



European Commission

**Green Paper on Forest Protection
and Information in the EU**

Adopted 01/03/2010

Public consultation



Origin of this Green Paper

- EU Forest Action Plan - [COM(2006)302]
 - KA 6 : EU compliance with UNFCCC/KP + adaptation to the effects of climate change
 - KA 8 : Work towards a European Forest Monitoring System
 - KA 9: Enhance the protection of EU forests

- Comm. White Paper on adaptation to Climate Change – [COM(2009)147]
 - Launching a debate on forest protection and information
 - Adapting the EU Forestry Strategy



Impacts of Climate Change on forests

- Increase in water stress
- Increased risk of storm damage
- Increased fire risk in terms of frequency and scale
- Changes in nutrient balance in soils
- Northward/altitude migration of tree species
- Increase in insect outbreaks , e.g. of bark beetles
- Forest dieback

Rapid changes may affect ecosystem stability and forest functions



What is at stake

- Trees and soil as sinks or sources of carbon (trend of interaction with the atmosphere)
- Output of forest products that can act as sink during their useful life
- High expectations for bio-energy supply, especially with current bio-fuels debate
- Ecological functions that are essential to the earth's life supporting systems

Forest protection = mitigation and adaptation to climate change



The process

- Forest protection policy study - 2009
- March- July 2010 GP PUBLIC CONSULT.
- April 2010 : Valsaín Declaration on Forest protection
- June 2010 : Council conclusions on forest protection and information
- Sept 2010 : Opinion of the EESC
- Opinion of CoR expected end 2010
- Own initiative report of the European Parliament, expected March - April 2011



The questions

1. Adequate forest functions balance?

2. Readiness of the sector to face the climate challenges?

EU early action needed?

