

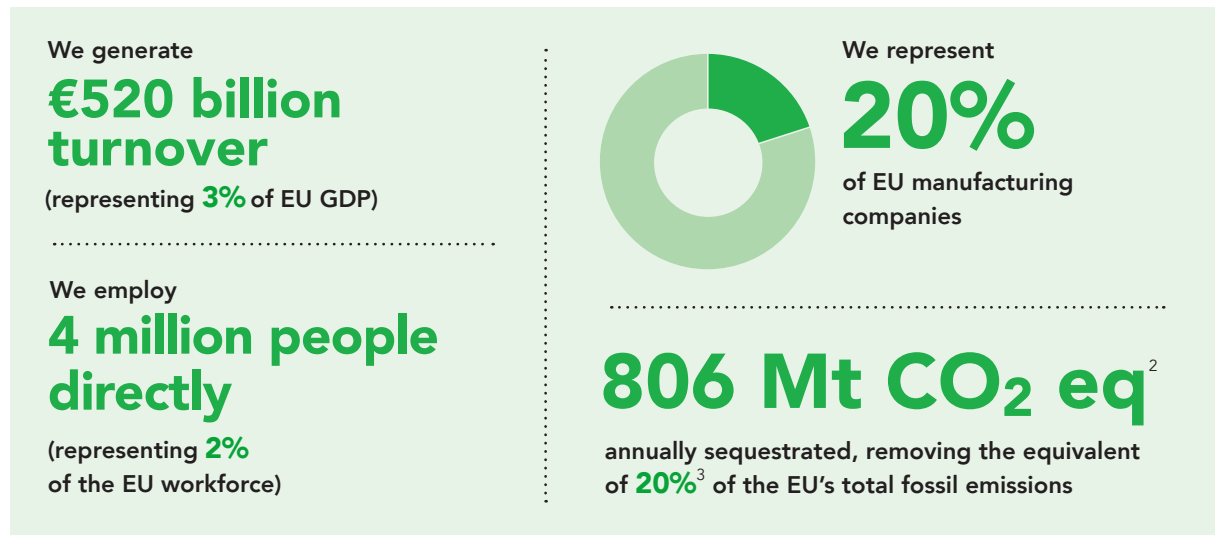
CIRCULAR CHOICES FOR A COMPETITIVE EU BIOECONOMY

Growing a circular future

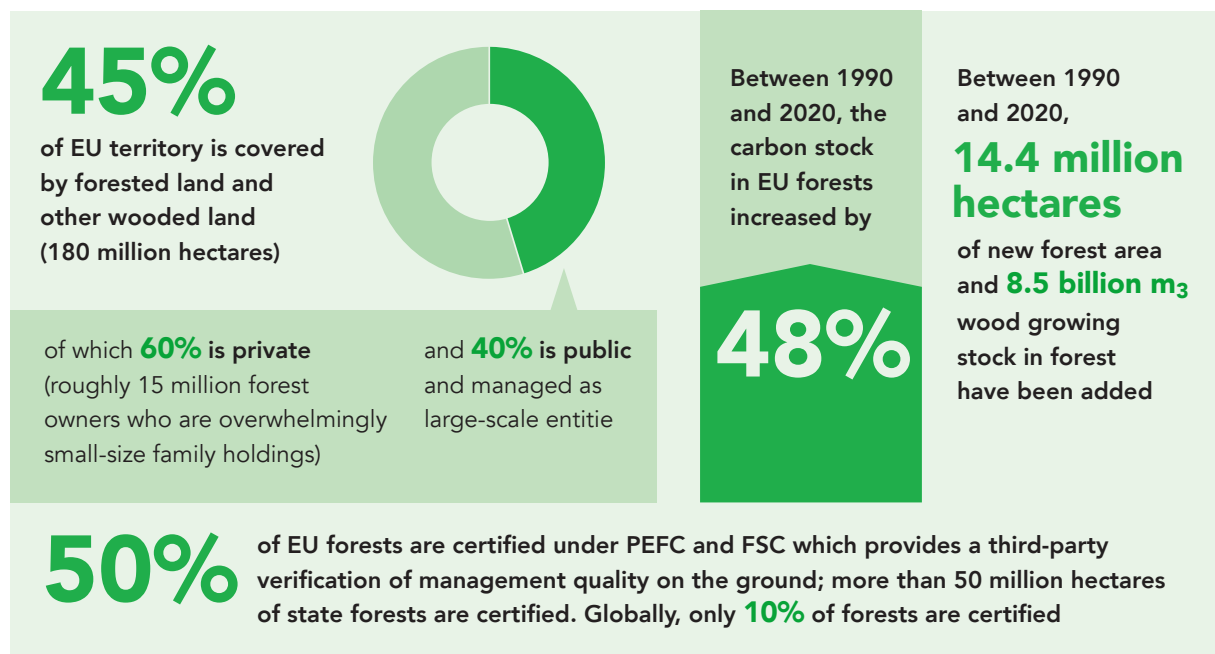
Executive summary

WHO ARE WE?

