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13. Emphasises that Parliament will be asked to give its consent to the potential EU-Japan FTA;
14. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and to the Government and Parliament of Japan.

Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change

P7_TA(2011)0226

European Parliament resolution of 11 May 2011 on the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change (2010/2106(INI))

(2012/C 377 E/05)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change (COM(2010)0066),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 11 June 2010 on preparing forests for climate change,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 March 2010 on biodiversity post-2010,
- having regard to the Commission White Paper on 'adapting to climate change: towards a European Framework for action' (COM(2009)0147) and to its resolution of 6 May 2010 ⁽¹⁾ thereon,
- having regard to the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) - FOREST EUROPE, its various resolutions and its expert work in providing guidelines, criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM),
- having regard to the Council resolution of 26 February 1999 on a Forestry Strategy for the EU ⁽²⁾ and the Commission report on its implementation (COM(2005)0084),
- having regard to the EU Forest Action Plan 2006-2011 (FAP) (COM(2006)0302) and the mid-term external evaluation of its implementation ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds ⁽⁴⁾, the Composite Report on the Conservation Status of Habitats and Species as required under Article 17 of the Habitats Directive (COM(2009)0358) and its resolutions of 21 September 2010 on the implementation of EU legislation aiming at the conservation of biodiversity ⁽⁵⁾ and of 3 February 2009 on wilderness in Europe ⁽⁶⁾,
- having regard to the conclusions of the UNEP COP10 Conference on Biological Diversity in Nagoya in October 2010 and the Aichi biodiversity targets, particularly the commitment to protect 17 % of terrestrial and inland water areas through effective conservation measures, integrated into the wider landscapes,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 81 E, 15.3.2011, p. 115.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 56, 26.2.1999, p. 1.

⁽³⁾ Service Contract No. 30-CE-0227729/00-59.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 20, 26.1.2010, p. 7.

⁽⁵⁾ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2010)0325.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 67 E, 18.3.2010, p. 1.

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- having regard to the study entitled ‘Shaping forest communication in the European Union: public perceptions of forests and forestry’ ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Kyoto Protocol and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on ‘Good Practice Guidance for Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)’,
- having regard to the EU biomass action plan (COM (2005)0628),
- having regard to Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC (Renewable Energy Directive) ⁽²⁾, Directive 2009/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 amending Directive 2003/87/EC so as to improve and extend the greenhouse gas emission allowance trading scheme of the Community (the ETS Directive) ⁽³⁾, Decision No 406/2009/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2009 on the effort of Member States to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions to meet the Community’s greenhouse gas emission reduction commitments up to 2020 (the Effort Sharing Decision) ⁽⁴⁾, the Commission report on sustainability requirements for the use of solid and gaseous biomass source in electricity, heating and cooling (COM (2010)0011), the IPCC 4th Assessment Report, Chapter 9: Forestry, and the results of public consultation on the preparation of a report for a sustainability scheme for energy uses of biomass,
- having regard to the European Climate Change Programme and the work carried out by the expert group on climate policy for LULUCF ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to its studies No 449.292, assessing the Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU, No 440.329 on forestry and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme, and No 449.237, on the European strategy for the prevention of and fight against forest fires, as well as the conclusions of the meeting of 13 July 2010 in Brussels of the Forestry Subgroup of the ‘Climate change, Biodiversity and Sustainable Development’ Intergroup,
- having regard to the European Landscape Convention of 2000 (the Florence Convention),
- having regard to Council Directive 1999/105/EC on the marketing of forest reproductive material ⁽⁶⁾ and the review of the EU Plant Health Regime,
- having regard to the synthesis report by TEEB (The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity) on ‘Mainstreaming the Economics of Nature’ and the TEEB Climate Issues Update,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 26 April 2010 on prevention of forest fires within the European Union,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 8 and 9 November 2010 on innovative solutions for financing disaster prevention,
- having regard to Directive 2008/99/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on the protection of the environment through criminal law ⁽⁷⁾,

⁽¹⁾ Tender No AGRI-2008-EVAL-10 // Framework Contract No. 30-CE-0101908/00-50.

