication of consumption (from 41 Mtoe to 117 Mtoe) of bioenergy in Europe over the same period.

However, the situation in the forest is not that rosy. On average, 1,3% of EU28 forests area is annually affected by pests and climate disturbances, causing unplanned salvage logging to result in high volumes of low-quality wood not meeting the quality or physical characteristics required by sawmill, pulp and panel industries. It is estimated that between 2018 and 2019, more than 1,2 million ha of forest have experienced damage, resulting in more than 36 million m³ of damaged wood.

Bioenergy brings a market value for residues and damaged wood through sustainable forest management creating new economic influx for forest owners, while ensuring our forests become more resilient.

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