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**TEXTS ADOPTED**

*Provisional edition*

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**A new EU Forest Strategy**

**European Parliament resolution of 28 April 2015 on ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’ (2014/2223(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’ (COM(2013)0659),
- having regard to the Commission staff working documents (SWD(2013)0342) and (SWD(2013)0343), appended to that communication,
- having regard to the conclusions of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council of 19 May 2014 on the new EU Forest Strategy,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 30 January 2014 entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 10 July 2014 on the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘A new EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector’,
- having regard to its resolution of 16 February 2006 on the implementation of a European Union forestry strategy<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environmental Action Programme to 2020 – □Living well, within the limits of our planet□,
- having regard to the Europe 2020 strategy, including the Innovation Union and Resource Efficient Europe initiatives,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 290 E, 29.11.2006, p. 413.

- having regard to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘An EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change’ (COM(2013)0216),
  - having regard to the communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled ‘Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020’ (COM(2011)0244),
  - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development and the opinions of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (A8-0126/2015),
- A. whereas the European Union has no competence to elaborate a common forestry policy but some of the Union’s policies may have implications for national forestry policies, while it is the Member States who decide the political approaches to forestry and forests;
- B. whereas, although this is clearly an area of Member State responsibility, there are potential advantages for forest-based businesses in better and more active coordination and in a higher profile for this important economic sector, which guarantees jobs at European level, particularly in rural areas, while protecting ecosystems and offering ecological advantages for all, without prejudicing the responsibility of the Member States;
- C. whereas timber is a renewable resource often under-exploited in Europe and the intelligent and sustainable use of this raw material needs to be ensured, including by the development and exchange of know-how;
- D. whereas forests are a source of unique flora, fauna and fungi;
- E. whereas the size and features of forests differ greatly, with some Member States having more than half their territories covered by forests; whereas sustainably managed forests are enormously important in terms of adding value at local, regional, European and international level, guaranteeing jobs in rural areas and contributing to a bioeconomy-based society, representing a benefit for human health, especially in structurally disadvantaged regions, while at the same time making a vital contribution to environmental and climate protection as well as to biodiversity;
- F. whereas forest biomass is a very important source of renewable energy; whereas European forests currently absorb and store around 10 % of EU carbon emissions and thus contribute markedly to climate change mitigation efforts;
- G. whereas, owing to the urbanisation of our society, EU citizens feel less of a connection to the forest, and have little knowledge of forestry or of its impact on prosperity, jobs, climate, environment, human health and the whole value chain together with the link with the wider ecosystems;
- H. whereas a growing number of EU policies are placing increasing demands on forests; whereas these demands need to be carefully balanced, and demand for new uses of

wood in the bioeconomy and for bioenergy must be accompanied by resource efficiency, use of new technology and respect for the limits of sustainable supply;

- I. whereas European forestry is characterised by sustainable management and long-term planning, and whereas the principle of sustainability should be even more strongly emphasised at all levels, from local to global, in order to create jobs, protect biodiversity, mitigate climate change and combat desertification;
- J. whereas it is necessary to highlight the economic, social and environmental role of forests, also in the context of the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage and the promotion of sustainable (eco)tourism;
- K. whereas an increasing world population means a growing demand for energy, and therefore forests should play a more important role in the EU's future energy mix;

***General – the importance of forests, forestry and forest-based sector for the economy and society***

1. Welcomes the Commission communication on a new EU forest strategy and the accompanying working documents, and stresses that an EU forest strategy must focus on the sustainable management of forests and their multifunctional role from the economic, social and environmental viewpoints and must ensure better coordination and communication of Community policies directly or indirectly linked to forestry; points out, in this context, that an increasing number of European policy initiatives in areas such as economic and employment policy, energy policy and environmental and climate policy require a greater contribution from the forestry sector;
2. Underlines the need to determine the value of forest ecosystem services more systematically and to take it into consideration in decision-making in both public and private sectors;
3. Notes that only mountain forests that are healthy and stable are able to perform to a full extent their functions of protecting humans and nature by counteracting the flow of avalanches and mudslides and serving as a natural protection against floods; stresses that in this connection in particular, transnational communication is indispensable;
4. Stresses in this connection that any attempt to make forestry a matter of EU policy should be resisted and that the sector's local and regional basis and the competence of the Member States in this area must be respected while seeking coherence between the respective competences of the EU and the Member States;
5. Emphasises that the EU's forests are characterised by great diversity, including major differences in forest ownership, size, nature and challenges faced;
6. Stresses that the EU forest strategy must take into account the fact that forests cover more than half of the territory of some Member States and that sustainably managed forests are enormously important in adding value at local and regional level and in guaranteeing jobs in rural areas, while at the same time making a vital contribution to the environment;
7. Underlines the particularly valuable role of stable mixed forests including native species of trees suited to local conditions, as well as the essential role that mixed forests play in ecosystems and their contribution to biodiversity;

