



Confederation of European Forest Owners

**EP Intergroup Breakfast Meeting**  
by **ELISABETH KÖSTINGER MEP**

Chair of the “Sustainable Forest Management” Working Group of the EP Intergroup “Climate Change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development”

**Europe’s Forests in the Sustainability Spotlight**

25<sup>th</sup> November 2015, 8:00 to 9:30.  
Strasbourg, European Parliament,

**CEPF Statement**  
by **Philipp Freiherr von und zu Guttenberg, CEPF Vice-President**

Dear Mrs Köstinger,  
honorable Commissioner Hogan, honorable Members of the European Parliament  
dear guests,

thank you very much for inviting me, as representative of 16 Million forest owners across the EU to share with you some thoughts on „Europe’s Forests”.

two years ago, we celebrated 300 years of multifunctional sustainable forestry in Germany. The original concept has evolved dynamically over the last generations and defines the course of action of all European forest owners and managers ever since.

Based on secure and strong ownership rights, Sustainable Forest Management in Europe became an unrivalled global story of success.

**1. What is our perception on the EU governance with view to forestry today?**

Frankly spoken we have the impression that each of the EU’s sectorial policy has its own definition of sustainability with the aim of maximising its single interests.

This of course generates conflicts with our core comprehension of sustainability, where we strive to optimise a holistic and rather complex concept on a daily basis.

In our forests, EU policies ultimately meet with reality. These “encounters” are increasingly burdened with frustration, conflict and incomprehension by owners and managers.  
Allow me to give you one example: the perpetual discussion on sustainability criteria for solid biomass.

Our management approach addresses the forest ecosystem as a whole. Multifunctionally, integrative and sustainably.



It is not feasible, let alone sensible to manage a single tree for various segments corresponding to their future end-use.

Solid biomass for energy use is a mere by-product from sustainable and planned harvesting operations. Since the adoption of the RES Directive in 2009 the EU Commission has already twice analysed in thorough reports the sustainability risk of solid biomass production on the internal market.

The conclusions drawn from these analyses are congruent: the forest legislation in the EU Member States is robust and there is no sustainability risk for solid biomass.

All Member States are signatories to FOREST EUROPE and have over the past 25 years committed to the implementation of the criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Nevertheless, the EU Commission keeps on pursuing the development of sustainability criteria for solid biomass as part of the Energy and climate package.

Instead of engaging with the three big biomass importers, the US, Canada and Russia in direct bilateral trade agreements based on sustainability requirements, the EU Commission invests considerable time in solving a problem that does not exist within their boundaries.

Esteemed Commissioner, I do ask for your support to bring back some common sense into that discussion.

## **2. What do we expect from EU governance for the future?**

Forests and forestry have much to offer in addressing today's challenges. The resource we manage appears to be the Swiss army knife with view to climate change, energy and the multiple segments within the bio-economy sector.

We are happy to contribute our share by supplying wood from sustainably managed forests as well as pertaining all other forest functions at the same time.

In this respect, we think, that DG Agriculture has a key role and leadership responsibility to secure a coordinated and coherent EU policy relevant for all forestry matters.

Commissioner Hogan: you and your team are the ambassadors for the holistic approach to sustainability within the Commission services.

Dear Mrs Köstinger, honourable Commissioner – in my short statement I indicated that forestry requires a different governance approach to develop its full potential.

However, in order to generate meaningful solutions and reach our common goals, those who own, live of and manage our most important resource in Europe have to be taken seriously at eye-level.

Thank you very much for your kind attention!