⁽²⁾ OJ L 140 5.6.2009, p. 16.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 63.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 136.

⁽⁵⁾ Report of 16/9/2010.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ L 11, 15.1.2000, p. 17.

⁽⁷⁾ OJ L 328, 6.12.2008, p. 28.

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- having regard to the report on the final implementation of the Forest Focus Regulation (COM(2010)0430),
 - having regard to the European Environment Agency (EEA) Technical Report No 9/2006, 'European forest types: Categories and types for sustainable forest management reporting and policy',
 - having regard to the report to the Commission DG for Agriculture and Rural Development entitled 'Impacts of Climate Change on European Forests and Options for Adaptation' ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the 2009 report to the Commission DG for Environment entitled 'EU policy options for the protection of European forests against harmful impacts' ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to the European Court of Auditors Special Report No 9/2004 on 'Forestry Measures within Rural Development Policy' (together with the Commission's replies),
 - having regard to Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to the recommendations of the FAO/UNECE/ILO Experts Network on implementing sustainable forest management,
 - having regard to MCPFE Helsinki Resolution H1 defining SFM as 'the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems',
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report by its Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinions of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (A7-0113/2011),
- A. whereas forests and wooded land cover more than 42 % of the EU's surface, and forest-based industries, with a turnover of more than EUR 300 billion, provide more than 2 million, mostly rural, jobs, contributing to economic growth, jobs and prosperity through the provision of timber and opportunities for tourism,
- B. whereas EU forests make up totalities of biospheres comprising not merely trees, providing invaluable ecosystem services including carbon storage, watercourse regulation, landscape preservation, maintenance of soil fertility, protection of soil from erosion and desertification, and protection from natural disasters, all of which are of great significance to agriculture, rural development and the quality of life of European citizens,
- C. whereas around 40 % of the EU's forests are under public ownership and around 60 % of the EU's forests are owned by more than 10 million private forest owners, so that both private and public stakeholders have a responsibility for forest protection and the sustainable use of forests through the implementation of SFM on the ground,

⁽¹⁾ AGRI-2007-G4-06.

⁽²⁾ ENV.B.1/ETU/2008/0049.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 295, 12.11.2010, p. 23.

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- D. whereas, despite alarming deforestation rates in various parts of the world, the long-term trend of increasing forest coverage in the EU is stable, and carbon in woody biomass is estimated to be expanding; whereas, despite the generally positive trend, carbon storage in forests across Europe remains far below natural capacity and could reverse to a source, as pressure to increase harvesting levels is increasing and approximately 500 000 hectares of EU forest are lost every year as a result of forest fires and illegal logging,
- E. whereas 30 % of NATURA 2000 sites are forest and other wooded-land habitats, playing an important role as links in the network of biotopes; and whereas 66 % of forest 'habitat types of Community interest' have unfavourable conservation status,
- F. whereas mountain forests account for one third of the total forest area in the EU and are essential to the natural landscape as they help in soil protection and regulating water supply; whereas these forests play a fundamental role in local economic activity,
- G. whereas protection of the last remaining wilderness areas can contribute to the halting of biodiversity loss and of the degradation of ecosystem services in the EU by 2020,
- H. whereas energy generation from solid biomass and biowaste is projected to be 58 % of EU renewables by 2020 and, while forestry biomass share is expected to decrease in relative terms, there is a steadily increasing demand for timber as a source of energy; whereas vigilance is therefore necessary to prevent illegal logging and the intensification of forestry practices that could increase the ratio of felling to increment to over 100 % in some Member States, counteracting climate-change and biodiversity objectives; whereas energy from biomass should be less dependent on forest biomass,
- I. whereas forest protection and protection of forests' functions should be mainstreamed in all EU policies affecting forests,
- J. whereas forests constitute live and evolutionary ecosystems, often cutting across state borders, which may be classified in different ways such as by bioclimatic zones or forest types, and whereas, in order to guide EU policy decisions, the EEA has developed a specific forest nomenclature; whereas the latest scientific achievements from all fields, such as the 'continental divide', should be taken into account in EU policies affecting forests, and those policies should avoid the risk of being too broad to be useful,
- K. whereas different forest types and the forestry sector face different and unpredictable biotic and abiotic threats from climate change, such as pests, storms, drought and fire, rendering forest resilience the cornerstone of protection efforts,
- L. whereas solid and comparable information on the state of EU forests and the consequences of climate change and production patterns in forests is an important precondition for policy and planning, including on forests' contribution to climate-change mitigation and adaptation,
- M. whereas wildfires and arson, often carried out for ulterior motives, destroy more than 400 000 hectares of forest per year, especially but not exclusively in the Mediterranean region, at great cost to human life, property, employment, biodiversity and the protective functions of forests; whereas regeneration after fire is especially difficult for all forests, and in the case of the NATURA 2000 network, hinders attainment of the network's objectives,

