

**Amendment 1****Gilles Lebreton**

on behalf of the ID Group

**Report****A9-0154/2020****Petri Sarvamaa**The European Forest Strategy - The Way Forward  
(2019/2157(INI))**Motion for a resolution (Rule 181(3) of the Rules of Procedure) replacing non-legislative motion for a resolution A9-0154/2020****European Parliament resolution on the European Forest Strategy - The Way Forward***The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) on the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality,
- having regard to Title I of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) on the competences of the European Union,
- having regard to the Commission report to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 7 December 2018 entitled ‘Progress in the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy – “A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector”’ (COM(2018)0811),
- having regard to its resolution of 28 April 2015 on ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 23 July 2019 entitled ‘Stepping up EU Action to Protect and Restore the World’s Forests’ (COM(2019)0352),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 April 2019 on the progress on the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy and on a new strategic framework for forests (08609/2019),
- having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee opinion of 30 October 2019 on the report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 7 December 2018 entitled ‘Progress in the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy -

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 346, 21.9.2016, p. 17.

“A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest sector”

- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 10 and 11 April 2019 on the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy,
  - having regard to the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy,
  - having regard to the conclusions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 17 and 18 December 2018 on the updated EU Bioeconomy Strategy,
  - having regard to the Commission communication of 28 November 2018 entitled ‘A Clean Planet for All: a European strategic long-term vision for a prosperous, modern, competitive and climate neutral economy’ (COM(2018)0773),
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 16 May 2018 on the mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to the Europe 2020 strategy, including the Innovation Union and Resource-Efficient Europe initiatives,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the opinions of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A9-0154/2020),
- A. whereas Title I of the TFEU makes no reference to a common EU forest policy, and responsibility for forests lies with the Member States; whereas the EU institutions therefore have no competence to adopt any legally binding rules whatsoever for the forest-based sector;
- B. whereas Article 5 of the TEU provides that ‘under the principle of subsidiarity, in areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Union shall act only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States’ and that ‘under the principle of proportionality, the content and form of Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties’;
- C. whereas the Commission’s attempts to influence forest policy – which is the sole competence of the Member States – inter alia on the pretext of promoting biodiversity, possibly in the form of new, area-based protection targets, which could even adversely affect the climate and the environment in Member States that are managing their forests well, are a cause for concern;
- D. whereas forests and the entire forest-based value chain are fundamental to the further development of the circular bioeconomy, as they provide jobs, ensure economic welfare in rural and urban areas, deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation services, offer

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<sup>2</sup> OJ C 361, 5.10.2018, p. 5.

health-related benefits, and protect the biodiversity and prospects of mountainous and rural areas, and whereas in addition, the bioeconomy improves the Union's self-sufficiency;

1. Highlights the fact that a definition of sustainable forest management (SFM) was agreed as part of the pan-European FOREST EUROPE process; notes that the definition has been incorporated into national legislation and voluntary systems, such as forest certifications, in place in the Member States;
2. Stresses that the promotion of SFM in the EU, as part of the EU Forest Strategy and the rural development measures implemented under the common agricultural policy (CAP), has had a positive impact on the biodiversity of forests in the EU and has enhanced the climate benefits offered by the forest-based sector; notes, however, that there is still a need to strengthen SFM in a balanced manner in order to ensure that forests are better able to adapt to changing climate conditions, to reduce the risks and impacts of natural disturbances and to safeguard opportunities for present and future generations to exploit forests, for example in such a way that forest owners' objectives are realised;
3. Believes that the EU should not adopt criteria that overlap with national legislation and voluntary certification systems that are more stringent than the law; considers that diversity criteria that go beyond legislation should be determined by forest owners and the wood-buying industry and should be guided by the market mechanism; takes the view that the market mechanism can deliver faster, more acceptable and further-reaching results than a regulation would; underlines that in all situations, the forest owner has the power of decision over how the forest is used, within the limits set by national law;
4. Notes that over the past decades the EU's forest resources have been increasing in terms of forest cover and volume, and currently forests and other wooded areas cover at least 43 % of the surface of the EU; points out that the sector employs at least 500 000 people directly and 2.6 million indirectly in the EU and that maintenance of this workforce and the sector's long-term competitiveness require constant efforts to attract a skilled and trained workforce to the sector; observes that nearly 25 % of the total area of forest in the EU belongs to the Natura 2000 network;
5. Observes that the area of forest in the Union is growing, inter alia as a result of afforestation, and that managed commercial forests not only bind carbon better than unmanaged forests but also reduce emissions and problems caused by deterioration of the condition of forests; notes that sustainable management of commercial forests has the very best impact on the climate, and that countries which manage their forests well should be rewarded for this;
6. Reiterates that forests and the forest-based sector significantly contribute to the development of local, circular bioeconomies in the EU; stresses that in 2010, the bioeconomy represented a market estimated to be worth over EUR 2 trillion, providing 20 million jobs and accounting for 9 % of total employment in the EU; notes that every euro invested in bioeconomy research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will generate added value;
7. Stresses the need to reconsider the ambitious goals of the European Green Deal for

