

2 Structure of the forest sector in the EU and overview of the policy framework

2.1 Structure of the forest sector in the EU

The forest sector includes forestry (forestry, logging and related services) and manufacturing of wood and articles of wood, and manufacturing of paper and paper products. This section gives a brief overview of the diversity of forests and forest-based activities in the EU.

2.1.1 Forests in the EU

Forests and other wooded land cover a total of 177 million ha in the EU27 i.e. 42% of the land area (see Table 1). In 2005, the countries with the highest coverage of forests and other wooded land were Sweden (31 million ha or 75% of its land area), Spain (28 million ha, 57%), Finland (23 million ha, 77%), France (17 million ha, 31%), Germany (11 million ha, 32%) and Italy (11 million ha, 37%). Together these six Member States accounted for more than two-thirds of the total forest area in the EU27. The lowest coverage of forests and other wooded land was found in Malta (1%), Ireland (10%), the Netherlands (11%) and the United Kingdom (12%).

Among the six Member States with the largest area covered by forests and other wooded land, the proportion of forest available for wood supply varied from 37% in Spain to 69% in Sweden, to 86% in Finland and to 99% in Germany. The total area of forests available for wood supply in EU27 is 129 million ha, i.e. approximately 73% of the total forests and other wooded land cover. A total of 27 million ha of forest area are protected¹.

During 2000-2005 the forest area of the EU27 increased by an average of 696 000 ha (0.4%) per year. Not only is the forest area stable and slightly increasing, but also the standing volume of forest (the growing stock) has increased during the past decades. Annual fellings in the EU27 represent some 60% of the net annual increment, but the figures vary considerably from one country to another.

The natural forest types and forest cover as well as the use of forests vary considerably across the EU. Forests provide a multitude of goods and services; wood supply is one, but other uses are also important, such as natural hazard prevention, biodiversity and ecological values, recreation and tourism, cork or other forest products e.g. berries, mushrooms and herbs. Forests play multiple roles in society with social, economic, environmental, ecological and cultural functions.

¹ As defined MCPFE management objectives and classes for protection of biodiversity and protection of landscapes and specific natural elements (MCPFE 2007)

Table 1. Forest area, net annual increment and fellings, 2005.

	Forest & other wooded land		Forest available for wood supply		Net annual increment million m3 (over bark)	Fellings million m3 (over bark)	Fellings, % of net annual increment
	million ha	% of land area	million ha	% of forest			
EU27**	177.0	42	129.2	73	764.0*	460.8*	60*
Belgium	0.7	23	0.7	96	5.3	4.5	85
Bulgaria	3.7	34	2.6	70	14.1	5.8	41
Czech Republic	2.6	34	2.5	95	20.5	17.2	84
Denmark	0.6	15	0.4	61	5.2	1.8	35
Germany***	11.1	32	11.0*	99*	122.0*	60.8	50*
Estonia	2.4	56	2.1	89	11.0	5.7	52
Ireland	0.7	10	0.7	92	:	:	:
Greece	6.5	51	3.5	53	3.8*	1.8	48*
Spain	28.2	57	10.5*	37*	28.6*	19.1	67*
France	17.3	31	14.7	85	102.5	56.6	55
Italy	11.0	37	8.9	81	38.3	10.1	26
Cyprus	0.4	42	0.0	11	0.0	0.0	16
Latvia	3.1	51	2.8	90	16.5	11.3	68
Lithuania	2.2	35	1.8	83	9.9	7.2	73
Luxembourg	0.1	34	0.1	98	0.7	0.2	38
Hungary	1.9	22	1.7	86	12.9	7.2	56
Malta	0.0	1	-	-	-	-	-
Netherlands	0.4	11	0.3	81	2.2	1.6	70
Austria	4.0	48	3.4	84	31.3*	18.8*	60*
Poland***	9.2	30	8.4	91	67.6	37.2	55
Portugal	3.9	42	2.0*	52*	12.9*	13.3	103*
Romania	6.6	29	4.6*	70*	34.6	15.9	46
Slovenia	1.3	65	1.2	88	7.3	3.2	44
Slovakia	1.9	40	1.8	91	12.0	9.0	75
Finland	23.3	77	20.0	86	92.9	64.5	69
Sweden	30.9	75	21.2	69	91.4	78.1	86
United Kingdom	2.9	12	2.4	83	20.7	9.9	48

Source: Eurostat

: Data not available

- Very small amount

* Estimated value

** Ireland excluded for net annual increment and fellings

*** Data do not cover other wooded land

2.1.2 Forestry in the EU

The socio-economic conditions and the role that forests play for rural livelihoods also vary. Around 60% of the forests are in private ownership in the EU, while around 40% are publicly owned (Figure 1). There are approximately 15-16 million private forest owners in the EU27. The average private holding size is very small, often not exceeding 5 ha. In the Central and Eastern European countries new forest laws have been introduced as a result of constitutional changes in the transition from planned to market economies. This has led to important land tenure reforms, privatisation in the forest sector and an increasing number of private forest holdings in these countries. The EU enlargements in 2004 and 2007 mean that these issues are on the agenda in the EU; the enlargement has also resulted in a large increase in the forest area in the EU.