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- N. whereas the above-mentioned White Paper on adapting to climate change includes forests as one of the key areas of action, stressing that the EU forestry strategy should be updated to include aspects linked to climate change,
- O. whereas only 5 % of the European forest area is old-growth, primary and undisturbed by human activity; whereas the small share of this type of forest, in combination with increased fragmentation of the remaining stands of all forest types, increases the susceptibility of forests to climate threats, and partially explains the continuing poor conservation status of many forest species of European concern,
- P. whereas enhancement of forests' protective functions should form part of the EU and Member States' strategies for civil protection, especially in the face of climate-related extreme phenomena such as fires and floods,
- Q. whereas the TEEB report has presented a compelling cost-benefit case for public investment in ecosystem-based approaches to climate-change adaptation and mitigation, particularly with regard to green infrastructure, such as restoring and conserving forests,
- R. whereas diverse national, regional and local forest management systems must be respected as well as assisted, in order to enhance their adaptive capacity,
- S. whereas the capacity of European forests to act as effective sinks for CO₂, NH₃ and NO_x is still underexploited, and wood originating from sustainably managed forests may have sustained mitigation benefits, serving as a recyclable, carbon-rich substitute for energy intensive materials such as metal alloys, plastics and concrete that are widely used in construction and other industries,
- T. whereas, according to data gathered by the Commission, summer warm-up in Southern Europe will be twice as fast as in the rest of Europe and summer precipitation in the South will decrease by 5 % per decade,
- U. whereas the EU FAP has four goals: improving long-term competitiveness, protecting the environment, contributing to quality of life and fostering coordination, and whereas significant progress has been made mainly in achieving the first goal,
- V. whereas the Forest Europe process has achieved a voluntary European consensus on Sustainable Forest Management; whereas the existing context for SFM lacks full recognition and consistent implementation;
- W. whereas, as part of the Forest Europe process, comprehensive preparations have been made for negotiations on a legally binding instrument, and whereas decisions on such an instrument can be expected at the next conference in Oslo in June 2011,
- X. whereas the Forest Fire Prevention ⁽¹⁾ and Forest Focus Regulations ⁽²⁾ have expired, resulting in ad hoc reporting and inadequate funding,
- Y. whereas genetic selection should seek, and be geared to improving, the adaptability of the forest ecosystem,
- Z. whereas more information is needed about the influence of forests on weather patterns at European level,

⁽¹⁾ Council Regulation (EEC) No 2158/92 of 23 July 1992 on protection of the Community's forests against fire, (OJ L 217, 31.7.1992, p. 3).

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EC) No 2152/2003 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 November 2003 concerning monitoring of forests and environmental interactions in the Community (Forest Focus), (OJ L 324, 11.12.2003, p. 1).

