



Confédération Européenne des Propriétaires Forestiers  
Confederation of European Forest Owners  
Zentralverband der Europäischen Waldbesitzer

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The Confederation of European Forest Owners is an umbrella institutions established to represent interest of forest owners around the Europe. CEPF's family has approximately 16 millions forest owners. In majority they are private individuals and families which manage more than half of forest covered area in the European Union. Due to promote, protect and reliable representation of private forest owners structure CEPF is acting in the heart of Europe along with all European Institutions. This includes assistance and strengthening an all social, environmental and economical values related to wide spectrum of forest issues like promoting the biodiversity, sustainable management, benevolent impact on cultural life of the society. All those actions taken due to integrate forest family and enhance their contribution in to modern European Union entitled CEPF to be the advocate of forest owners actively networking and lobbying for better political framework conditions.

Average forest cover in Europe is about 47 %, starting from 1 % in Malta to more than 70 % in Sweden and Finland. The numbers show that together with agricultural areas forestry is one of the biggest land holders which play a major role in affecting environmental and climate changes in the future. Further more forest is the most important factor responsible for sequestration of greenhouse gases like CO<sub>2</sub>.

The structure of the forest owners is not homogenous and it's very specific. It is a heritage of generations combined with different conditions throughout the Europe. Its range is from very small properties like 0.5 ha to almost 10 000 ha but small scale forestry is dominant structure in the Europe. Almost 4 million people are employed in the forestry and wood processing industry. The way of managing forest to achieve all the goals mentioned above is strongly affecting rural areas where most of the forest owners live. Sustainable management create a stability of biodiversity and contribute into further development of rural areas. It is a backbone which helps and keeps those areas inhabited. The positive impact of forestry considering the rural areas can no be overestimated. It provides significant important income and employment for all those areas which are usually less developed and preserve their social and economic sustainability. Respectively 9 % of GDP in Europe comes from the sustainable management of the forestry sector which is equal to almost 400 billions Euros of income every year.

Family forest has a strong awareness of keeping their forest well managed with respect for its further impact on the future development of next generations. Investing in the sustainability and maintaining the biodiversity in order to preserve most valuable aspects of forest area is considered as active protection of natural heritage. Unlike most forest area in the world, European forestry is expanding. The standing volume is 20 000 million cubic metres and the annual increment is estimated around 346 million cubic metres while only 64 % of it is harvested. To further strengthening and enhancing the sustainable way of management the forest certification system was created. It is a voluntary action taken in order to verify and promote forestry managed in environmental-preserving system. Qualified independent agencies evaluated the impact of different managing regimes and created standards which encourage to aiming on environmental friendly actions taken in forestry and wood processing industry.



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In the recent years the EU rural development policy plays a major role as an instrument for implementing the forest measures. Promoting sustainable forestry and its multifunctional impact resulted that around 8 billions of Euro has been made available from the Community budget for forestry measures in the period 2007-2013. The recognition of the forestry as an important contributor to sustainable development of rural area is crucial for the further supporting from European funds. The major part of the forestry measures is aiming at improving and enhancing the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector in general. Further more some of the forestry actions concentrate on the quality of rural life and often they are connected with producing renewable energy. Report published by the Commission shows that afforestation, restoring the forestry potential and the development of forest infrastructure have a wide uptake the rural development funds.

As long as forestry deliver a renewable wood resources but also focussing on the non-financial aspect of forestry like care for natural biotopes, clean water and fresh air, soil stability together with more and more important non-production values of forestry like providing leisure service, preventing climate changes and natural disasters is it worth to mention that forest owners do not receive significant subsidies for the further development in maintaining all those values. The current CAP-Common Agricultural Policy has focused on farm-level subsidies which can be seen as distortion of internal competitions. In this shape agricultural subsidies are considered as non-effective and they should be more focused on the research level instead of giving it directly to the farmers. According to above changes should be proposed to reshape the current CAP due to spend money in more efficient way. In relation to forestry farmers do receive some subsidies for excluding and forgone their profits in order to convert agricultural area into afforested land. Forest owners only receive compensation for loss of income from the designated protection area but do not receive profit from being environmental friendly.

As far as the forest is considered as a substantial contributor towards meeting the new challenges like climate change, renewable energies, water management and biodiversity a clear defined and structured support should be provided from public authorities. The major requirements can be pointed out as following:

- Increase the level of compensation for forest owners when they enter into any of schemes under the Rural Development regulation , particularly compensation should be raised for afforestation , Nature 2000 and restoration of forest potential
- To be able to increase the climate change mitigation and adaptation measures existing forest fire prevention schemes should be elaborated
- Quality and quantity of groundwater together with protection of habitats can be increased by placing more funding for active water management by forest owners under the Rural Development scheme



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- Support schemes should be established for adding value to the local wood supply chain- this can be done by promoting local innovative woodworking industries and district heating initiatives.
- Funding and support should be provided to establishment of forest owner cooperatives , especially in member states with a very small tradition of this type institution
- Limit the administrative burden and simplify the reporting obligations under the Rural Development in order to increase the number of application

CEPF remains involved in different working groups which emphasize the major role that forestry play in economic activity in rural areas. According to above the Community aid is significant important to increase awareness of and helping to promote forestry as not only wood supplier on the market but further more as environment tool to maintain nature conservation and preventing climate changes.

Forest owners while their long time history and inherited experience are considered to be very valuable partners in policy-creating areas. From the additional 3.2 billion of Euro assigned for rural development for years 2010 to 2013 a large amount can potentially be directed towards forestry measures.