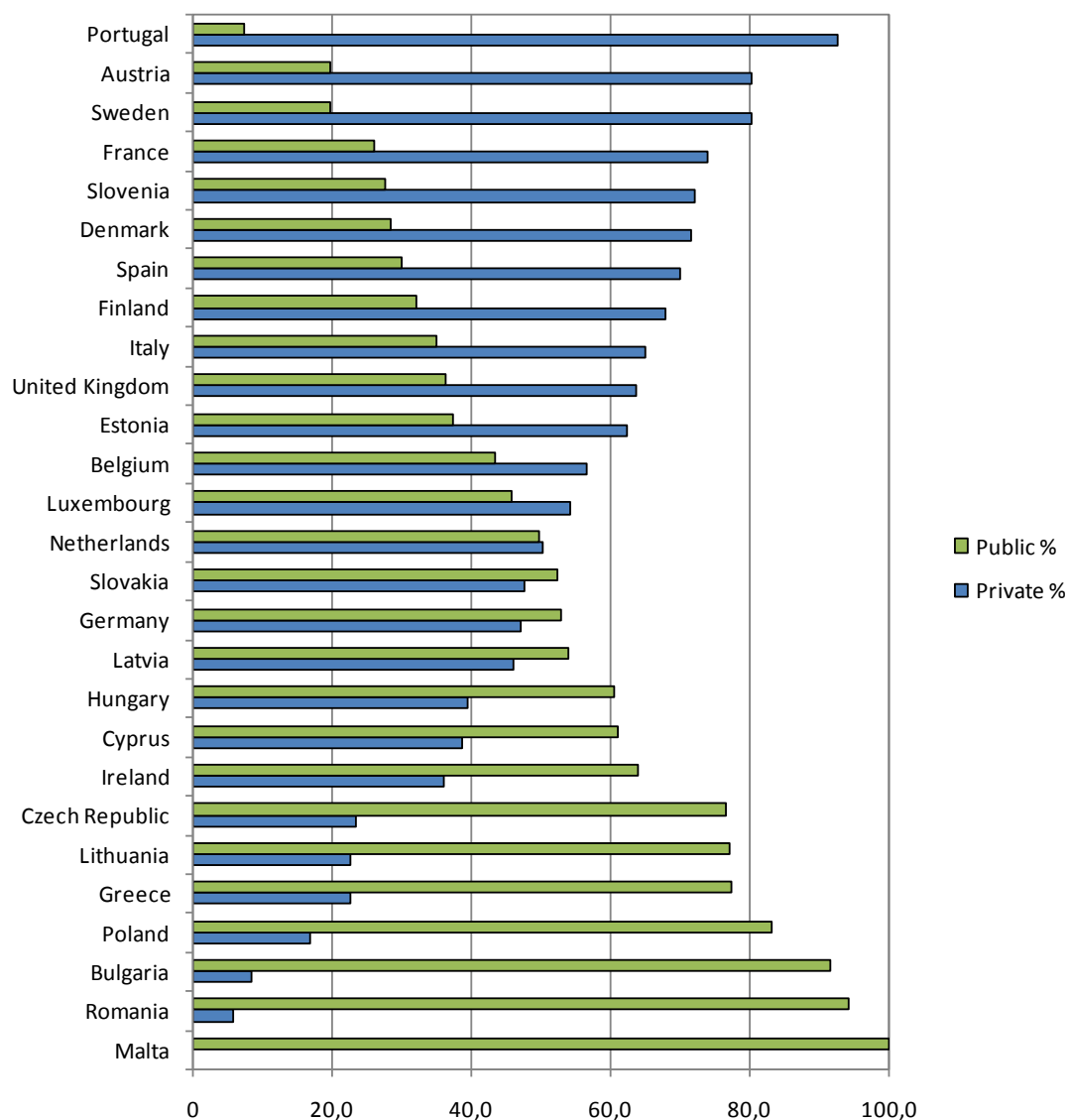


Figure 1. Forest ownership shares public-private in the EU.
(Source FAO 2005, category “other” is included in “private” for Spain, Finland, Estonia, Slovakia and Latvia). Note: the figures for Romania and Bulgaria may be outdated.

Situation differs across the EU regarding e.g. the forest owners’ formal training in forest management and the stage of development of markets and infrastructure. Fragmentation of forest ownership and high share of non-operational private forests without any management activities and lack of capacity in private forestry is a pervasive issue. Furthermore, the EU forestry is influenced by the effects of globalisation on political and institutional frameworks, societal developments, investments directed to emerging markets elsewhere and global environmental phenomena, particularly climate change. At the same time while the main source of revenues to finance forestry is industrial wood only, the multifunctional role of forests and demand for forest services is growing.

