



*Rome, 24th June 2011
Plenary Session*

Present and future role of forest resources in the socio-economic development of rural areas

The role of Forests in the frame of future EU Environmental Policies *European Commission, DG ENV*



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Forest Functions

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3 main RELATIONSHIPS of forests and society

- **Economic function**
 - Provision of forest products and employment in the forest sector
 - Renewable energy
- **Environmental Function**
 - Nature and biodiversity protection
 - Protection of the human environment
 - Renewable energy
- **Social function**
 - Recreation and amenity
 - Cultural aspects of forests

Focus of this presentation : ENVIRONMENT



No full EU Forest Policy but “Forest related” policies at EU Level :

- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)
 - Forest programmes funded under pillar 2 (Axis 2)
- Water Framework Directive (WFD)
 - River basin based Programme of Measures can include forest measures
- Nature protection (Natura 2000)
 - Forests being part of Protection Sites (can affect forest management)
- Policy on Renewable Energy
 - Targets for renewable energies generate biomass demand from forests
- Climate Policy
 - Forests as an essential component of the Carbon cycle
- FLEGT : “due diligence” Timber Regulation of 2010



Climate Change

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Impacts of Climate Change on forests

- Increase in water stress
- Increased risk of storm damage
- Increased fire risk in terms of frequency and scale
- Changes in nutrient balance in soils
- Northward/altitude migration of tree species as well as other organisms
- Increase in insect outbreaks , e.g. of bark beetles
- Forest dieback

These changes may affect ecosystem stability



What is at stake : forest functions

- Ecological forest « services » that are essential to the earth's life supporting systems :
 - Protection of water, soils, biodiversity, landscapes
 - Regulation of weather patterns, esp. in the Med. zone
- Trees and soil as sinks or sources of carbon (trend of interaction with the atmosphere)
- Output of forest durable products that can act as sink during their useful life (wood as a material)
- High expectations for bio-energy supply, especially with current bio-fuels/bio-energy debate



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Green Paper on Forests - 2010

- Based Comm. White Paper on adaptation to Climate Change + EU Forest Action Plan
- Contents :
 - Description of forest functions
 - Impacts on forest functions
 - State of forest use and management
 - State of forest information
 - Questions to the public and EU Institutions to launch discussion on forest protection and information

Purpose : asking questions on forest policy



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- *01 March 2010 : adoption of Green Paper*
- *March- July 2010 PUBLIC CONSULTATION*
- *Valsaín Conference on Forest protection*
- *Council conclusions on forest protection and information*
- *Opinion of the EESC: September 2010*
- *Opinion of Committee of Regions*
- *Own initiative report of the European Parliament, expected May 2011*
- *Follow up by the Commission 2011-2012*



The questions

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1. Adequate forest functions balance in the EU ?

2. Readiness of the sector to face the climate challenges.

(Is EU action needed?)

3. Are existing EU/MS policies enough? If not what should be done?

4. Does SFM need to be updated? How?

5. Is the existing information enough? Is EU legislation needed?



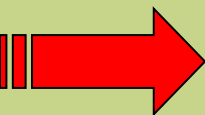
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The Council

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Council Conclusions June 2010

- **“Conservative” position :**
 - Forests & Forestry = subsidiarity
 - Generally sceptical about increased EU profile in forest sector
 - More inclined towards global / pan-European approach
 - Better co-ordination between MS policies
- **Positive openings RECOGNIZING TRANSNATIONAL APPROACH FOR**
 - Addressing forest fires
 - Sharing information
 - Continuation of environmental forest monitoring
 - Valuation of forest goods and services
- **Reserve on ways to proceed**
 - Information collection by MS
 - Evaluate existing infrastructure
 - Build on existing systems ; integrate support systems