8. Calls on the Member States to support the efforts of forest owners to preserve and also to create native mixed forests typical of the area;
9. Expresses its disappointment with the fact that the working conditions of forest workers are not included as a point of reference in the proposed strategy, and requests the Commission to take intelligent work organisation, high standards in technology and quality jobs into account;
10. Notes that the forest sector currently employs over 3 million European citizens, and stresses that its long-term competitiveness will only be achieved with a skilled workforce;
11. Considers that the EU Forest Strategy should set the conditions to enable the EU to have relevant training facilities and a workforce which is fully aware of the current challenges and threats faced by the forest sector, but also of the safety rules inherent in forest management;
12. Emphasises the need for a comprehensive and holistic joint strategy, and welcomes the recognition of the economic, environmental and social role and benefits of forests and the forest based-sector in the EU;
13. Believes that this recognition provides a strong basis for supporting the EU forestry sector, inter alia in preventing and managing forest disasters, improving resource efficiency, increasing competitiveness, boosting employment, strengthening forest-based industries and preserving ecological functions;
14. Stresses the significant role that the bioeconomy plays in terms of achieving the Commission's new priorities of growth, employment and investment;
15. Acknowledges that the EU has a role to play in supporting national policies to achieve active, multifunctional and sustainable forest management, including the management of different forest types, and in strengthening cooperation to tackle transboundary challenges such as forest fires, climate change and natural disasters, or invasive alien species;
16. Takes the view that the strategy needs to take greater account of the problem of tree diseases such as oak decline, which is ravaging cork-oak plantations in Portugal, France and Spain and is also affecting Special Protection Areas and biosphere reserves;
17. Stresses that the predicted growth in demand for wood represents both an opportunity and a challenge for forests and all forest-based sectors, especially as drought, fires, storms and pests are expected to damage forests more frequently and more severely as a result of climate change; in this context, emphasises the need to protect forests from these growing threats and to reconcile their productive and protective functions;
18. Welcomes action to increase forest cover, especially with native species, in areas not suitable for food production and in particular in close proximity to urban areas, with a view to mitigating adverse heat effects, reducing pollution and enhancing links between people and forests;
19. Gives its full support to the Commission's efforts to promote forest-related employment and the generation of prosperity in Europe in a sustainable manner;

20. Stresses the important role of the sustainable production and use of timber and other forest-based materials such as cork and wood derivatives including textile fibres for the development of sustainable economic models and the creation of green jobs;
21. Calls on the Commission to analyse the difficulties in the downstream supply chain related to increased demand from third countries, particularly for roundwoods, and to support this sector;
22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives to encourage the increasingly large group of female forest owners to obtain special advice and support in relation to the active and sustainable management of their forests;
23. Stresses that around 60 % of the EU's forests are private, with about 16 million private forest owners, and underlines in this context the importance of ownership and property rights and supports all measures enabling stakeholder groups to participate in a dialogue on reinforcing and implementing sustainable forest management and improve the exchange of information;
24. Notes that forest owners are key actors in rural areas, and welcomes in this connection the recognition of the role of forestry and agro-forestry in the Rural Development Programme of the 2014-2020 CAP;
25. Considers that the implementation of the EU Forest Strategy would be enhanced if supported by appropriate coordination with available EU funding, including from the EAFRD;
26. Stresses the opportunity for Member States and regions to make use of the available funding under their respective rural development programmes, to support sustainable forest management and boost agro-forestry and to deliver public environmental goods such as producing oxygen, sinking carbon and protecting crops against climate effects, as well as stimulating local economies and creating green jobs;
27. Recognises the need for improved transportation and logistics for forest management and extraction of timber; calls on the Member States, therefore, to develop sustainable logistics and logging systems having a reduced negative effect on climate, including the use of trucks and ships powered by sustainable biofuel as well as extended use of railways; encourages the use of EU Structural Funds and Rural Development Programmes for those purposes;
28. Recognises the role of forests in society in relation to the physical and mental health of citizens and that public goods delivered by forests are of high environmental and recreational value and contribute to quality of life, in particular with regard to oxygen supply, carbon sequestration, air filtration, water storage and filtration, erosion control and avalanche protection, as well as providing a place for outdoor activities;
29. Encourages public transport links between urban areas and forests in order to facilitate access to forests and woodland;
30. Highlights the importance of other forest-related activities, e.g. the harvesting of non-wood forest products such as mushrooms or soft fruit, as well as grazing and beekeeping;

