

Wood creates independence and sustainability in Europe

With the effects of the COVID pandemic and the war in Ukraine, Realpolitik and a focus on what is feasible are more important than ever. Previous approaches in terms of a sustainable energy supply and for combating climate change were hardly feasible even under the best of circumstances.

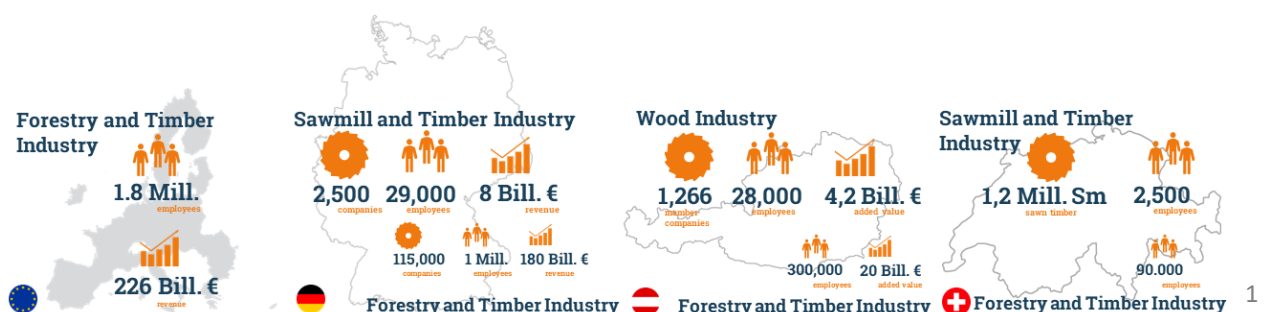
Europe's forests have huge renewable reserves. CO₂ emissions can be prevented by using the wood that grows in our forests. Forests must be systematically managed to remain "climate-fit" with new species of trees and to combat pests. Sustainable forest management ensures that no more wood is harvested than will grow back and this creates the basis for increased wood use and growing European forests. In terms of multiple and reuse of wood with optimal added value, a contribution to energy supply from biomass can also be made in addition to material use in long-lived wood products. Both variants of wood use contribute to climate protection and energy sovereignty.

The timber industry shows that its tradition makes it one of the most robust economic factors we have in Europe. The use of wood must now be strengthened. The expansion of wood construction in the building sector and a broad use of the material offers alternatives to fossil raw materials as well as CO₂-intensive materials and products. Moreover, every tree harvested is 100 percent utilised and processed into valuable products. Wood is reusable and, as a secondary raw material, an important building block for a sustainable and environmentally friendly circular economy.

Renewable energies for space heating and mobility currently provide only a small part of the necessary supply, despite extensive subsidies. There is a huge lack of infrastructure, legal framework conditions and an overall concept. We need to transform and improve the competitiveness of our industry if we are going to make entire sectors and their jobs fit for the future and create new prosperity.

European Union policy needs to reflect again on the value of an independent economy and production in Europe and take responsibility for jobs. This would make the EU a role model in terms of motivating sustainability worldwide and setting standards for climate protection and efficiency. Not being allowed to use its own renewable resources is the wrong way to go in the current situation.

We demand a clear commitment from the European Union and the governments of all European countries to sustainable forest management and greater use of wood. This requires adjusting the European Green Deal to the new realities in Europe.



EU Biodiversity Strategy and EU Forestry Strategy

Europe must continue to be able to supply itself with wood and so, we reject closing off extensive forest areas in the European Union to timber harvesting. The goal of placing at least 10 per cent of the land area under strict protection must be completely reassessed, as the implementation of this target will result in approximately 40 per cent less wood being available in the EU. Important European policy goals such as decarbonising housing construction, bolstering the bioeconomy and accelerating the energy transition cannot be achieved in this way. In addition, this would also lead to increased reliance on Russia for wood products. The wood value chain now needs to be strengthened in Europe.

Renewable Energy Directive (RED II + RED III)

Wood is an essential component when it comes to a successful energy transition. If wood is to be used with the best value-added effect, it makes sense to use it for energy purposes, especially after multiple material uses, as this can offer a further climate bonus. If the planned tightening of the directive goes ahead, this will make wood no longer competitive. All cost-driving factors that go beyond the RED II Directive and hinder sustainable timber harvesting must be removed from the draft RED III Directive.

Land Use, Land-Use Change and Forestry-Ordinance (LULUCF)

The EU Commission's approach to date runs counter to the greatest possible climate protection effect, namely the use of wood and the substitution of fossil raw materials and energy-intensive materials with the renewable raw material. Instead, the Commission plans to increase carbon storage in forests. However, the growth of trees is finite. They die and rot, and the carbon they bind escapes into the atmosphere as CO₂. Managed and rejuvenated forests can absorb CO₂ again from the atmosphere and do so more extensively than over-mature stocks of trees. Rejuvenated forests are also more adaptable to climate change and more resistant to the consequences of climate change.

"Climate-fit" forests whose timber growth is used are ideal for value creation and climate protection. Increased use of wood from Europe's sustainably managed forests boosts Europe's contribution to combating climate change and secures the independent value chain of the timber industry in Europe. The associations of the timber industries in Germany, Austria and Switzerland appeal to the institutions of the European Union and the European states to streamline the framework conditions for the use of wood now.