3. Are existing EU/MS policies adequate? If not what should be done?

4. Does SFM need to be updated from a climate change perspective? How?

5. Is the existing forest information adequate? If not what should be done?



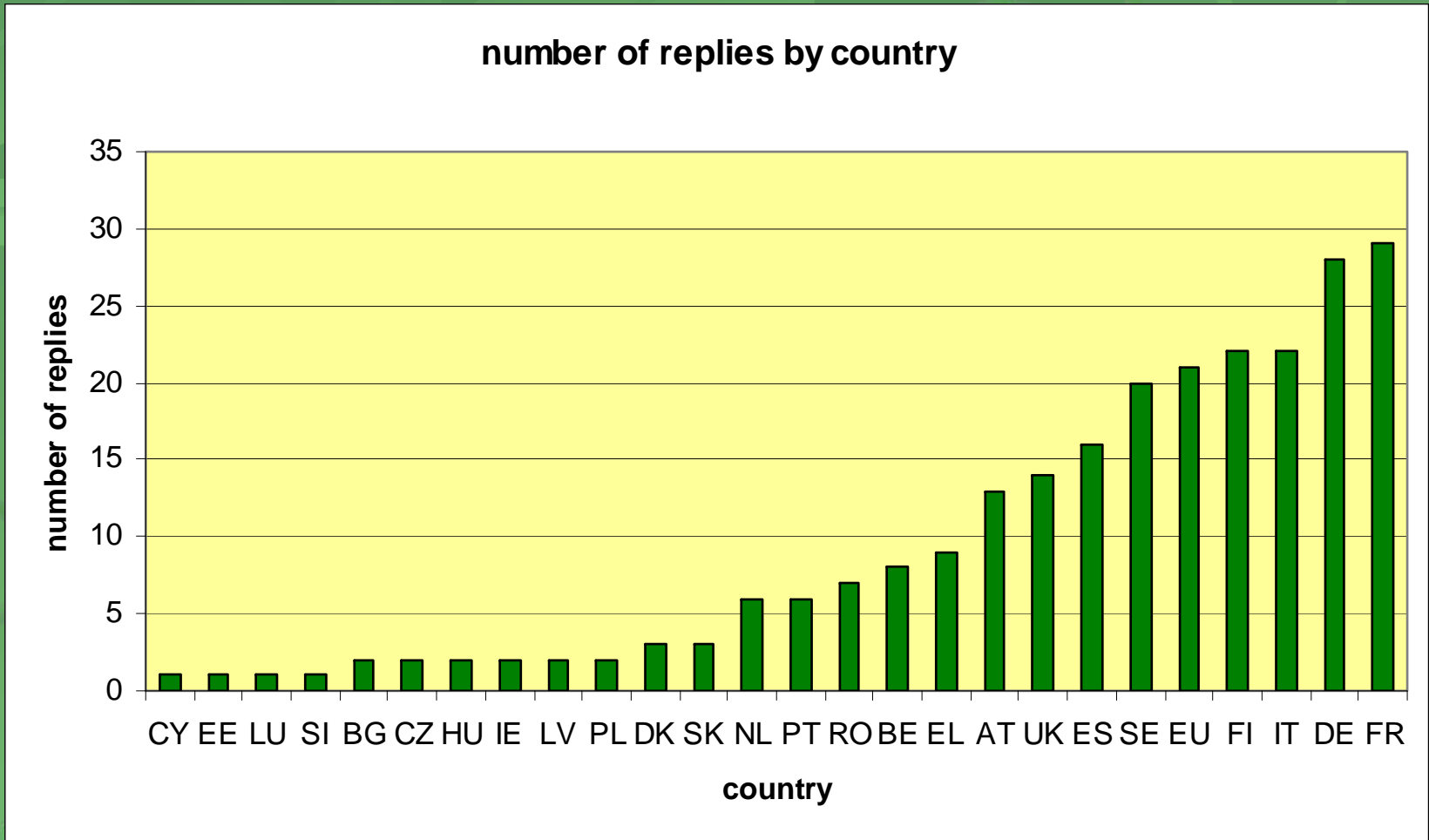
Response by functional groups

	number of replies
business and industry	48
governments and public bodies	56
Parliaments & elected bodies	7
NGOs	40
forest owners & private persons	90
research and academia	21
TOTAL	262

262 replies received = a success ?
Caution : NOT a statistical survey !