2030 (especially the goal to increase the EU's greenhouse gas emission reduction target to 50-55 %) and to thoroughly assess its economic impacts on the competitiveness of the forestry sector and foresters in the EU, in the context of the current global COVID-19 pandemic;

8. Acknowledges the crucial climate benefits of forests and the forest-based sector; highlights the need to increase CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration in forests, carbon storage in wood-based products and the substitution of fossil-based materials and energy; notes, however, the importance of avoiding unnecessary market distortions for wood-based raw materials when it comes to supporting schemes for bioenergy; highlights the need to encourage the circular use of wood-based products to promote resource efficiency, waste reduction and the extension of the carbon life cycle in order to expand the circular bioeconomy;
9. Point out that according to the current legislation, which allows forest areas to be established without approval, forest bailiffs can no longer do anything to prevent forest damage or extensive damage by insects; considers that comprehensive pest management should be promoted and facilitated;
10. Recognises the role of forests as regards provision of recreational values and forest-related activities such as harvesting non-wood forest products e.g. mushrooms and soft fruits; takes note of the opportunities for enhancing biomass removals in terms of forest fire prevention via grazing, but also notes that wildlife grazing has a negative impact on seedlings and therefore points to the need for sustainable management of grazing fauna;
11. Stresses that the participation of farmers and hunters in the good management of wooded areas, in particular as regards maintaining the balance of animal and plant biodiversity, is crucial;
12. Considers that the Union's forest strategy should concentrate on supporting and promoting the competitiveness of the EU's forest industry, bioeconomy and bioenergy; considers that the forest strategy should in particular aim to achieve self-sufficiency in wood for the EU, as a result of which forest cover would be increased and associated problems such as illegal felling, land grabbing and damage to the environment and biodiversity in third countries would be reduced;
13. Considers that the role of forests in climate policy should be viewed primarily in relation to the bioeconomy, and that the aim should be to increase the use of renewable fuels and materials, rather than setting targets for the size of forest sinks or protected forest areas; considers that, until the full potential of the bioeconomy has been exploited, there will be no need for additional legislation on forests;
14. Observes that the development of the EU's bioeconomy depends, inter alia, on the development of technology and markets, on the European and international political framework and on the sustainability of the use made of the EU's forests; notes that some of these factors are easier to influence than others; is therefore in favour of eliminating unnecessary legislative obstacles, promoting inter-sectoral cooperation and promoting investment in research and development in order to facilitate change in this industry;