31. Calls on the Commission to promote economic activities which can serve as a source of raw materials for the pharmaceutical, cosmetic and food industries and be used as an alternative way of dealing with unemployment and rural depopulation, and also to promote the products of those activities as beneficial for human health;

***Resource efficiency – timber as a sustainable raw material (sustainable forest management)***

32. Stresses that both the use of timber and other harvested wood products as renewable and climate-friendly raw materials on the one hand, and sustainable forest management on the other, have an important role to play in the achievement of the EU's socio-political goals such as the energy transition, climate mitigation and adaptation, and the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy targets and biodiversity targets; notes that lack of active forest management would be inimical to these goals;
33. Stresses that managed forests have a higher CO<sub>2</sub> absorption capacity than unmanaged forests, and underlines the importance of sustainable forest management in maximising the carbon sequestration potential of EU forests;
34. Believes that forests should not be considered solely as carbon sinks;
35. Emphasises the need to make sure that forest resources and wood materials are used and reused efficiently, as a means of cutting the EU's trade deficit, improving the self-sufficiency of the EU in wood, boosting the competitiveness of its forest sector, helping reduce unsustainable forest management, protecting the environment, and reducing deforestation in countries outside the EU;
36. Expressly supports the resource-efficient use of timber as a renewable, versatile raw material with limited availability, and opposes legally binding rules for prioritising the uses of wood, as this not only restricts the energy market and the development of new and innovative uses of biomass, but is also impossible to enforce in many remote and rural areas, if only for infrastructure reasons;
37. Supports an open, market-oriented approach and freedom for all market participants by giving priority to locally sourced wood in order to minimise the carbon footprint created by overseas transport, and stimulate sustainable local production;
38. Considers it imperative, given that some of the Union's biggest biomass resources are found in its most sparsely populated and remote regions, that the strategy should also take full account of the specificities of those regions;
39. Recognises the value of wood for energy purposes, as a means of combating energy poverty, contributing to the renewable energy targets of the 2030 climate and energy framework, and opening up new business opportunities;
40. Considers that the new forest strategy must enable greater cooperation on the issue of the structuring of the timber industry and the regrouping of operators, with a view to ensuring better use of the forest resource;
41. Takes the view that sustainable forest management must be based on generally acknowledged and accepted principles and tools, such as criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management which must always apply to the sector as a whole regardless of the end use of wood;

42. Supports the Commission's intention to develop, together with the Member States and stakeholders, an ambitious, objective and demonstrable set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of forests, stressing that these criteria should be aligned with the requirements of Forest Europe (Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe)<sup>1</sup>, which form a pan-European basis for uniform reporting on sustainable forest management and a basis for sustainability certification, taking into account the diversity of forest types across Europe;
43. Acknowledges that the growing demand for forest-based materials, primarily as a result of the rise in the number of biomass-based renewable energies, calls for new ways of increasing the availability of timber to ensure the sustainable exploitation of forests;
44. Notes the significant progress made in the negotiations within Forest Europe towards a 'European Forest Convention'<sup>2</sup> as a binding framework for sustainable forest management and for improving the balance of interests in forest policy, and calls on the Member States and the Commission to make all necessary efforts to resume these negotiations and drive them forward to a successful conclusion;
45. Takes the view that forest management plans or equivalent instruments can be important strategic instruments for the implementation of concrete measures at the level of individual businesses, for long-term planning and for the implementation of sustainable forest management in European forests; emphasises, however, that the implementation of the concrete measures contained in these plans at the forest holding level must remain subject to national regulations;
46. Calls on the Member States, in line with the subsidiarity and proportionality principles, to monitor and promote the implementation of the forest management plans without creating unnecessary administrative burdens;
47. Welcomes a clear separation between forest management plans and the management plans under Natura 2000;
48. Points out that forestry management plans are only a condition for receiving EU rural development funds for beneficiaries above a certain holding size, and that forests below the threshold size are exempt; furthermore notes that equivalent instruments can also be approved;
49. Calls on the Member States to make full use of this existing flexibility when implementing legislation, especially to benefit smaller operators;
50. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to create incentives and support new business models, such as production cooperatives, that seek to encourage small private forest owners to manage their forests actively and sustainably;
51. Maintains that in order to implement the strategy in the proper way it is essential to have a specific long-term action plan emphasising the importance of mobilisation and sustainable use of forest timber, with the aim of creating added value and jobs, while

