

Over 550 scientists call for climate smart forest management

Brussels, 27 October 2022 – Bioenergy Europe welcomes the open letter sent to EU Presidents Ursula Von der Leyen, Charles Michel and Roberta Metsola today, indicating broad scientific support of the forestry and bioenergy sectors.

Signed by over 550 scientists, and with backing from the larger international community, [the letter](#) calls for climate-smart forest management. Forests play an essential role in our environment as they store carbon and have the capacity to mitigate climate change while increasing biodiversity. However, changing climate conditions are increasingly placing forests at risk which **can only be reduced with proper management and use of biomass products** in order to secure a sustainable bioeconomy and renewable energy production.

The letter stresses that avoiding CO₂ emissions from fossil fuels can only be achieved through proper forest management and wood utilisation. **Forest management focuses on maintaining the health of the forest and primarily generating wood, but an inevitable by-product of harvesting, processing and manufacturing wood products is the generation of low-quality material which has little or no other use other than energy wood.**

The climate benefits of wood products are numerous, as they create long-lasting items while embedding carbon and replacing more energy-intensive materials. On top of this, **they can subsume a renewable energy supply, establishing synergies with other forest-based industries and significantly contributing to climate policy in EU countries.** *Energy substitution is an integral component of a managed forest and the associated wood products*, the letter mentions.

The ongoing negotiations at the EU level regarding the Renewable Energy Directive, represent a great opportunity to increase environmental ambition. However, **a ban on the use of wood for energy from sustainably managed forests would not have added advantages for biodiversity and would hamper a circular bioeconomy.**

The letter concludes that *ecologically driven sustainable forestry, that keeps wood volumes constant and makes use of the increment for products and energy is “climate-smart”.*

According to lead author **Prof. Roland Irslinger**, the term **Climate Smart Forestry (CSF)** *integrates climate goals with forest management. CSF is more than just storing carbon in forest ecosystems; it is incorporating greenhouse gas emission reductions, increasing forest ecosystem resilience, biodiversity criteria and sustainably increasing forest owner productivity and income into the silviculture strategy. CSF takes into account the regional peculiarities of natural factors and socioeconomic circumstances of EU Member States. It looks for synergies with other policies impacting the forest sector, such as rural, industrial, energy and biodiversity policies.*

Irene di Padua, Policy Director at Bioenergy Europe highlights: *The current discussion around sustainable forest management and bioenergy is emotionally driven and does not reflect the reality in the forests or in the scientific literature. If we want to achieve the EU’s climate goals, **we must find workable and applicable regulations and guidelines** that take into consideration the multifunctionality of forests.*

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Notes to editors:

[Bioenergy Europe](#) is the voice of the European bioenergy industry. It aims to develop a sustainable bioenergy market based on fair business conditions. Founded in 1990, Bioenergy Europe is a non-profit, Brussels-based international organisation bringing together more than 40 associations and 157 companies, as well as academia and research institutes from across Europe.