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AA. whereas the above-mentioned 2009 report to the Commission on 'EU policy options for the protection of European forests against harmful impacts' identified and studied four policy options, covering continuation of the current approach, the open method of coordination, increased monitoring and the introduction of a forest framework directive,

1. Welcomes the Commission Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU: preparing forests for climate change; considers that the EU strategy on forests should be strengthened with a view to improving sustainable management and conservation, in accordance with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles;

2. Emphasises, however, that pursuant to Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union, the EU may act in areas where, demonstrably, the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States;

3. Welcomes the Commission's view that forests should be seen as a major contributor to solving the climate crisis; emphasises that sustainable forest management is of pivotal importance in the EU achieving its climate goals and delivering necessary ecosystem services such as biodiversity, protection against natural disasters, and capturing of CO₂ from the atmosphere;

4. Recalls that forests make up biospheres comprising much more than trees, and that their resilience thus depends on the biological diversity not only of trees but of all forest organisms, particularly wild animals living in the forest, and that forests are essential for the adaptation of European societies to climate change;

5. Recalls that forests are the main repository of carbon and have a vital role to play in the fight against climate change; stresses that it is therefore vital for the EU to reinforce its strategy for combating the factors causing deterioration of forests, such as fires and atmospheric pollution;

6. Is convinced that ecological sustainability is the prerequisite for continuation of the economic and social functions of EU forests;

7. Underlines the role that forest biodiversity plays in adapting to climate change and the need to improve knowledge about forest biodiversity indicators – including in particular forest genetic capacity – in the interests of better adaptation;

8. Congratulates the Commission on the exhaustive analysis of biotic and abiotic threats in its Green Paper, and draws attention to the need to examine, in addition, other factors directly linked to the impact of climate change on forests, such as defoliation, recalling that the defoliated treetop surface in southern European forests has doubled in the last 20 years, resulting, in terms of direct consequences, in reduced capacity and efficiency in the carbon-fixing processes and in the reduction of forests' tempering effect in periods of drought or heatwaves, due to trees' premature loss of leaves;

9. Recognises the important contributions made to sustainable forestry by existing global certification schemes, such as the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC);

The EU Forestry Strategy and Forest Action Plan

10. Stresses that the above-mentioned EU Forestry Strategy and Forest Action Plan should be updated to include the climate-change dimension and wider forest protection issues; recalls that a comprehensive forest policy debate with the Member States and all stakeholders affected by the implementation of the proposed measures must precede any such review;

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11. Welcomes the success of EU efforts to achieve global competitiveness for European forest-based industries;
12. Calls on the Commission and Member States to intensify efforts to achieve the environment and quality-of-life goals of the FAP, the implementation of which is currently lagging behind;
13. Calls on the Commission to conduct an analysis of EU policies impacting on EU forests in order to examine whether they are coherent and guarantee forest protection;
14. Calls on the Commission to conduct an analysis of the funding currently available for forests and forestry and to reallocate existing funds which impact negatively on forest biodiversity, in line with the above-mentioned Council conclusions of March 2010;
15. Calls on the Commission and Member States to step up implementation of the actions set out in the Commission Communication of 27 February 2008 on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU (COM(2008)0113), taking into consideration that excessive regulation may make timber products less competitive compared to non-renewable and energy intensive materials;
16. Stresses that measures for forest protection should reflect the cross-border nature of biotic and abiotic threats, according to their type, bioclimatic zone and regional conditions; stresses, further, that action to support, coordinate and supplement policy initiatives by the Member States and regions should be taken where the EU possesses added value, and in accordance with the forest nomenclature developed by the EEA;
17. Stresses that forest protection depends on long-term commitment on the part of Member States, the regions, forest-based industries and both public and private forest owners;
18. Considers that the northern Boreal forests (taiga) and the Mediterranean forests are of immense value in terms of European biodiversity and as sinks of atmospheric carbon, and should benefit from enhanced protection;
19. Considers that long-term forest planning should be flexible, adaptive and participative, taking into account all conceivable scenarios, allowing for consideration of multiple options for future development, and providing a realistic and reliable basis for management decision support; considers, further, that at EU level this should take the form of a permanent 'Forest Forum' to ensure long-term forest protection;