In the recent years, a rather substantial change has taken place both in Western Europe and in the countries which have recently joined the EU, in particular in the Central and

Eastern European countries. Restructuring of the state forest enterprises has led to workers in these enterprises being laid off and outsourcing of forest operations to private contractors. Overall, this has resulted in decrease of jobs in forestry, but also in a major reorientation in terms of job requirements. In 2005 there were 492 000 people employed in forestry, logging and related services in the EU27 (Eurostat). The significance of the forest sector for jobs and income is mainly not in forest management but in the wood processing industries such as sawmills, pulp and paper, and related production.

2.1.3 Forest-based industries in the EU

The forest-based and related industries – i.e. woodworking (excluding wooden furniture), cork and other forest-based materials, pulp and paper manufacturing, paper and board converting, and printing – are among the most important sectors in the EU. In 2005, the EU27 forest-based industries included around 350 000 enterprises employing almost 3 million people. The forest-based sector represents some 15.1% of the total number of all manufacturing firms, and 8.6% of the manufacturing workforce. Small and medium-sized enterprises are predominant in the woodworking and printing sectors, while the manufacturing of pulp, paper and paperboard is a field of large firms – with several corporations operating on a global basis with production units in Europe, in Asia and in North and South America. The total turnover of the forest-based industries amounts to EUR 380 billion.²

The forest-based industry is based on renewable raw material resources and on efficient recycling. Wood is the main cost for many of these industries: in paper making wood represents more than 30%, and in the sawmill industry 65-70% of total costs³. Prices of the raw material vary considerably within the EU27 and also economic fluctuations affect the situation e.g. through currency rates. Average personnel costs in the forest-based industries of the EU27 in 2005 were EUR 29 100. There is considerable variation in the average annual personnel costs with highest average in Germany and Sweden (EUR 45 200 and EUR 44 000), and lowest in Bulgaria and Romania (EUR 2200 and EUR 2500).

Access to raw material – both domestic supply and import – is important for the forest-based industries. In 2008 the global economic crisis has affected the sector with decline in demand for forest products and decline in production during 2008 and early 2009. Wood energy is an exception in this trend, and the demand for wood energy is expected to continue growing. These developments in the manufacturing sector will affect the forest sector as a whole.

Besides wood, cork is an important forest product in the EU with approximately 1.7 million ha of cork oak forests (mainly in Portugal and Spain) accounting for 80% of the worldwide production of cork.

The EU forestry is closely connected with the forest industry, which makes it especially sensitive to changes in foreign direct investment, economic activity (value-added

² Eurostat statistics in focus 74/2008

³ Communication on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU, COM(2008)113

production, productivity, and employment), trade and technology/know-how. This has a direct effect on the economic viability and competitiveness of the European model of sustainable forest management. It also affects the multi-functional forestry i.e. secured provision of the many services that forests provide, often outside the markets and without market-based income streams. Also environmental issues – including the role in climate change mitigation – are becoming an increasingly important determinant of competitiveness for the forest sector.

2.2 Policy landscape around the EU FAP

The EU FAP provides a framework for forest-related actions at the Community and Member State level and serves as an instrument of coordination between Community and the forest policies of the Member States. This section describes the policy landscape in which the EU FAP was defined and where it operates, and places it in context in relation to international processes and arrangements, to policy areas at the Community level, and to national forest policies.

2.2.1 International policy setting

Since the 1990s both global processes and pan-European regional process have addressed forest-related issues and supported Sustainable Forest Management. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) i.e. the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 adopted the Forest Principles together with the Agenda 21 (Chapter 11. Combating Deforestation).

The **United Nations Forum on Forests** (UNFF), established in 2000 by United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to carry on and build on the work of the Intergovernmental Panel of Forests (IPF) and Intergovernmental Forum of Forests (IFF) processes 1995/1997. At its sixth session, in 2006, the UNFF agreed on four shared Global Objectives on Forests, focusing sharply on the implementation of sustainable forest management. The main outcome of the UNFF is the **Non-Legally Binding Instrument on All Types of Forests**, which was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2007.

The **Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests** (MCPFE) is a policy process which was started in 1990 with the aim to work towards the protection and sustainable management of forests throughout the pan-European region. A total of five ministerial conferences during 1990-2007 have identified key forest policy issues and concluded resolutions as political commitments of the European countries – the latest conference took place in Warsaw in 2007. In total 46 countries, including all EU Member States and the European Union have committed to the cooperation and policy deliberations. Major outputs are e.g. the definition of the MCPFE approach to sustainable forest management (Helsinki Resolution 1, 1993) and to national forest programmes in Europe (Vienna resolution 1, 2003) as well as the pan-European Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management. The MCPFE has contributed to the national forest policies as well as the EU Forestry Strategy and the EU FAP to this day.

