



European Federation  
of Building  
and Woodworkers



## JOINT STATEMENT

*Brussels, 08 February 2023*

### **The European Woodworking and Furniture Social Partners welcome the new EU forest strategy passed by the European Parliament on 13 September 2022: A new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 – Sustainable Forest Management in Europe**

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The woodworking and furniture industries are a labour-intensive and dynamic sectors that employ over 2 million people in more than 300 thousand companies, most of them small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and micro firms. They are committed to continuing to create attractive, healthy, and competitive working places and decent jobs, while positioning sustainability at the heart of companies' activities.

The European Confederation of the Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois), the European Federation of Building and Woodworkers (EFBWW) and the European Furniture Industries Confederation (EFIC) welcome the following statements made by the Members of the EU Parliament in the new EU Forest Strategy:

- **In order to achieve the optimal contribution to the circular economy and climate-neutrality, a strong link between the Strategy and the Bioeconomy Action Plan is required. The sector requires a competitive environment and strong incentives to innovate in the fields of bio-based materials that replace fossil-based ones.**
  - The woodworking and furniture industries consider materials beyond their end-of-life. Our industries play an important role in shifting to more enduring, sustainable design & products, for this reason, as highlighted by the EU Parliament we call for a predictable regulatory environment that nourishes entrepreneurial activities.
- **Proposals to promote the establishment of a skills partnership under the Pact for Skills and make use of the European Social Fund Plus to work together to increase the number of upskilling opportunities in forestry, but also in the woodworking and furniture sectors in order to create quality jobs and provide workers with opportunities and adequate working conditions for boosting the wood-based bioeconomy and making it a more attractive career choice.**
- **Highlights the important role that forests play in the creation of green jobs in rural and mountainous areas.**
  - The woodworking and furniture Social Partners support the European Parliament call on the Commission and the Member States to monitor and assess the effects of a shift in the balance of forest functions on the overall employment situation and

profitability of the local timber sector, especially in rural and mountainous areas, as well as in downstream parts of the wood-processing industries. In addition, the European woodworking and furniture Social Partners are pleased to see the importance given by the strategy to improve the attractiveness of employment in the sector especially in the context of the digital and green transitions of forest-based activities by attracting young people and female entrepreneurs to the sector and finding investments opportunities for the sector and throughout the value chain.

- How the wood sectors are specifically shaped, and the surrounding cluster looks like varies from one to another country in the EU. The actual implementation of the Forest Strategy must build on these conditions and should therefore look at local impacts too and not just the national or European level picture. In this sense, we support the EU Parliament in calling on the Commission to provide a comprehensive impact assessment of the strategy to identify the implications for market conditions, rural areas and the various funding needs.
- **Recognises the key role of forests and the entire forest-based value chain in protecting the climate and biodiversity, and in mitigating climate change to contribute to the achievement, by 2050 of a sustainable and climate-neutral economy.**
  - The Strategy correctly emphasised the essential role of forests in carbon sequestration, carbon storage and the sustainable substitution of wood and wood products for fossil fuels, fossil-based products, materials, energy sources and other products with high environmental and carbon footprints. It further accentuates that wood is the most significant natural renewable resource that has the potential to partly replace some very energy-intensive materials, such as cement and plastics, and will be in greater demand in the future.
- **Recognises the role of wood in construction as a key solution to the climate change.**
  - It is to be recalled the building sector today accounts for some 40% of energy consumed and for about 40% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the European woodworking and furniture Social Partners have highlighted on multiple occasions the benefits of wood-based products to decarbonize key sectors of the economy, such as construction and renovation by providing a natural and green construction material that is renewable, recyclable and has a low fossil carbon footprint.
- **Recognises the importance of sustainably managing multifunctional forests.**
  - The EU Forest Strategy for 2030 – Sustainable Forest Management in Europe has the ambition to increase the balanced contribution of multifunctional forests to the targets of the Green Deal. To this end competitive woodworking and furniture industries and sustainably managed forests are heavily interlinked as both are required to maximise the contribution of the sector towards climate neutrality by 2050.
  - In this regard, voluntary existing certification schemes for sustainable forest management exist and certification schemes are an essential tool to comply with the EU Timber Regulation and due diligence requirements of the new Deforestation-free products Regulation.

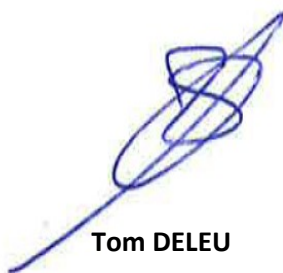
The European Social Partners commit themselves to implement the various aspects of the Forest Strategy by informing their national members; by supporting concrete measures on regional or even company level and by its implementation via national agreements.

We stress the importance of strengthening cooperation as regards implementing the new EU Forest Strategy for 2030 and hope the European Commission will take into account all stakeholders in its development.



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Secretary General of CEI-Bois



**Tom DELEU**

Secretary General of EFBWW



**Gabriella KEMENDI**

Secretary General of EFIC

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*Background information:*

[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.

[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.

[European Furniture Industries Confederation](#) (EFIC) EFIC is the European Furniture Industries Confederation, representing over 70% of the total turnover of the European Furniture Industries, a sector employing 1 million people in about 120.000 enterprises across the EU and generating a turnover of over 100 billion Euros. The EFIC membership is composed of 17 national associations, one individual company member and several clusters.