

Basic information	
2005/2054(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy Subject 3.10.11 Forestry policy	Procedure completed

Key players				
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur	Appointed
	 Agriculture and Rural Development		KINDERMANN Heinz (PSE)	16/03/2005
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	 Environment, Public Health and Food Safety		FJELLNER Christofer (PPE-DE)	24/05/2005
Council of the European Union	Council configuration		Meetings	Date
	Agriculture and Fisheries		2662	2005-05-30
	Agriculture and Fisheries		2669	2005-06-20
	Agriculture and Fisheries		2739	2006-06-19

Key events			
Date	Event	Reference	Summary
10/03/2005	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2005)0084 	Summary
12/05/2005	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
30/05/2005	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		Summary
20/06/2005	Debate in Council		Summary
26/01/2006	Vote in committee		Summary
31/01/2006	Committee report tabled for plenary	A6-0015/2006	
15/02/2006	Debate in Parliament		
16/02/2006	Decision by Parliament	T6-0068/2006	Summary

16/02/2006	Results of vote in Parliament		
16/02/2006	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/06/2006	Debate in Council		Summary

Technical information	
Procedure reference	2005/2054(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	AGRI/6/27214

Documentation gateway				
European Parliament				
Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee opinion	ENVI	PE360.068	24/10/2005	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE365.102	12/12/2005	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A6-0015/2006	31/01/2006	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T6-0068/2006	16/02/2006	Summary
European Commission				
Document type	Reference	Date	Summary	
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2005)0084 	10/03/2005	Summary	
Follow-up document	COM(2006)0302 	15/06/2006	Summary	
Other institutions and bodies				
Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES1252/2005 OJ C 028 03.02.2006, p. 0057-0065	26/10/2005	

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

2005/2054(INI) - 30/05/2005

The Council adopted conclusions on an EU Forest Action Plan. Acknowledging the economic, ecological and social relevance of the forest sector in the EU, the Council invites the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States and in consultation with stakeholders, to elaborate a proposal for this Action Plan and to present it to the Council by mid 2006.

The Council also recommends that :

- the Action Plan should provide a coherent set of actions, in line with the Lisbon and the Göteborg strategies, based on clear objectives which should interact with and provide guidance to the objectives of other Community policies, as well as to the implementation of forest-related international commitments;
- the Commission, in close cooperation with the Member States, should present the existing instruments at EU level which could be used to realise the proposed actions;
- the Action Plan should encompass both Community forest-related actions and forest-related actions in Member States, including national forest programmes.

Lastly, the Commission is invited to enhance the existing Community means and practices to facilitate coordination, communication and cooperation between different policy sectors that have an influence on forestry, and the role of the relevant committees at Community level, in particular the role envisaged for the Standing Forestry Committee.

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

2005/2054(INI) - 20/06/2005

The Council took note of a Presidency progress report on the FLEGT Agreement on trade in timber. The Belgian delegation voiced its concern at illegal logging and the associated unlawful trading. It thanked the Luxembourg Presidency for its efforts in preparing a negotiating brief and hoped that significant progress would be made on this matter during the forthcoming United Kingdom Presidency, so that the first partnership agreements could be implemented. Finally, the Belgian delegation pointed to the need to supplement those agreements by means of mandatory legislation on illegal timber trading in the Community.

Commissioner Fischer-Boel hoped that the negotiating directives would be completed during the forthcoming United Kingdom Presidency. She stressed that EUR 3 million had been spent to assist dialogue on forestry governance and the Community had spent a further EUR 15 million on technical assistance. She reminded the Council that the informal negotiations currently in progress with several non-member countries (Ghana, Cameroon, Malaysia, etc.) should result in negotiating directives in due course.

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

2005/2054(INI) - 15/06/2006 - Follow-up document

This Communication presents an EU Forest Action Plan. It has been prepared in close cooperation with the Member States and in consultation with stakeholders. It takes into account the report by the European Parliament (please refer to the previous summary) on implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy and related reports by the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The Commission Staff Working Document attached to the Communication provides a review of the preparatory process.