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<sup>1</sup> Forest Europe - Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe: <http://www.foresteuropa.org/>

<sup>2</sup> See: <http://www.forestnegotiations.org/>

providing means of strengthening private forestry businesses and supporting organised groupings of forest owners;

52. Underlines that efficient resource management should include support programmes for the afforestation of land areas that are not fit for agriculture, as well as for the creation of shelter belts;

### ***Research and development – education and training***

53. Considers that priority should be given to the practical application of research, since the whole sector can benefit from new ideas and the forest-based industries have great potential for growth; also considers that further investments in innovation in the sector can create new production niches and more efficient processes that would ensure smarter use of available resources and could minimise negative impacts on forest resources;
54. Calls on the Commission to assess, from the point of view of forestry and wood working priorities, the European R&D programmes (Horizon 2020) and the programme for the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) and, where appropriate, to develop new instruments for the forest-based sector and promote targeted research into cost-effective solutions for new and innovative timber products to support the development of the sustainable wood-based bioeconomy;
55. Welcomes the benefits of sharing best practices and existing knowledge on forests between Member States, and calls on the Member States and the Commission to support exchanges between industry, scientists and producers;
56. Stresses the importance of supporting EU framework programmes for research, development and innovation for achieving smart and sustainable growth, higher added-value products, cleaner technology and a high degree of technological advance, in particular in relation to refined biofuels and industrial building using wood, along with the automotive and textile sectors;
57. Recalls that, according to the Commission, in 2009 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;
58. Notes that every euro invested in bioeconomy research and innovation under Horizon 2020 will generate about EUR 10 in added value; stresses that forests play a crucial role in the bioeconomy now and will continue to do so in the future;
59. Considers that the substitution of oil-based or heat-intensive raw materials by timber and harvested wood products should be encouraged, in line with progress in research and technology, and that this can positively contribute to further gains in terms of climate change mitigation as well as job creation;
60. Stresses the need to carry out a cost assessment of all EU legislation affecting the value chains of forest-based industries, with a view to cutting out all unnecessary and burdensome bureaucracy and creating an enabling framework in order to increase the industries' long-term competitiveness in a sustainable manner, and also to support the principle that legislative proposals affecting the forestry sector and the value chains of forest-based industries should be thoroughly evaluated by means of an impact assessment;

61. Takes the view that extending the forest-related knowledge basis is of crucial importance to research and that reliable information is essential for the implementation of the forest strategy;
62. Notes the availability of information and monitoring resources via the Copernicus programme and other space initiatives at European level, and recommends increasing the use of these resources and tools;
63. Notes that national forest inventories represent a comprehensive monitoring tool for assessing forestry stocks and take regional considerations into account while also responding to demands for less red tape and lower costs;
64. Welcomes the Commission's efforts to establish a European forest information system based on national data and initiatives to improve the comparability of new and existing data, and hopes in this regard to see a reinforcement of the analysis of data on the economy and employment in the forest and woodworking sectors;
65. Recommends, in particular, that there should be more long-term data sets to help the understanding of trends in forestry and its adaptation to climate change;
66. Takes the view that a skilled and well-trained workforce is essential for the successful implementation of sustainable forest management, and calls on the Commission and the Member States to devise measures and, where possible, to use existing European instruments such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European training programmes (ET2020) to support generation renewal and compensate for the skilled workforce shortage in the forests;
67. Calls on the Commission to support the preparation of information campaigns for the sector aimed at raising awareness of the opportunities it offers for tackling unemployment and depopulation, as well as increasing its attractiveness to young people;
68. Takes the view that training programmes should be developed, particularly for new entrants and young foresters as well as for existing employees in the construction industry, in order to increase their awareness of the opportunities created by the use of wood, so that the transfer of knowledge regarding sustainable forest management and its downstream industries is ensured;
69. Recognises that sustainable management for the entire life-cycle of forest products can make a significant contribution towards achieving green economy objectives, in particular those linked to climate change mitigation policies and efficient use of resources;
70. Considers that Member States should promote the sustainable use of forest products in the construction sector, including application to the construction of more affordable houses built from sustainably sourced raw materials;
71. Points out the importance of traditional high-value uses that still have huge growth potential, such as using wood in construction and packaging;