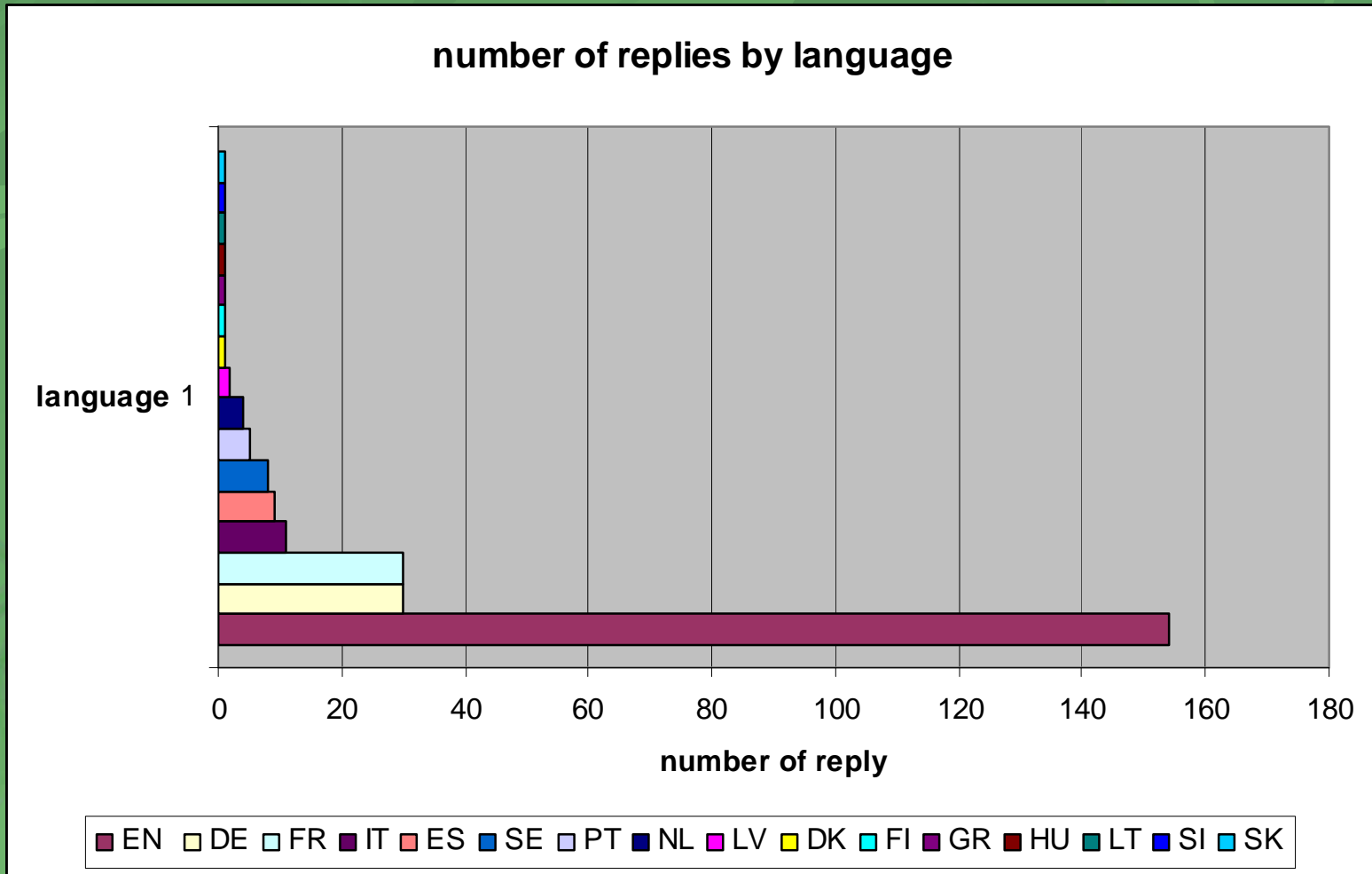


Response by MS





Response by language





Government/public bodies

- What is most often mentioned :
 - Need to revise the EU FS and the EU FAP
 - Lack of readiness to face climate change
 - Insufficiency of EU and MS policy on climate change
 - SFM as a dynamic concept / continuous updating
 - More co-ordinated EU forest information desirable



Business and industry

- What is most often mentioned :
 - Problem with many demands on forests affecting competitiveness (mainly env.)
 - EU should promote wood, enable SFM
 - High concern about competition for raw material with bio-E > wood hierarchy
 - Intensification of forestry , more active forest management
 - Improve forest information



Forest owners/private

- What is most mentioned :
 - More attention for balancing forest functions at all policy levels
 - Optimism about readiness of forests for climate change > use forests for carbon sequestration, materials , energy
 - Early action : training, PES systems, management guidelines, support schemes
 - Need to update SFM
 - Need for better forest information



NGOs

- What is most mentioned :
 - Better balance of forest functions means more attention for environment
 - Forests are not ready for climate change
 - More information and research needed
 - Revision of EU FAP and FS
 - SFM to be updated, more precise, more prescriptive guidelines, biodiv. Standards
 - EU forest info system based on NFIs



Research community

- A larger variety of opinions than in other groups :
 - Better balance of forest functions is needed to get ready for climate change
 - Updating SFM : biodiv. prot. / raising output
 - Calls for continuing monitoring and EFFIS
 - A proposal for a forest fires directive
 - A lot remains to be done on forest information, actual situation very uneven across MS, minimum standards for EU



Points of convergence

- What do people agree on?
 1. Need for harmonized forest information
 2. Continue and enhance support for research on climate change and its effects
 3. Need for forest gene pool conservation
 4. Most affected region : Med zone > forest fires
 5. Continue EU support for forest sector through RD measures



Differences

- Most obvious antagonisms
 - EU forest policy vs. Subsidiarity (N / S)
 - Protection by use / by conservation
 - Intensification vs. close to nature management
 - Financing yes / legislation no
 - Level for action on forests (local/ nat/ EU / UN)



What next ?

- Green Paper = 1st step : asking What ? Why ? How ?
- Further steps in the process :
 - Studies (ongoing in different DGs)
 - Report on Stakeholder/Institutional consultation (end 2010)
 - Comprehensive report as requested by Council (2011)
 - *Eventually*: impact assessment of possible measures (2011)
 - *Eventually*: white paper on forest protection and information (2011 ?)
 - *Eventually*: legislative proposal (2012?)



Thanks for your attention!

More information on:

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/fprotection.htm>