



European Federation
of Building
and Woodworkers



Joint statement by the European Social Partners representing the Woodworking Sector in view of the adoption of the revised rules on land use, land use change, and forestry

Brussels, 06 September 2022

The European Confederation of the Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois) and the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) are fully behind the objectives of the European Green Deal, and are committed to its objectives of climate neutrality, circular bioeconomy, resource efficiency, optimising material, economic growth, and employment creation. Creating a green economy is not just about encouraging environmental protection but establishing climate friendly alternatives that substantively contribute to a competitive green economy. The Woodworking Industries offer sustainable and environmentally friendly alternative solutions in the built environment as in everyday life while maintaining employment and contributing to the wealth and development, including in rural areas.

Our industry provides significant green employment opportunities across all European regions, including the urban and the rural, and for all levels of skill and qualifications. Through the skills of the woodworking workforce and through its technological solutions, the EU Woodworking Industries offer the potential to decarbonise key economic sectors, such as construction, in line with the Green Deal objectives. Timber buildings are globally recognised as key allies in climate change mitigation strategies: they represent an immediate way to achieve long-term carbon storage in products and they enable a reduction in the use of energy-intensive materials.

To encourage increased investment in the wood industry, it is essential that Member States make their country an attractive place to do business. This requires a long-term vision for a stable regulatory environment, raw material availability, along with workable policies to fully develop vocational education and skills for the workforce. In view of the Trilogue discussions on the revised rules on land use, land use change, and forestry (LULUCF), CEI-Bois and EFBWW call Member States to:

- **Maintain the EU net removals target at a maximum of 310 Mt CO₂ equivalent by 2030.** This is already an ambitious target, which will require the LULUCF sector to increase the sink by an additional 42 Mt CO₂ equivalent compared to current levels in less than 10 years. To reach this target, Member States may be tempted to decrease their harvesting levels, with possible severe consequences on the economic viability of the entire sector and on forest-based climate solutions which are needed in the long-term. There is also a risk of a wood shortage, which would further negatively impact the situation of the woodworking workforce. Therefore, the unintended consequences of setting an even higher target could be overwhelming. For this reason, the social partners urge the European Commission and Member States to immediately collaborate and assess the socio-economic impacts of the LULUCF objectives on the wood industries, including possible wood shortages. Under no circumstance should the LULUCF Regulation become a tool for regulating Member States' harvest levels, which are better determined by national legislation. Instead, it should be an enabler of climate mitigation

solutions such as the upcoming framework for the certification for carbons removals, which can also play a key role in reaching the 310 Mt CO₂ target.

- **Recognise the contribution of wood products to climate mitigation.** By facilitating and promoting the expansion of carbon storage products (which currently include only paper, wood-based panels, and sawn wood) to new categories with carbon sequestration and storage effects, in particular Harvested Wood Products (including wood fibre insulation), the revised LULUCF Regulation will enable the Woodworking Industries to help transform strategic sectors, such as construction, towards a greener pathway with a reduced environmental footprint. The timber and bio-based product industry has the technology and materials available now to store very large quantities of carbon, e.g., wood fibre-based insulation. Wood products can also contribute to the circular bioeconomy by acting as substitutes for competing energies or materials with higher carbon footprints.
- **Anticipate impacts on employment, jobs, and job-related outcomes.** The increased level of ambition in the land-use and forestry sector will have social, labour, and economic effects. To preserve and enhance social coherence, the European Green Deal needs to be implemented in an economically sustainable and socially positive way to ensure a fair and just transition that leaves no one behind and promotes gender equality. It should create opportunities for new quality employment and provide incentives for relevant training, reskilling, and upskilling. It is therefore important to anticipate impacts of policies on jobs and job-related outcomes with Employment Impact Assessments, as laid down for example through the ILO Reference Guide on Employment Impact Assessment, to ensure a just transition of the land-use and forestry sector to become more sustainable. The involvement of social partners and relevant civil society organisations in both the planning and implementation phases, benefitting forest and land managers, farmers, workers, the environment, and society more widely is also essential. This should be reflected duly in national policies.
- **Accompany LULUCF action with initiatives that support eco-system services of forests while enhancing the economic competitiveness of our sectors.** We support any type of forestation activities that ensure the EU-forests will continue to grow. Sustainable Forest Management is extremely important to maintain and improve the quality of the forest ground. Another important aspect is building a modern forest management that minimizes forest fires and bark beetle propagation. Forest fires are increasing due to climate change while salvage logging is expanding due to bark beetles. Both phenomena are seriously undermining efforts to reduce CO₂ emissions. As a specific action in this field, better surveillance of forest fires/bark beetle and a much better equipped European Task Force is requested. We call on national and EU-policymakers to provide the needed resources for such action.

Background information:

[The European Federation of Building and Woodworkers \(EFBWW\)](#) is the European Trade Union Federation grouping 76 national free trade unions from 34 countries with members in the building, building materials, woodworking, forestry and allied industries and trades.

[The European Confederation of Woodworking Industries \(CEI-Bois\)](#) represents 21 European and National organisations from 15 countries and is the body backing the interests of the whole industrial European wood sector: more than 180,000 companies generating an annual turnover of 152 billion euros and employing 1 million workers in the EU.