15. Observes in addition that the ambitious targets to increase the share of renewable energy set in the EU's energy policy should be taken into account when promoting the use of biomass produced by forests;
16. Emphasises the crucial role of forests, the forest-based sector and the bioeconomy in achieving goals; stresses that achieving the EU's environmental and climate goals will never be possible without multifunctional, healthy and sustainably managed forests and viable industries; encourages, in addition, actions to maintain or increase forest cover;
17. Notes that forest fires can be prevented by ensuring forest growth, reducing the quantity of dead wood and ensuring that there is a comprehensive network of forest roads; considers that the Paris Agreement should recognise that good, planned management of commercial forests can combat forest fires; takes the view that countries that have succeeded in preventing forest fires should be rewarded via carbon calculations;
18. Stresses that ambitious, independent and self-standing national forest strategies that are not subordinate to any other sectoral strategy are needed for the post-2020 period; calls for these strategies to build on the holistic approach to SFM, taking into account all of the economic, social and environmental aspects of the forest-based value chain; stresses that a coordinated and consistent approach to forests, the forest-based sector and the multiple services they provide needs to be developed, given the growing number of national and EU policies directly or indirectly affecting forests and their management;
19. Regrets that such a coordinated and consistent approach has also not been applied to the EU's trade policy, which permits the mass import of agricultural products that are directly responsible for deforestation in third countries, particularly protein crops and livestock products;
20. Takes the view that the EU Forest Strategy should act solely as a bridge between national forest policies, which would recognise the need to respect the Member States' national competences;
21. Stresses the importance of evidence-based decision-making with regard to EU policies relating to forests, the forest-based sector and its value chains, without it leading to the systematic collection of data at the EU level;
22. Highlights the need to take into consideration the links between the forest-based sector and other sectors as well as the importance of digitalisation and investing in research and innovation; stresses the crucial role of wood-based materials in substituting fossil-based alternatives in industries such as the construction industry and the textile industry; considers it important to stress the benefits to health of the forest-based sector, not only from the point of view of clean air and recreation, but also from the point of view of providing raw materials for the medicines industry and particularly the production of hygiene products, which serve to limit the spread of pandemics;
23. Observes that agroforestry, the combined cultivation of trees and agricultural crops, and/or a combination of tree growing with livestock farming, could reduce forest fires, particularly in Mediterranean countries; points, furthermore, to the importance of a comprehensive and well-maintained network of forest roads and regular forest management in preventing and managing forest fires, thus avoiding the release of

carbon from unnecessary forest fires, which affects the climate; stresses that opportunities for pest control over large areas should be increased; emphasises, in this context, the need to better prevent such events by making forests more resilient, for example through research and innovation, the exchange of information and collaboration on ways to combat natural disasters;

24. Recognises the role of biodiversity in ensuring that forest ecosystems remain healthy and resilient; notes, however, that sufficient financial resources are needed to manage recognised natural areas; highlights the importance of the pragmatic integration of nature conservation into SFM, without enlarging the protected areas and creating additional administrative and financial burdens; supports the establishment of networks created on the basis of Member-State-driven initiatives to this end;
25. Stresses that the Union should allocate sufficient funding from the CAP budget to measures for the forest-based sector, corresponding to the new expectations of that sector, including investment in the development of forest areas and in improving the viability of forests, maintaining networks of forest roads, forestry technology and innovation, and processing and taking into use forestry products; emphasises the need for a reduction of administrative burdens in the EU forestry measures and in State aid generally, for example by allowing block exemptions in order to react promptly to challenges for forests;
26. Highlights the fact that global deforestation and forest degradation are serious problems; points out that policy initiatives should be developed to tackle issues outside the EU, with a focus on the tropics and the drivers of unsustainable practices in forests from outside the forest sector, notably through the use of geographical labelling, sustainability certification and bans on access to the EU market for products that do not comply with current standards; stresses the need to foster the implementation of the EU Timber Regulation and the FLEGT (Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade) action plan in order to prevent the import of illegally or non-sustainably sourced wood into the EU market, which constitutes unfair competition for the continental forestry sector and that in the outermost regions;
27. Stresses the need to maintain the forest information systems that are under the responsibility of all the competent national administrations; stresses the importance of science-based, balanced information with socio-economic indicators for the development of any forest-related policy, calls for such data to be shared with the stakeholders concerned, such as hunting federations or chambers of agriculture in order to ensure the effective coordination of the actions implemented;
28. Calls on the Commission's Standing Forestry Committee to give the Member States a central role in the coordination of the forestry sector; stresses the importance of the parallel involvement of relevant stakeholders in the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork; urges the Commission to work with Parliament and the Member States on the coordination of the forestry sector;
29. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

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