Overall principles: The overall objective of the EU Forest Action Plan is to support sustainable forest management and the multifunctional role of forests. It is based on the following principles:

- national forest programmes as a suitable framework for implementing international forest-related commitments;
- the increasing importance of global and cross-sectoral issues in forest policy, calling for improved coherence and coordination;
- the need to enhance the competitiveness of the EU forest sector and good governance of EU forests;
- respect for the principle of subsidiarity.

Recognising the wide range of natural, social, economic and cultural conditions and differences in ownership regimes of EU forests, the Action Plan acknowledges the need for specific approaches and actions for different types of forests. It emphasizes the important role played by forest owners in the sustainable management of forests in the EU.

Objectives: Multifunctional forestry delivers economic, environmental, social and cultural benefits. It supplies renewable raw materials and plays an important role in the economic development, and employment of Europe, in particular of rural areas. Forests make a positive contribution to the quality of life, providing a pleasant living environment, opportunities for recreation and preventive healthcare, while maintaining and enhancing environmental amenities and ecological values. Forests are to maintain the spiritual and cultural heritage they contain. The five-year Action Plan (2007–2011) consists of a set of **18 key actions**, which the Commission proposes to implement jointly with the Member States. It also points out additional actions that can be carried out by the Member States according to their specific conditions and priorities, with support from existing Community instruments, although implementation may also require national instruments.

The Action Plan has four main objectives:

- improving long-term competitiveness: key actions include examining the effects of globalisation on the economic viability and competitiveness of EU forestry, encouraging research and technological development to enhance the competitiveness of the forest sector, and promoting the use of forest biomass for energy generation;

- improving and protecting the environment: key actions include facilitating EU compliance with the obligations on climate change mitigation of the UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol and contributing towards achieving the revised Community biodiversity objectives for 2010 and beyond;

- contributing to the quality of life: key actions include encouraging environmental education and information and maintain and enhance the protective functions of forests;

- fostering coordination and communication: key actions include strengthening the role of the Standing Forestry Committee and strengthening coordination between policy areas in forest-related matters.

A mid-term evaluation will take place in 2009 and a final evaluation will be carried out in 2012. A report on implementation of the Action Plan will be presented to the Council and the European Parliament in 2012.

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

2005/2054(INI) - 19/06/2006

The Council took note of the presentation by Commissioner Fischer-Boel of a Communication on an EU Forest Action Plan, and held a first exchange of views on the subject. Commissioner Fischer-Boel noted in particular that there were at present 15 million forest owners and that 3.4 million jobs were directly or indirectly related to forestry management. The Finnish delegation stated its intention of tabling conclusions on this issue under its forthcoming Presidency.

In general, a large majority of delegations could support the objectives and the key actions proposed in the Communication. Some delegations insisted on the need to support a larger use of wood as a source of renewable energy, and stressed the multifunctional role of forests.

The Communication was adopted following the Council's request that the Commission present an EU Forest Action Plan in 2006, and on the basis of a Council Resolution of 1998 on forestry strategy in the EU.

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

2005/2054(INI) - 10/03/2005 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present an implementation report of the EU Forestry Strategy

CONTENT: This Communication responds to the request of the European Council to the Commission to present an implementation report of the EU Forestry Strategy. In preparing this report, the Commission carried out extensive consultations with the Member States and stakeholders via the Standing Forestry Committee, the Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork, including an internet-based stakeholder consultation.

The Communication presents the main conclusions of the analysis as well as emerging issues affecting forests and forestry, and outlines possible actions for the future. The Commission Staff Working Document, which is attached to the Communication, provides a detailed description of the actions and activities implemented in the context of the EU Forestry Strategy in the period 1999–2004.

The Communication concludes that, overall, the basic principles and elements identified in 1998 in the EU Forestry Strategy are still valid. Sustainable Forestry Management (SFM) and the multifunctional role of forests remain the overarching common principles; national forest programmes provide a suitable framework for implementing these principles; and there is widespread recognition of the increasing need to take global and cross-sectoral issues into account in forest policy.

The experiences gained in the implementation period show that forests and forestry can contribute to the Lisbon objectives of sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, and to the Gothenburg objectives of safeguarding the quantity and the quality of the natural resource base. However, in order to maintain and maximise this contribution in the future, the Strategy and its implementation process need to be placed within the newly emerging policy context.