Sustainable forest management

20. Welcomes the success of Forest Europe in enhancing SFM and achieving European consensus on SFM guidelines, criteria and indicators; notes however that the existing context of SFM, lacks consistent implementation;
21. Recalls that the aim of SFM is to reconcile production and protection aspects of forests, ensuring the continuity of their economic, social and environmental functions, in accordance with national, regional and local priorities; notes with concern that the growing trend to consider forests only from an economic perspective, forgetting their environmental and social aspects, is incompatible with the principles of SFM;
22. Calls for the Commission to make proposals to complement the above-mentioned Timber Regulation (EU) 995/2010 to ensure that all timber or timber products placed on the European market are sourced from sustainably managed forests;

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23. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to continue their efforts to stamp out illegal logging and the trade in timber thus produced, as by so doing they will help to combat deforestation, forest degradation and biodiversity loss;
24. Calls for a strengthening of the link between national forest programmes (NFPs) and the FAP through structured reporting to the Standing Forestry Committee;
25. Considers that SFM is essential to the continuing ability of EU forests to carry out economic, ecological and social functions; calls on the Commission and Member States to demonstrate their support for the Forest Europe process by making SFM implementation mandatory within the EU; considers, further, that such a commitment would help assimilate sustainability principles into forestry and serve as the best possible support for the Forest Europe process and the legally binding agreements being considered by Forest Europe and the United Nations Forum on Forests;
26. Advocates full implementation of active SFM in the context of long-term NFPs incorporating national and regional priorities, measurable targets and evaluation criteria and taking account of the increased threats to forests from climate change;
27. Stresses that rural development plans and operational programmes should not be considered as equivalent to NFPs; calls on the Commission and Member States to ensure that NFPs take into account the conclusions and recommendations of the studies on the impact of climate change on water resources, ecosystems and biodiversity, and that rural development strategies and programmes are consistent with forest programmes, biodiversity strategies and renewable energy action plans;
28. Notes that genetic diversity, natural regeneration and diversity in structure and species mixture among all organisms living in the forest are common elements in forest adaptation options, cutting across all bioclimatic zones, sustainable management systems and forest types; notes further that SFM guarantees economic viability for commercial forests but does not impose it in the case of those forests with primary functions other than the production of timber;
29. Considers that long-term forest protection depends upon establishing or sustaining forest ecosystems with highly diverse tree composition, age and structure;
30. Calls on the Commission to put forward recommendations on ways of adapting national civil protection systems to cope with the impact of climate change on forests; particularly urges the Commission to take action to expand the European Forest Fire Tactical Reserve in terms of resources and capacity;
31. Warns against unrestricted commercial exploitation of forest resources, which, particularly in the case of natural forests, very often leads to their irreversible destruction;
32. Considers that, given their importance in CO₂ sequestration, agro-forestry trees should be considered in the same way as non-productive traditional woodlands in relation to the fight against climate change;

General proposals

33. Calls on the Commission to proceed with the drafting of a White Paper on Forest Protection in the EU, taking into account the results of the public consultation on the Green Paper, the widely perceived need to be prepared for climate change, the policy options study and the adaptation options study; considers that the White Paper, in addition to confirming the contribution of forests to the economy through wood and non-wood forest products and services, should focus on maintaining and increasing European forests, as they help European societies to mitigate climate change and adapt to its effects; considers further that a higher level of protection must be ensured for high-quality habitats and protective forests with functions in

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countering flooding, landslides, fires, desertification, loss of biodiversity and extreme weather catastrophes; considers adequate financial resources, knowledge exchange and the promotion of research and information to be indispensable aspects of the Commission's proposals;

34. Reaffirms its view on the need for increased levels of funding for EU forest protection measures, through the rural development pillar of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP); points out that the new challenges entailed in climate change make it plain that forest protection requires greater funding and that new forms of assistance may be required;

35. Urges the Commission carefully to study, and to report to Parliament and the Council on, options for payment for ecosystem services that acknowledge their economic value and reward forest biodiversity conservation and the restoration of forest ecosystems; points out that it is important that business recognises the credibility, publicity and other financial benefits that flow from its involvement in biodiversity conservation and forest protection;