The European Community and/or the individual Member States are signatories in other forest-related international agreements and conventions agreed on at UNCED. These include the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, the **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**, the **Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**, and the **Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and its Kyoto Protocol. Furthermore commitments are made in the **International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA)** and the **International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)**.

Other important international organisations influencing the EU forest-related policies are the **World Trade Organization (WTO)**, and the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, and at the pan-European level, the **United Nations Economic Commission to Europe (UNECE)**. The UNECE serves as the secretariat to the **Environment for Europe (EfE)**, which is a political process started in 1991 focusing on environmental protection and sustainable development in Europe.

The institutional and political framework of the forestry policy is a complex set with several institutional players dealing with forest-related policies at European and international levels as well as in the EU Member States. These international policy processes and instruments deal directly and indirectly with forests, and set a general framework in which the EU and national forest policies take place.

2.2.2 Community policy setting

Given the fact that the Treaty establishing the European Community makes no provision for a specific common forestry policy and that the responsibility for forest policy lies with the Member States, the EU Forestry Strategy and the EU Forest Action Plan are based on the principle of subsidiarity and the concept of shared responsibility. At the same time there are a number of EU regulations and directives in other policy areas that are to be implemented by the Member States and that have a direct or indirect influence on forestry. This section presents the main policy areas related to forests and forestry in the EU with information on latest developments since the implementation of the EU FAP in 2007.

Rural development policy

The EU's rural development policy – the second pillar of the common agricultural policy – seeks to establish a coherent and sustainable framework for the future of rural areas. The overall principles of the EU Forestry Strategy, e.g. multifunctionality and sustainability, are in accordance with the EU rural development policy by bringing together economic, social and environmental objectives.

The **European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)**⁴ is the core instrument to achieve the objectives of the EU's rural development policy. The Rural Development Regulation is also the main instrument at the Community level for the implementation of the EU Forestry Strategy and the EU FAP. Forestry measures and forestry-related actions have been included in the rural development programmes 2007-

⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, 20.9.2005

2013 of all Member States except Malta and Ireland⁵. It is envisaged that the rural development programmes will make around EUR 8 billion of EAFRD funds available for forestry measures, and together with the national co-funding the sum will amount to EUR 16 billion in 2007-2013. Under the Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005, the **Community guidelines for state aid in the agriculture and forest sector** aim to prevent distortions in competition and co-finance support for forestry by assuring consistency of State Aid with the Community's common agricultural and rural development policies and international obligations. The new comprehensive Community Guidelines for State Aid in the agricultural sector entered into force at the beginning of 2007⁶.

Environment policy

The **Sixth Environment Action Programme** of the European Community (2002-2012)⁷ includes issues of relevance to forestry, namely Climate Change, Nature and Biodiversity, Environment and Health. The **Renewed Sustainable Development Strategy** (SDS)⁸ for an enlarged EU sets out how the EU will more effectively reach its sustainable development goals. The regulation for the **Financial Instrument for the Environment** (Life+)⁹ was approved in 2007. The Life+ programme supports environmental and nature conservation projects throughout the EU, and the measures to be financed in 2007-2013 include also projects that e.g. develop environmental information sources through monitoring (including forest monitoring), and support forest fire prevention awareness and training campaigns.

The creation of the **Natura 2000** network is the cornerstone of Community nature conservation policy. The network consists of "Special Protection Areas" emanating from the **Birds Directive**¹⁰ and "Special Conservation Areas" emanating from the **Habitats Directive**¹¹. Measures taken pursuant to these directives are designed to maintain or restore, to a favourable conservation status, natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora of Community interest. The EU Biodiversity Strategy was adopted in 1998 and related Action Plans in 2001. Most Member States have also developed, or are developing, their strategies and/or action plans. The Commission communication in 2006 **Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond**¹² identifies key policy areas for action, and objectives and supporting measures: woodlands and forests are included in the objective of conserving and restoring biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU countryside.

⁵ Report on implementation of Forestry Measures under the Rural Development Regulation 1698/2005 for the period 2007-2013. DG AGRI H.4, March 2009

⁶ Community guidelines for state aid in the agriculture and forestry sector 2007-2013 (OJ C 319 of 27.12.2006). Commission Regulation (EC) No 1857/2006, 15.12.2006.

⁷ COM (2001) 31, 24.1.2001, and the Mid-term review of the Sixth Community Environment Action Programme COM(2007) 225 final, 30.4.2007

⁸ Adopted by the European Council on 15/16 June 2006. European Council DOC 10917/06 and the 2009 Review of the European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development. COM(2009) 400 final, 24.7.2009

⁹ Regulation (EC) No 614/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 23.5.2007

¹⁰ Council Directive 79/409/EEC of 2 April 1979 on the conservation of wild birds.