72. Notes that current technological developments enable construction of high-capacity housing developments made mostly of wood, thus significantly limiting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the building sector;
73. Points out that rules on the use of wood for building purposes differ from one Member State to another; calls, therefore, for a commitment to adopt EU rules promoting the wider use of wood in buildings;
74. Calls on the Member States to develop initiatives to support knowledge and technology transfer and to fully utilise existing EU programmes supporting research and innovation in forestry and the forest-based sector;
75. Notes that there are significant gaps in scientific and technological research relating to the adaptation of forestry to climate change, including research into the impact of increasing pests and diseases which pose a serious threat to Europe's forests and forest-based sectors;
76. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to act to raise awareness of the economic, environmental and social role of European forests and forestry and the importance of the sustainable forest-based bioeconomy and of wood as one of the EU's crucial renewable raw materials;
77. Considers it important to encourage scientific research work oriented towards rational use of biomass and the development of fast-growing energy crops, and to create a model providing an economic incentive for the use of biomass waste;

#### ***Global challenges – environment and climate change***

78. Stresses that sustainable forest management has a positive impact on biodiversity and climate change mitigation and can diminish the risks of forest fires, pest damage and disease;
79. Stresses that the Union has agreed that by 2020 the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystem services, including pollination, must be halted, ecosystems and their services must be maintained and at least 15 % of degraded ecosystems should have been restored; adds that the Union has further agreed that forest management must be sustainable, that forests, their biodiversity and the services they provide must be protected and, as far as feasible, enhanced, and that the resilience of forests to climate change, fires, storms, pests and diseases must be improved; emphasises, in addition, the need therefore to develop and implement a renewed Union Forest Strategy that addresses the multiple demands on, and benefits of, forests and contributes to a more strategic approach to protecting and enhancing forests, including through sustainable forest management<sup>1</sup>;
80. Points out that other issues should be studied further, in particular the problem of overpopulation of herbivores, forest health and facilitating sustainable timber production, Forest Genetic Resources (FGR), measures to prevent and fight forest fires and avoid soil erosion, and the recovery of vegetation cover;

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<sup>1</sup> Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 – 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'.

81. Recognises that short rotation forestry could provide sustainable wooden biomass while providing the necessary territory maintenance, thus reducing the risks of soil erosion and landslides on set-aside or abandoned land;
82. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take specific action with a view to achieving Aichi Target 5, under which the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, should be at least halved by 2020 and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation should be significantly reduced;
83. Urges the Member States to design their forestry policies in such a way as to take full account of the importance of forests in terms of protecting biodiversity, preventing soil erosion, ensuring carbon sequestration and air purification and maintaining the water cycle;
84. Notes that the bioeconomy, as a core element of smart, green growth in Europe, is necessary for the realisation of the objectives of the flagship initiatives 'Innovation Union' and 'Resource Efficient Europe' under the Europe 2020 strategy, and that timber as a raw material has a significant role to play in making progress towards a bio-based economy;
85. Stresses the need to clarify, as a matter of urgency, the greenhouse impacts of the various uses of forest biomass for energy and to identify the uses that can achieve the greatest mitigation benefits within policy-relevant timeframes;
86. Takes the view that it is important to promote the implementation of the concept of the bioeconomy, while respecting the sustainability boundaries of raw material supply, in order to boost the economic viability of forest value chains through innovation and technology transfer;
87. Calls for more support for diverse forest products, ensuring that the different demands on forest products are balanced and evaluated against the sustainable supply potential and the other ecosystem functions and services provided by forests;
88. Expresses serious concern at the pace of world deforestation, particularly in developing countries and often from illegal logging;
89. Supports mechanisms that promote the global development of forestry towards more sustainable use, and in this connection refers in particular to the EU Timber Directive<sup>1</sup>, which aims to combat illegal logging and the placing of illegal timber on the European market from third-country imports, as well as to the authorisation system for timber imports to the EU (FLEGT)<sup>2</sup> and to voluntary partnership agreements;
90. Calls on the Commission to publish the awaited review of the functioning and effectiveness of the EU Timber Regulation, and stresses that a new regulation should be proportionate and should look at ways of reducing unnecessary costs and reporting

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 October 2010 laying down the obligations of operators who place timber and timber products on the market.