Firstly, even if the different measures implemented over the last years have led to progress in the sustainable management of forests, the competitiveness and economic viability of forest management in the EU – based on a multipurpose approach, simultaneously serving economic, social and environmental objectives – is increasingly being challenged in the context of an open and global market. Most forest owners have few possibilities to realise economies of scale. Forest owners provide a wide range of goods and services to society, although they largely rely on wood sales for revenue. To satisfy the growing public interest in the management of forests for their environmental and social benefits requires, in many cases, changes in management practices that may reduce the economic viability of forestry. If the tradition of multipurpose forestry in the EU is to be maintained, these issues need to be addressed in the future.

Secondly, while the EU Forestry Strategy is based on subsidiarity and shared responsibility, there are a number of EU policies and initiatives that affect forests and forestry. There is a need to strengthen coherence between EU policies, as well as co-ordination between the Commission and the Member States, and to establish adequate monitoring mechanisms for the implementation of the Strategy, so that the various functions of forests and their links with other policies are addressed in a coherent way in the policy formation process.

Thirdly, all stakeholders concerned with forests and forestry stress the importance of good governance for the protection and sustainable management of forests. A participatory and collaborative approach to policy formulation and implementation is a pre-condition for good governance. There is a need to review and strengthen the consultation structures in forestry at Community and national level, in order to facilitate transparency in decision-making and a structured dialogue with all stakeholders.

Lastly, the global importance of forests for sustainable development, including their climate change and biodiversity dimensions, is being increasingly acknowledged. The EU should firmly continue to support the international commitments for the sustainable management of forests at global level. In this respect, the decision on the future international arrangement on forests, which will be taken at the 5th session of the UNFF in May 2005, will be significant.

In providing a reference framework for forest-related policies, initiatives and actions, the EU Forestry Strategy has changed the way forest-related issues are discussed today. However, the changes in the policy context suggest that a more coherent and pro-active approach to governing the Union's forest resources is needed in the future. Such an approach should be based on a shared vision of the EU's forest sector and the challenges it faces at global, Community and national levels, and on a shared understanding of what forests and forestry can contribute to modern society. It should encompass a set of clear objectives that can provide a basis for regular monitoring and stocktaking, and bring together the thematic, horizontal and cross-sectoral policy initiatives at Community and national level in a structured framework to encourage better and more effective co-ordination and consultation, and promote the flow of information among the various actors concerned.

The Commission believes that the development of an EU Action Plan for Sustainable Forest Management could provide such a framework. An Action Plan could provide the necessary impetus to transform the EU Forestry Strategy into a dynamic process capable of responding to the newly emerging policy context and delivering outcomes consistent with the Lisbon and the Gothenburg Strategies.

Therefore, after reviewing the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy, the Commission is proposing to the European Council that it will:

1. Develop an EU Action Plan for Sustainable Forest Management, which should provide a coherent framework for the implementation of forest-related actions and serve as an instrument of co-ordination between Community actions and the forest policies of the Member States. The list of actions to be taken at Community and national levels should cover, but not be limited to, the following elements and domains: socio-economic issues (competitiveness of forestry, valuation of social and environmental goods and services); environmental issues (climate change, forest fires, water, biodiversity conservation); use of wood as energy source; information about wood as a renewable and environmentally friendly resource; governance issues; horizontal activities (research, training, forest statistics, monitoring); and coordination, communication and co-operation. The international dimension of these issues should also be addressed.

2. Review the existing Community means and practices to facilitate co-ordination, communication and co-operation between different policy sectors, which have an influence on forestry, in the light of the increasing complexity of forest policy and of the decision-making processes. This review will also include Council Decision 89/367/EEC of 29 May 1989 setting up the Standing Forestry Committee, and the role this body should play in the implementation of the Action Plan.

The Commission proposes to present the Action Plan in 2006.

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

2005/2054(INI) - 16/02/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Heinz **KINDERMANN** (PES, DE) in response to the Commission paper on the implementation of the EU forestry strategy.