¹¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

¹² COM(2006) 216 final, 22.5.2006 and the Mid-term Assessment of Implementing the EC Biodiversity Action Plan. COM(2008) 864 final, 16.12.2008

The **Water Framework Directive (WFD)**¹³ sets need for coordinating policies on forest, agriculture and water sectors. The overall aim of the water directives is to establish a framework for the protection of inland surface waters, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater. The wider objectives are to promote sustainable water use and to mitigate the effects of floods and droughts.

The **Commission communication addressing the challenges of deforestation and forest degradation to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss** – the so-called REDD communication¹⁴ – was put forward in 2008. The EU has played a key role in the development of the 1992 UNFCCC and its Kyoto Protocol, which was agreed in 1997. In 2000 the Commission launched the European Climate Change Programme (ECCP). In 2007-2009 the Commission took forward a number of initiatives: in 2007 the **Green Paper Adapting to climate change in Europe – options for EU action**¹⁵ and in 2009 **White Paper – Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action**¹⁶. The year 2009 is a crucial year in the international effort to address climate change, culminating in the United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 15) in Copenhagen in December. Energy and climate change policies go hand in hand: the EU is committed to reduce its overall emissions to at least 20% below 1990 levels by 2020, and ready to scale up this reduction to as much as 30% under a new global climate change agreement.

Energy policy

The Commission **Biomass Action Plan**¹⁷ adopted in 2005 sets out measures to increase the development of biomass energy from wood, wastes and agricultural crops by creating market-based incentives to its use and removing barriers to the development of the market. The **Renewable Energy Road Map** in 2006 set a strategy to enable both increasing security of energy supply and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It improves the legal framework for promoting renewable electricity, requires national action plans that establish pathways for the development of renewable energy sources including bioenergy, creates cooperation mechanisms to help achieve the targets cost effectively and establishes the sustainability criteria for biofuels.

The **Climate and Energy Package**¹⁸ was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in 2009. It aims at ensuring that EU Member States meet targets relating to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by 20% before 2020, including to ensure a level of 20% renewable energy in the total EU energy consumption before 2020 as well as to increase the proportion of renewable energy in the transport sector by 10% before 2020. As a part of this package a **Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources** – the so-called RES Directive¹⁹ – was approved in June 2009.

¹³ Directive 2000/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2000 establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy (OJ L 327, 22.12.2000, p. 1-73)

¹⁴ COM(2008) 645 final, 17.10.2008

¹⁵ COM(2007) 354 final, 29.6.2007

¹⁶ COM(2009) 147 final, 1.4.2009

¹⁷ COM(2005) 628 final, 7.12.2005

¹⁸ COM(2008) 30 final, 23.1.2008

¹⁹ 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. (OJ L 140, 5.6.2009, p. 16-62)

Industrial policy

Forest-based industries and thereby industrial policy are closely linked to forestry policy. The Communication on the State of the Competitiveness of the EU Forest-Based and Related Industries (1999) was followed in 2008 with the **Communication on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU**²⁰. The so-called FBI communication underscores the importance of forest-based industries for the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy. The FBI communication is complementary to the EU FAP.

Research and technological development policy

The **Seventh Framework Programme (FP7)**²¹ is the EU's main instrument for the funding research in 2007-2013. It contains four specific programmes, corresponding to four major objectives of European research policy: cooperation, ideas, people, and capacities. Topics related to the multifunctional management of forests and to the forest-based industries are found in the work programmes of the programme cooperation, under the thematic priorities: priority 2, "Food, Agriculture and Fisheries, Biotechnology", priority 5 "Energy", and priority 6 "Environment (incl. climate change)", and also in specific activities covering a wider field of research in support of Community policies.

Development cooperation policy

The **Financing Instrument for Development Cooperation**²² 2007-2013 aims to eradicate poverty and achieve the Millennium Development Goals *inter alia* by promoting sustainable development through environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources, including protection of biodiversity, and of forests, including activities for the conservation and sustainable management of forests with active participation of local communities and forest-dependent peoples.

As regards sustainable forest management, the Community supports efforts on combating illegal logging, giving particular attention to implementation of the **EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT)**²³. A key element of the Action Plan is a voluntary scheme to ensure that only legally harvested timber is imported into the EU from countries agreeing to take part in the scheme. The Council adopted a Regulation in 2005²⁴ allows for the control of the entry of timber to the EU from countries entering into bilateral FLEGT Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPA) with the EU. In October 2008, the Commission published a **proposal for a regulation laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market**, the so-called due diligence proposal²⁵.

²⁰ COM(2008) 113 final, 27.2.2008

²¹ Decision No 1982/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities (2007-2013)

²² Regulation (EC) 1905/2006, 18.12.2006

²³ COM(2003) 251 final, 21.5.2003.

²⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005, 20.12.2005

²⁵ COM(2008) 644 final, 17.10.2008

Trade Policy

The EU has promoted the integration of sustainable development into international trade. The sustainable development objectives are taken into account in trade negotiations with third countries, and this refers also to forest-related questions – e.g. the generalised system of preferences (GSP) 2006-2015 introduced tariff preferences for trade with the developing countries with the aim to reduce poverty. Regulation (EC) 980/2005²⁶ applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences for 2006-2008 and regulation (EC) 732/2008 for 2009-2011 can apply e.g. to tropical wood products – goods that are classified as non-sensitive and imported from the preferred developing countries to the Community are exempt from import tariffs.

Regional policy

EU Regional policy continues to support an integrated approach to regional development, considering the three dimensions of sustainable development and taking advantage of natural assets such as forests. One of the principal conditions for creating territorial cohesion in Europe is to ensure complementarity and balance between urban and rural areas. The **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)**²⁷ can provide financial support for the implementation of specific actions of the EU Forest Action Plan in the Member States under the condition that these actions are coherent to the regional priorities of development and to the Community Strategic Guidelines. The cross-border, transnational and interregional projects on forests and forestry represent a genuine added-value of Cohesion Policy in this area. Some projects²⁸ explicitly mention the EU FAP as a background of their design while others deal with more recent topics such as forestry and climate change²⁹. In addition natural risk prevention, such as forest fires, is recognised as a priority in the Community Strategic Guidelines and this has led to numerous concrete projects at regional and local level, often in cross-border or interregional co-operation.

Plant health, plant protection and propagating material policy

EU Plant health, plant protection and propagating material policy is one of the policy fields that indirectly affects the forest sector. The main objectives of EU legislation are to protect the safety of feed and food derived from plants, to prevent the introduction and spread of organisms harmful to plants or plant products within the EU, and to regulate the trade of plants and plant products within the EU as well as imports from the rest of the world in accordance with international standards and obligations. Regarding the forestry sector, the following pieces of EU plant health legislation are to be considered the most influential ones: Council Directive 91/414/EEC³⁰, Council Directive 2000/29/EC³¹, Council Directive 1999/105/EC³², and Regulation (EC) 396/2005³³.

²⁶ Council Regulation (EC) No 980/2005, 27.6.2005 and Council Regulation (EC) No 732/2008 of 22 July 2008

²⁷ Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council, 5.7.2006

²⁸ E.g. the Interreg IIIC 'Robinwood' project

²⁹ E.g. the Interreg IVB project 'ForesClim' and the Interreg IVC project FUTUREforest

³⁰ Council Directive of 15 July 1991 concerning the placing of plant protection products on the market (91/414/EEC).

³¹ Council Directive 2000/29/EC of 8 May 2000 on protective measures against the introduction into the Community of organisms harmful to plants or plant products and against their spread within the Community.

³² Council Directive 1999/105/EC of 22 December 1999 on the marketing of forest reproductive material.

³³ Regulation (EC) NO 396/2005 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 February 2005 on maximum residue levels of pesticides in or on food and feed of plant and animal origin and amending Council Directive 91/414/EEC.

Other – institutions

The **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** is a Directorate General of the European Commission, providing independent science and technology advice to European policy makers. All forestry and forest-related research projects are embedded in the activities of the JRC's Institute for Environment and Sustainability, Ispra, Italy.

Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union is responsible for the collection, management and publication of data concerning forest products and trade statistics as well as of other statistics regarding the forest sector as a whole. Collection of forest statistics is carried out in cooperation of the Inter-secretariat Working Group on Forest Sector Statistics which brings together FAO, UNECE, and Eurostat. The primary tool for the co-operation is the annual Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire used by all three organisations.

The **European Environment Agency (EEA)** is an agency of the EU with the task to provide sound, independent information on the environment. It currently has 32 member countries. EEA's mandate is to help the Community and member countries make informed decisions about improving the environment, integrating environmental considerations into economic policies and moving towards sustainability, and to coordinate the European environment information and observation network (Eionet).

2.2.3 The EU Forest Action Plan

The EU Forest Action Plan originates from the Council Resolution on a forestry strategy for the European Union (1998). It was prepared in 2006 in close cooperation between the Commission and the Member States, and in consultation with the stakeholders.

The EU FAP has an overall objective of supporting the multifunctional role of forests and to enhance Sustainable Forest Management in the Member States, allowing the EU to fulfil its international commitments relating to forests. The Actions are grouped under four specific objectives headings:

- (1) to improve the long-term competitiveness,
- (2) to improve and protect the environment,
- (3) to contribute to the quality of life, and
- (4) to foster coordination and communication.

These objectives are targeted with 18 Key Actions (see Figure 2). For implementation of the Action Plan a five-year work programme has been established for 2007-2011. It indicates 55 activities that will provide guidance to the Commission, Member States and stakeholders. The mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan in 2009 and a final evaluation foreseen in 2012 are an integral part of the implementation.