<sup>2</sup> Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 of 20 December 2005 on the establishment of a FLEGT licensing scheme for imports of timber into the European Community (FLEGT = Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade).

requirements for Europe's woodland owners and foresters without compromising the aim of the regulation;

91. Takes the view, given the challenges posed by global warming and climate change, that ecosystems and populations of species must be healthy, biologically diverse and robust in order to be resilient;
92. Highlights the opportunities provided by the Natura 2000 sites where, thanks to their extraordinary natural resources, it is possible to produce forest-based products and services of high environmental and cultural quality;
93. Underlines the importance of healthy forest ecosystems offering habitats for animals and plants, but stresses that well-meaning legislation such as the EU Habitats Directive affects land management decisions and must be implemented proportionately;
94. Recognises the role of forests in the development of related sectors, and insists in this respect on the importance of supporting melliferous tree growers, which in turn helps the pollination process;
95. Takes the view that certain issues affect the forestry industry at global level, particularly illegal felling, and therefore calls on the Commission to reinforce support for the forestry industry among the associated international bodies;
96. Notes that demand for biomass, particularly wood, is rising, and therefore welcomes the efforts of the Commission and Member States to support developing countries in their measures to improve forestry policy and forestry legislation, particularly by way of REDD+<sup>1</sup> (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation);
97. Invites the Commission to develop an action plan on deforestation and forest degradation in order to address the objectives set out in its communication on deforestation, as called for by the Seventh Environmental Action Programme; considers it important to provide for not only the conservation and management of existing forests but also the reforestation of deforested areas;
98. Considers that separate reference must also be made to the need for widespread reforestation in areas that have been affected by recurring forest fires;

### ***Implementation and reporting***

99. Stresses that the implementation of the EU's forest strategy should be a multiannual coordinated process in which the views of Parliament should be taken into account and that the strategy should be implemented efficiently, coherently and with minimal red tape;
100. Regrets that the implementation process has partly begun before Parliament has adopted its position, and considers that this is not in line with the aim of better coordination of forest-related policies as stated by the Commission in its Strategy text;

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<sup>1</sup> Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation:  
<http://unfccc.int/methods/redd/items/7377.php>

101. Takes the view that the new strategy should establish links between the strategies and funding plans of the EU and of the Member States, and reinforce cohesion in terms of planning, funding and the implementation of cross-sector activities;
102. Calls for an inclusive, well-structured and balanced implementation of the strategy;
103. Takes the view, therefore, that the mandate of the Standing Forestry Committee should be strengthened and better resourced to enable the Commission to fully use the expertise from the Member States whilst implementing the new EU Forest Strategy at EU level; calls on the Commission to consult the Standing Forestry Committee with sufficient notice before submitting any initiative or draft text that will impact on the management of forests and the timber industry;
104. Emphasises the important role of the Civil Dialogue Group on Forestry and Cork and other relevant stakeholders, and calls for their proper involvement in the strategy's implementation;
105. Takes the view that the transverse nature of forestry issues requires internal cooperation among the various Commission departments when considering any measure which may impact on the specific nature of sustainable forest management and associated industries; therefore calls on DG Environment, DG Climate Action, DG Agri, DG Energy, DG Research and Innovation and other DGs concerned to work together strategically in order to ensure effective implementation of the strategy through enhanced coordination and communication;
106. Considers that, in view of the Commission's list of priorities on growth, employment and investment, priority should also be given in implementing the new EU forest strategy to promoting the competitiveness and sustainability of the forest sector, supporting both rural and urban areas, expanding the knowledge basis, protecting forests and preserving their ecosystems, promoting coordination and communication, and increasing the sustainable use of wood and non-wood forest products;
107. Calls on the Commission to supplement the strategy with a robust action plan containing specific measures, and to report to Parliament annually on the progress made in the implementation of specific actions under the strategy;
108. Advocates the convening of an expanded AGRI-ENVI-ITRE committee to permit a balanced discussion on progress in the implementation of the new EU forest strategy;

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109. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.