36. Urges the Commission to present a legislative proposal for forest fire prevention, incorporating funding for prevention plans and risk assessment, the European Forest Fires Information System (EFFIS), fire detection, infrastructure, training and education, and forest recovery after fires, including consideration of a 30-year ban on building on land where there has been a forest fire;

37. Urges the Commission to submit a legislative proposal prohibiting building on land cleared by fires proven to have resulted from arson;

38. Calls for the removal of legal obstacles to sustainable management;

39. Points to the need to lay down the financial framework required to boost forest firefighting, and also calls for greater flexibility to be brought to mobilisation of the Solidarity Fund;

40. Urges the Commission to present a legislative proposal on forest information, taking into account climate threats and the need for collection and dissemination of relevant, harmonised and comparable data on forest cover, biodiversity, biotic and abiotic threats and land use in the context of the UNFCCC, CBD and environmental accounts; calls further on the Commission to compile and monitor indicators relating to the protective functions of forests such as soil retention and water capacity;

41. Calls on the Commission to support research into the influence of forests on regional weather patterns in the EU, so as to inform forest management strategies with regard to changes in the size, composition and location of forests and the impact of such changes;

42. Asks the Commission and Member States to develop and disseminate best-practice guidelines based on the principles of sustainable management to fit the needs of private and state owners as well as local communities, in order to ensure resilience to climate change; notes further the importance of exchanging best practice on how companies and sectors of industry can contribute to biodiversity targets and enhance life-cycle thinking, and how they can build the link between biodiversity conservation and revenue generation; highlights the need to reinforce communication and information policy in order to ensure the sustainable management of forests, to inform the public and to encourage the use of sustainable wood;

43. Stresses the need to enhance coordination and information efforts with regard to forest protection; takes the view that greater efforts are needed to ensure that internal EU measures are consistent with external policy statements concerning forests (cooperation, development, exotic wood trade, etc.);

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44. Considers that forests are part of mankind's collective cultural and environmental heritage and that remarkable trees should be protected whether they are located within or outside forests; in this regard, calls on the Commission and Member States to devise appropriate strategies for their protection, including the consideration of 'Forest Heritage Observatories'; further, encourages Member States, in the context of their national policies, to promote equal and public access to forests and nature areas, recognising that the right of public access to forests and nature areas (*allemansrätten*) as practised in certain Member States brings many benefits in terms of democratic access for recreation, appreciation of ecosystems and respect for natural heritage;

45. In order to achieve the objectives of the EU 2020 strategy with regard to national forest action plans, requests that each Member State or region develop a forest strategy which includes reforestation of river banks, the capture of rainwater, agricultural activities and research results for selection of the traditional plant and tree varieties and species best adapted to drought;

Research on forests

46. Emphasises that, although Europe possesses undeniable know-how about forestry, which stems from long-standing traditional forestry practices, financial resources for research into the impact of climate change on forests need to be increased; is of the opinion that, in view of the scientific uncertainty surrounding the timescale and extent of the threats to forests in different areas, it is necessary to earmark funding for climate research according to specific needs and solutions applicable to different bioclimatic zones, so as to improve the relevant knowledge base;

47. Asks the Member States to set up joint long-term research programmes to improve understanding of impacts and vulnerability and to support adaptation measures in the forest sector; calls on the Commission to promote the inclusion in the multiannual framework for research and technological development of projects relating to the knowledge of forest ecosystems and their capacity for adapting to the consequences of climate change;

48. Calls on the Commission to draw up an action plan to protect EU forests in order to forestall the adverse impact of proliferation of insects and diseases caused by climate change;

49. Calls on the Member States to drive forward research into climate change and its consequences for forests; to foster broader awareness of the diverse significance of forests and the importance of managing them sustainably; to support initial and in-service training for forestry employees, focusing on areas of expertise expected to be required as a result of climate change (the promotion of diversity, damage prevention and recovery); and to encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience;

50. Considers that, given the need for effective research into the 'defence potential' of forest ecosystems, for prognostic research and for research into strategies for mitigating the effects of climate change for the entire forestry and timber sector, coordination and funding at EU level is required;