In the course of preparation of the EU FAP, the Commission and the Member States developed a common vision of forestry and of the contribution which forests and forestry make to modern society:

Forests for society: long-term multifunctional forestry fulfilling present and future societal needs and supporting forest-related livelihoods.

An action plan is a tool to coordinate actions related to the forestry sector, now run in parallel in different policy areas and at different levels of implementation, e.g. international and national levels.

There are no specific resources allocated for the implementation of the EU FAP, though the plan indicates a number of existing financing instruments (mainly the rural development funds, framework programme for research and development, but also several other sources) which could be utilised in implementing the EU FAP.

The EU FAP implementation makes use of existing structures. The Standing Forestry Committee (SFC)³⁴ is the Commission's comitology committee³⁵. The committee was set up by a Council Decision in order to ensure closer and more constant cooperation in the forestry sector between the Member States and the Commission and thereby support forestry measures initiated under the Community agricultural structure and rural development policy³⁶. The SFC consists of Member State representatives, mainly those of Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Forestry or Ministry of Environment representatives, but for some countries also regional representatives. The Advisory Group on Forestry and Cork (AGFC)³⁷ is an advisory committee of the Commission. The AGFC consists of representatives of producers (28 seats), traders (2), industry (11), workers (2), consumers (1) and environmental groups (4). The EU FAP mentions also cooperation with another advisory committee i.e. Advisory Committee on Community Policy regarding Forestry and Forest-based Industries³⁸. The Commission's Inter-services' Group on Forestry (ISGF) is a cooperation body within the Commission, additional to the formal inter-service consultation process.

The action plan activities are to be implemented by the various departments (DGs) of the Commission and the Member States (incl. presidencies). Stakeholder participation is channelled mainly through the AGFC.

³⁴ (89/367/EEC) Council Decision of 29 May 1989 setting up a Standing Forestry Committee

³⁵ http://europa.eu/scadplus/glossary/comitology_en.htm

³⁶ (89/367/EEC) Council Decision of 29 May 1989. Article 2:

1. Taking account of Member States' forestry policies and measures and programmes relating thereto, of the role of the forestry sector in the context of agricultural structure and rural development policy and of the links between the forestry sector and the various Community policies, the Member States shall keep each other and the Commission informed, within the committee, of the situation and developments in the forestry sector and the relevant policies.

2. The Commission may consult the committee on any issue or aspect concerning the forestry sector arising from the various Community policies either on its own initiative or at the request of the representative of a Member State.

3. The Council, acting on a proposal from the Commission, may assign other duties to the committee in connection with Community measures affecting the forestry sector.

³⁷ (2004/391/EC) Commission Decision of 23 April 2004 on the advisory groups dealing with matters covered by the common agricultural policy

³⁸ (97/837/EC) Commission Decision of 9 December 1997 amending Decision 83/247/EEC setting up a committee on Community policy regarding forestry and forestry-based industries