Fundamental aspects: Parliament supported the Commission's proposal to draw up an 'EU Action Plan for Sustainable Forest Management', which should operate for a five-year period. In view of the many effects of the Community's sectoral policies on forests and in view of the Lisbon and Göteborg Strategies, the Commission and Council should have an objective report drawn up to examine the scope for creating a separate legal basis for forests in the EC Treaty or in a future draft Constitution. The subsidiarity principle must be taken into account to a special degree in all legal acts affecting forests, as long as the EU lacks a separate legal basis for forests.

Parliament proposed 11 strategy elements:

- **Active participation in international processes relevant to forestry:** Parliament welcomed the fact that, thanks to a dynamic dialogue within the framework of the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), the Member States and the Commission had arrived at a common vision of sustainable forest management. Parliament felt that a legally binding instrument is the best means of ensuring sustainable forest management in its environmental and social dimensions.

- **Implementation of national forestry programmes in order to comply with international commitments:** the Commission and the Member States should apply the approach developed at the MCPFE as a uniform instrument for national forestry programmes and adopt assessment criteria in order to facilitate an evaluation of the attainment of objectives.

- **Improving coordination, communication and cooperation in all fields of policy of relevance to forestry:** Parliament proposed that, in addition to the existing horizontal integration of the Commission departments responsible for forestry issues, consideration should be given to vertical integration over all levels of work of Commission departments, with a basis in the Secretariat. It also felt that remit of the Standing Forestry Committee should be extended by giving it a practical dimension.

- **Promoting sustainable forest management as part of policy on conserving and developing rural areas:** Effective monitoring systems should be established for forestry measures to be implemented by Member States with co-financing from the EU pursuant to Council Regulation 1257/1999/EC. The Commission and the Member States must take increased account of the objectives of the EU forestry strategy and the EU action plan for sustainable forest management when drawing up their corresponding rural development programmes.

- **Protecting Europe's forests:** the EU action plan for sustainable forest management must contain effective measures to avert dangers and cope with serious disasters (fires, storms, insect infestations and drought). It must pay more attention to protecting the soil, water and air and also biodiversity and typical forest landscapes. Parliament also stressed the importance of reforestation as a vital instrument in combating desertification and maintaining biodiversity, and reducing the risk of fire.

- **Protecting tropical forests:** Parliament supported the current FLEGT initiatives to combat illegal logging and enforce international agreements.

- **Mitigating climate change and contributing to sustainable energy supplies:** it was vital that the importance of forests and forestry products in mitigating climate change should be recognised and that the EU should promote research, activities to promote the image of wood and exchanges of information in this field. Biomass, particularly from wood, should be fully included in political measures to develop renewable energy sources (cooling, heating and power (CHP), biofuels). Member States were asked to assess the possibilities of tax concessions for wood-based heating.

- **Promoting competitiveness, employment and income in the forest-based sector:** Parliament welcomed the fact that incentives to encourage voluntary mergers between smaller forestry businesses had been provided at national and Community level. The Commission should draw up the necessary studies on the fiscal measures which may be taken by the individual Member States with a view to applying positive differentiation with regard to taxation for producers who have fewer negative impacts on the environment. The implementation of measures aimed at the prevention of fires and desertification, afforestation with native species, the promotion of biodiversity, the sustainable management of natural forests and the fostering of environmental benefits such as protection for water systems and the combating of erosion represent positive externalities which such producers provide to society and for which they should be duly compensated.

- **Promoting forest-related research and development:** there were calls for an increase in promotion of forest-related research and development work and more recognition of the multifunctional role played by forests, particularly with regard to the sustainable development of biodiversity, by including key forestry research projects in the 7th Framework Programme.

- **Promoting sustainable forest management by means of training and further training programmes:** the support of forest owners in terms of education, capacity building, information activity and advisory services would be a prerequisite for the sustainable use of forests in the context of rural development.

- **Promoting sustainable forest management by means of information and communication strategies:** Parliament welcomed the efforts of European forestry undertakings to give consumers assurances concerning sustainable forest management which takes account of the multifunctional role of forests, notably by means of certified wood products. The FSC and PEFC certification systems were equally suitable for this purpose.