CAP Pillar 2

51. Points out that discussions on the future of the CAP after 2013 should take account of the fact that forests provide essential environmental functions and contribute to achievement of the social and economic objectives of rural development and national economies; calls therefore on Member States and regions to cooperate fully with forest authorities and the wider public in the preparation of rural development programmes to ensure consistency between EU policies, taking into account that forestry may, in some cases, be an independent sector of the rural economy;

52. Recalls that forests play a key role in the provision of socio-economic and environmental public goods for the well-being of society and for development, particularly in rural areas; calls on the Commission to devise a policy approach which recognises this role, while respecting owners' property rights;

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53. Welcomes the fact that the latest Commission Communication on CAP reform ⁽¹⁾ recognises the important roles that farmers play as indispensable actors in forest fire prevention, as stewards of forest ecosystems who protect them from threats to biodiversity – such as pests – and, above all, as territorial mainstays, since the continuation of their livelihood is the most effective way of averting depopulation;

54. Maintains that rural producers, producer groups and public bodies should be made eligible for forestry measures in the second pillar of the CAP; considers that the EU should continue to provide aid for forestation under the national rural development programmes, while making sure that these initiatives do not interfere with the market and that forestation measures rely on local, pest-resistant and fire-resistant material and contribute to biodiversity conservation; stresses further that forestation efforts must prioritise tree species which considerably improve the quality of soil and biodiversity, while respecting the characteristics of the location of planting, native species and the need for mixed forests;

55. Draws attention, as the Council did in its conclusions of 11 June 2010, to the fact that serious problems can arise from forest abandonment insofar as it may no longer be possible to ensure that forests continue to perform their functions;

56. Considers it necessary to encourage and support the setting up of associations of producers and forest management bodies practising SFM, particularly in areas characterised by small forests, as this will help to balance the supply of the many goods and services that forests can provide; considers that such associations and bodies would strengthen producers' bargaining power in the timber supply chain, helping to provide and create a level playing field while contributing simultaneously to tackling the problems of the economic crisis, international competition and climate change and combating illegal logging;

57. Maintains that assistance to public and private actors protecting forest biodiversity of species, habitats and ecosystem services must increase and include voluntary protection methods and areas connecting NATURA 2000 sites, as biodiversity is vital to the maintenance, development and adaptation of agriculture;

58. Calls for the invoice-based system of remuneration to be replaced by a system of standard or area-based costs;

59. Calls for the development of a standard for good forestry practices to be used as a baseline for support under all forest measures;

60. Calls for the mandatory inclusion of forest environment and Natura 2000 measures in rural development programmes, and for area-based support for the Natura 2000 network under direct payments;

61. Calls for the inclusion of a new CAP measure for 'in-situ and ex-situ conservation of source-identified forest genetic material';

62. Strongly rejects the application of intellectual property rights over forest genetic resources;

63. Urges the Commission and Member States to guarantee the long-term horizons of forestry and forest protection projects in all EU financing;

Civil protection and fire prevention

64. Is convinced that preventing forest fires is much more cost-effective than combating them;

⁽¹⁾ Commission Communication of 18 November 2010 entitled "The CAP towards 2020: Meeting the food, natural resources and territorial challenges of the future." (COM(2010)0672).

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65. Draws attention to the urgent need to implement the recommendations on the prevention of natural or human-made disasters which it recently adopted ⁽¹⁾, especially those concerning support for afforestation/ reforestation schemes giving preference to local species and mixed forests, in the interests of biodiversity and improved resistance to fires, storms and diseases; also draws attention to the added difficulties faced by islands and the outermost regions in tackling fires; calls for such regions to be given special treatment through the various financial instruments available, including the Solidarity Fund;

66. Considers that forest fire prevention through landscape planning and connectivity, infrastructure and training should be firmly anchored in the EU's forest protection, adaptation and civil protection policies;