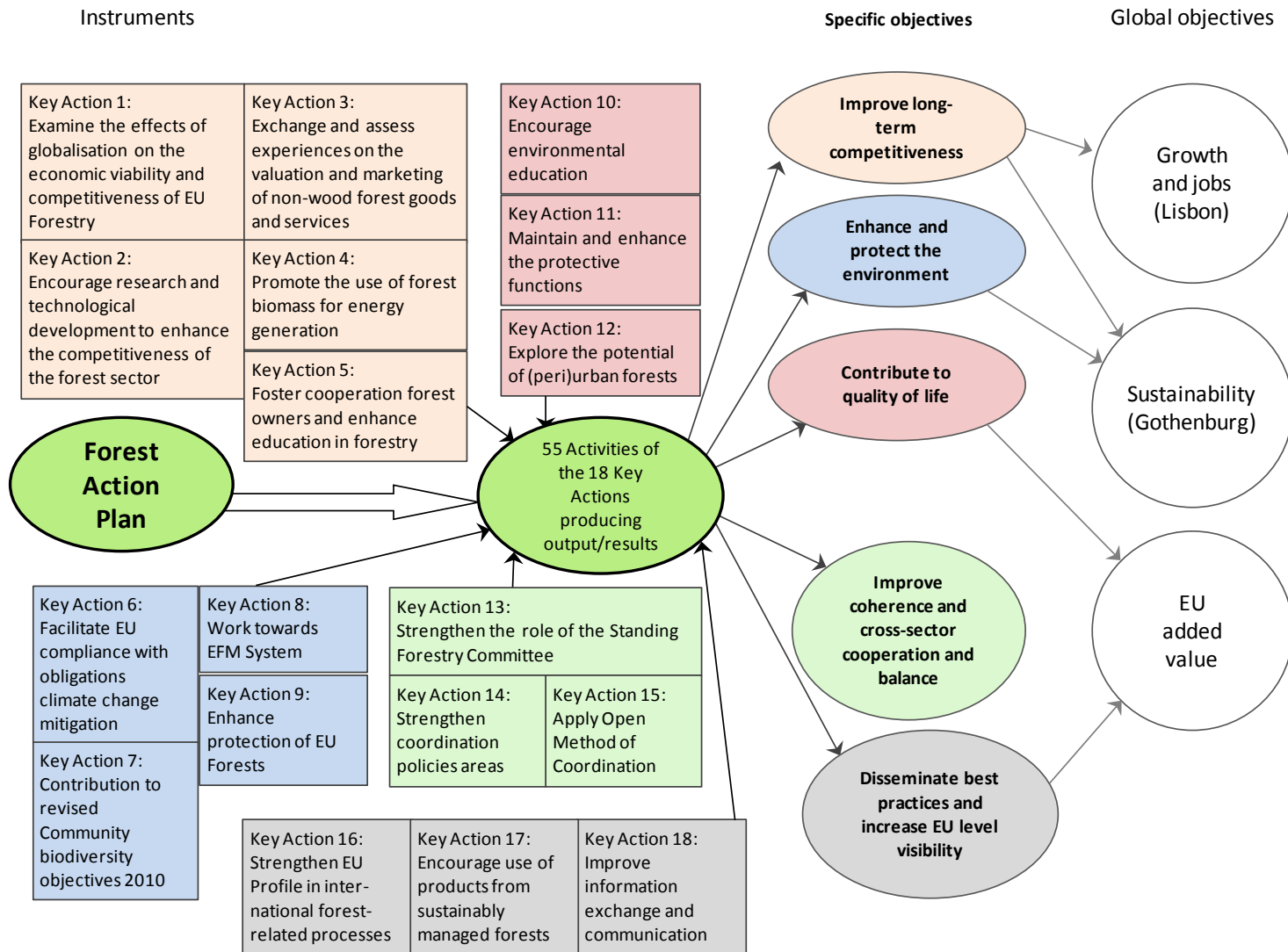


Figure 2. Overview of the EU FAP Key Actions and the specific objectives and global objectives.

2.2.4 National forest policies and NFPs in the EU and their relation to the EU FAP

The EU Forestry Strategy and the EU Forest Action Plan identify, as one of the substantial elements, that the international commitments, principles and recommendations should be implemented through national and sub-national forest programmes or appropriate instruments developed by the Member States. The mid-term evaluation collected information from the Member States and investigated the relationship between the EU FAP and the national forest programmes in the EU FAP.

The national forest programmes (NFPs) have been established in the EU27 in accordance with the pan-European process. Rather than being one approach, the NFPs cover a wide range of approaches to develop, program and implement forest policies in a country or a region³⁹. NFPs can be formal or informal governmental processes, with the resulting documents formally adopted or not. Some countries identify their NFP as a set of policies or strategies addressing sustainable forest management.

Based on the inventory for the mid-term evaluation in 2009, few Member States indicate that there is a *direct influence* from the EU FAP to the national level processes – e.g. in Italy the NFP (2008) “Framework Programme for the Forest Sector” is strictly shaped around the EU FAP. For the NFP there will also be established a national, permanent body for the definition, coordination and information on forest policies called “Standing Forest Board”, similar to the SFC.

Several countries indicate similar approaches: the EU FAP has been utilised for *informing* the national process, e.g. checking the coherence between the EU and national level themes when preparing or updating the NFPs and the annual work plans. During 2007-2008 the EU FAP key actions have been considered and referred, together with the national developments e.g. in Czech Republic (NFP ratified in 2008), in Hungary (NFP started in 2008), Slovenia (NFP adopted in 2007) and Slovakia (NFP adopted in 2007 and the Action Plan for NFP in 2008). Also other countries indicate that the EU FAP has guided the national process, e.g. in reconsidering the priorities and actions in Bulgaria, Luxemburg, United Kingdom and Ireland.

Some responses show that the dialogue carried out in the EU FAP has had more of an *indirect effect* on the national processes, including contribution to also *other than forest sector* programmes – e.g. green procurement / public procurement, renewable energy (e.g. wood biomass and targets for forestry), Natura2000, and investment in research have been themes emphasised in the implementation of the EU FAP, and this also reflects an increasing emphasis placed on these themes at national level. This connection is made in Latvia, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain.

There are also Member States that see *low influence* from the EU FAP on their national policy and processes (e.g. Finland, Sweden, Lithuania and Poland). National actions are carried out as a result of long-term national forest policy, and the linkage from the EU FAP to the national level is not seen as significant, even though the goals and measures coincide.

³⁹ State of Europe's Forests 2007. The MCPFE Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe. Jointly prepared by the MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw, UNECE and FAO. Warsaw, 2007.