Cautious approval

Public consultation replies – July 2011

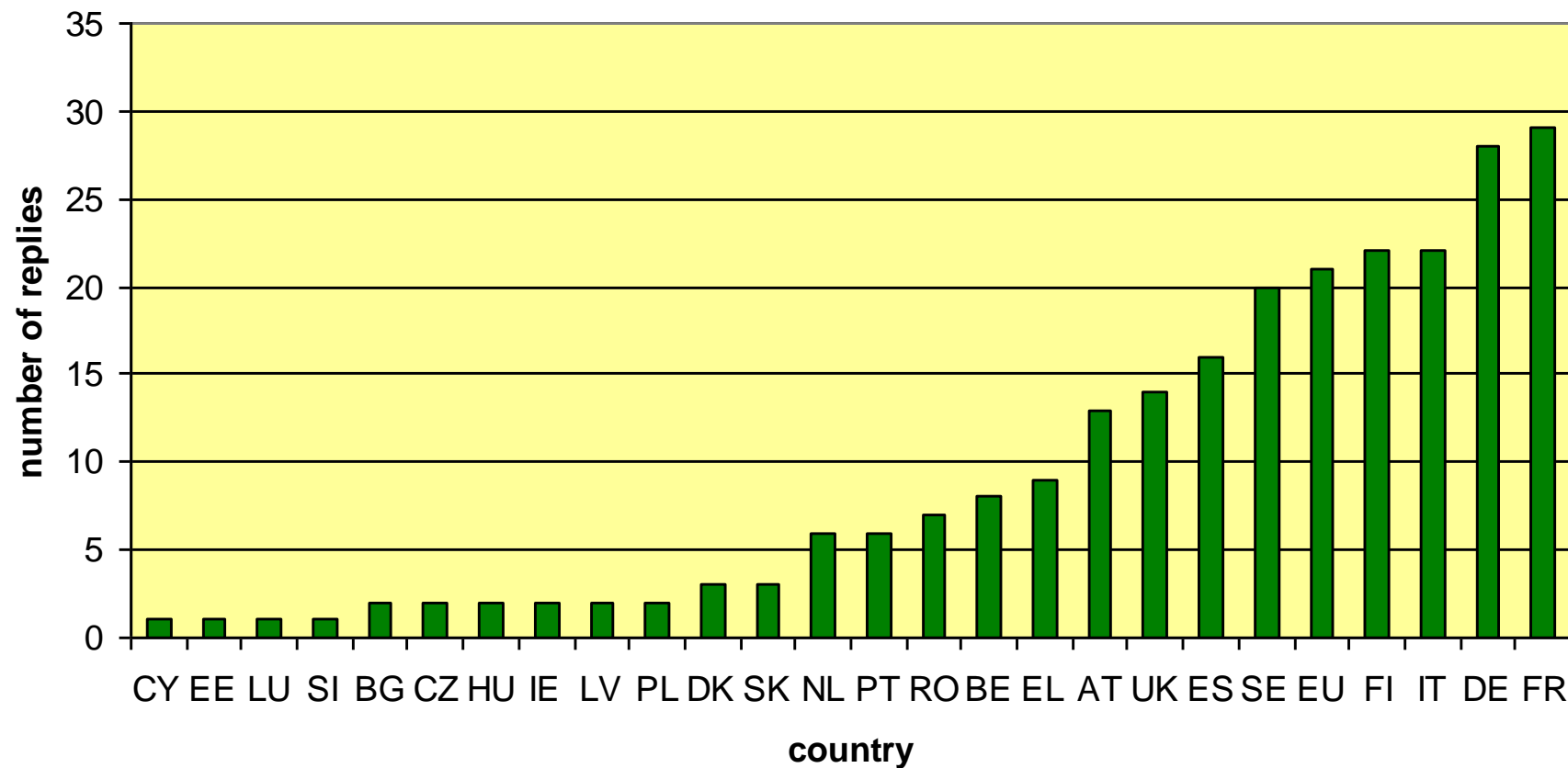
| | number of replies |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| business and industry | 48 |
| governments and public bodies | 56 |
| parliaments | 7 |
| NGOs | 40 |
| individuals and forest owners | 90 |
| researchers and academia | 21 |
| TOTAL | 262 |

262 replies received



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number of replies by country





Policies

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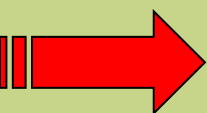
Which EU policies come in view ?

- No EU Forest Policy as such (> subsidiarity)
- Rural Development Policy
- Most obvious are environmental policies
 - Nature Protection
 - Water Protection
 - Reducing GHG emissions / Energy policy
 - LULUCF accounting
 - Procurement Policy / Ecolabel
 - Forest Information System
- Energy Policy > renewables / bio-energy



Arsenis report – May 2011

- Review EU policies and support systems related to forests
- Make SFM and NFPs mandatory (+guidelines)
- Enhance civil protection & forest fire actions
- Legislation on Forest fires/information/building
- Obligatory RD support for forestry
- LULUCF accounting and biomass sust. Crit.



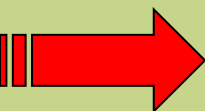
Very wide discussion / ambitious action list



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- What do people agree on?
 - Need for harmonized forest information, need for wider coverage of forest information systems
 - Need for forest gene pool conservation
 - Continue and enhance support for research on climate change and its effects
 - Continue EU support for forest sector through RD measures



Important points of convergence



Differences

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- Most obvious antagonisms in forest policy discussion generated by Green Paper :
 - EU forest policy vs. Subsidiarity (N / S)
 - Protection by use / by conservation
 - Financing yes / legislation no
 - Level for action on forests (local/ nat/ EU / UN)



What next ?

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- Green Paper = 1st step : asking What ? Why ? How ?
- Further steps in the POLICY PROCESS could be , eventually :
 - Studies (ongoing in different DGs)
 - Discussions of results of SFC working groups by Commission (2011-2012)
 - Assessing possible options for measures (2011-2012)
 - White paper on forest protection and information ?
 - Initiative on forest protection and information ?

The need for a more comprehensive policy review is increasingly recognized.



Forestry Strategy

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Reconsidering the basics...of 1998

- SFC working group on FS review started with workshop in April 2011
- Most major EU forest countries have sent policy specialists to Brussels
- Consideration of new policy objectives by the forest sector (e.g. EU 2020)
- Possible elements of new EU Forestry Strategy or equivalent instrument



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Thank you for your attention!

More information on:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/fprotection.htm>