67. Points out that, in arid areas and regions at risk of desertification, reforestation with productive species will benefit the inhabitants and secure their involvement in the tasks of conservation and firefighting;

68. Stresses the indisputable importance for public safety of forest areas which protect human habitats from the negative impact of natural phenomena;

Emissions reporting and accounting

69. Considers that the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) in its current form is incompatible with LULUCF accounting, primarily as a result of the difference between annual compliance requirements for industrial installations under the ETS and the longer timescales required for carbon stock changes in landholdings to occur and be observed; and therefore no linkage should be made; in this regard, calls on the Commission to reconsider how best to provide funding for carbon savings from LULUCF activities;

70. Acknowledges the challenges associated with any consideration of inclusion of LULUCF in Member States' targets under the Effort Sharing Decision; is concerned in particular that differences in accounting precision and a large degree of natural variation could undermine the compliance regime under that Decision; calls therefore for separate targets for the LULUCF sector;

71. Expresses its commitment to meeting the EU 2020 renewable energy target and the 2 degree Celsius climate-change target; is concerned however that the short time-frames used in the current greenhouse gas (GHG) calculation methodology, and the resulting carbon neutrality assumption for woody biomass, could hinder their achievement; calls on the Commission to consult the IPCC and establish a new GHG calculation methodology, controlling for longer time horizons and for biomass emissions from land use, land use change and forest management assessing carbon flow on a national level, and integrating the different phases in forestry (planting, thinning and harvesting);

72. States that the current 'biofuel' criteria developed by the Commission are not suitable in the case of biomass and calls for the development of new legally binding sustainability criteria for biomass promoted for the use of energy; states that the Commission should consult the work and the findings of Forest Europe so as to develop criteria which factor in possible risks of distortion in the renewable energy market, do not rely on the carbon neutrality assumption, address indirect emissions, and do not undermine the EU 2020 renewable energy and biodiversity targets; notes that detailed implementation of the criteria should be left to the local level, taking into account site-specific conditions;

⁽¹⁾ European Parliament resolution of 21 September 2010 on the Commission communication: A Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters (P7_TA(2010)0326).

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73. Calls for the application of forest definitions based on an ecological forest classification such as the one proposed by the EEA in 2007, so as to be able to differentiate between carbon-rich old forests, intensively managed monocultures and other forest types, including Mediterranean shrub, according to biomes and stages of succession;

74. Stresses the importance of protecting the diversity of forests at all stages of succession within the EU, in order to ensure biodiversity of and within forests, as each stage of succession creates conditions for the following, and without concerted protection at all the various stages succession in the latter stages will be severely endangered;

External dimension

75. Calls on the Commission and Member States to work internationally to establish a new UN definition of forests which clarifies natural forest definitions on a biome basis and distinguishes between native forests and those dominated by tree monocultures and non-native species; notes, in this respect that – the EU being the biggest public aid donor to developing countries (with the forest sector receiving more than EUR 600 million in 2003) – this definition would greatly enhance policy coherence and ‘value for money’; regrets that the Green Paper fails to register progress on the need to coordinate EU actions within and outside the Union and to achieve a global legally binding agreement under the UN Forum on Forests;

76. Notes the importance of global cooperation, at both administrative and research level, on standard setting, best practices and transfers of technology and scientific know-how, especially in the context of the REDD (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) system; also points out that fair sharing of the benefits of the REDD system cannot be achieved without active cooperation and the exchange of best practices; stresses the importance of the GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) programme in the charting, surveillance and recording of forest areas at European and international level and the contribution that the information thus gathered can make to the UN negotiations on climate change;

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77. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.

Annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2009

P7_TA(2011)0227

European Parliament resolution of 11 May 2011 on the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2009, presented to the European Parliament in application of Part II, Section G, paragraph 43 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 (2010/2124(INI))

(2012/C 377 E/06)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the annual report from the Council to the European Parliament on the main aspects and basic choices of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in 2009, presented to the European Parliament pursuant to Part II, Section G, paragraph 43, of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 17 May 2006 ⁽¹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 139, 14.6.2006, p. 1.