The Cross-sectoral Coalition for Circular Choices for the EU's Bioeconomy¹ offers biobased, renewable and carbon-neutral products and solutions that contribute to European resilience and enable the transition towards a circular bioeconomy. From the logs, wood products and renewable energy, to our key role in the construction sector and in the furniture sectors, to the innovations we are driving in the pulp, packaging, board, tissue, and printing sectors, we are committed to the sustainable management of our forests, the delivery of sustainable products, the transition to net zero and the creation of long-term jobs.



FOREST DATA



1. The term bioeconomy covers all sectors and systems that rely on biological resources, their functions and principles. This paper focuses exclusively on the EU forestry sector bioeconomy. European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, A sustainable bioeconomy for Europe: strengthening the connection between economy, society and the environment: updated bioeconomy strategy, Publications Office of the European Union, 2018, (<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/792130>).

2. Climate effects of the forest-based sector in the European Union, Peter Holmgren, 2019 (https://www.cepi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Cepi-Climate-effects-of-the-forest-based-sector-in-the-EU_Exc-summary.pdf).

3. Climate effects of the forest-based sector in the European Union, Peter Holmgren, 2019 (https://www.cepi.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Cepi-Climate-effects-of-the-forest-based-sector-in-the-EU_Exc-summary.pdf).

OUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY

In order to achieve our goals and simultaneously contribute to EU priorities, we are:

- Driving the EU away from fossil raw materials through sequestration, storage and substitution
- Making sustainable and climate-friendly products the norm by providing renewable, carbon-neutral and recyclable alternatives to fossil-based materials
- Meeting the increasing demand for raw materials by maximising new secondary streams
- Maintaining and developing healthy, resilient and productive forest ecosystems, thus strengthening the environmental and climate benefits of EU forests
- Protecting and advancing consumer health and safety thereby contributing to societal well-being

We also contribute to EU strategic autonomy, as shown by the adaptability of our sector during recent crises. We play a key role in providing essential products and services to society, helping to build European resilience, while playing our part in the green and net zero transition.

OUR 2030 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Coalition proposes the following policy recommendations in order to address the challenges that Europe faces on raw materials and supply, circular economy and the environment, energy decarbonisation, strategic autonomy, and forest management:

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Sustainable Supply and Efficient Use of Raw Materials

Ensure a strong and growing supply of renewable wood and fibre as critical primary and secondary raw materials for the circular bioeconomy by warranting the proper functioning of the Single Market, and by developing enabling EU legislation that facilitates the transition to sustainable wood-based products and bioenergy from fossil-based alternatives.

- Assess the impacts of legislation that directly affects raw material supply, i.e. on forests with respect to the availability of wood, and on recycling with respect to the availability of recycled fibres, while avoiding counterproductive policies such as imposing mandatory recycled content
- Apply the cascading principle in line with market and regional specificities, along the lines of the European Commission's 2018 guidelines for good practice on the resource-efficient use of wood
- Ensure that EU policy drives the transformation of wood on European soil, as a precious resource and raw material to achieve the twin objectives of supporting local industries and EU added value
- Acknowledge the contribution of renewable materials to climate neutrality and enhance the use of industrial off-site wood construction to improve the use of raw materials and reduce waste
- Support a functional EU internal market for wood, fibre-based paper and board products by putting in place appropriate collection and sorting systems for recycling at scale

Biobased Circular Economy and Environment

To build a circular bioeconomy, it is fundamental to recognise that renewability is an important sustainability parameter alongside recyclability. EU legislation could lock in the environmental and societal benefits that accrue from the use of recycled wood, fibre-based and paper products derived from renewable resources, while maintaining carbon cycles.

- Recognise the contributions of Coalition stakeholders to the EU's circular bioeconomy and ensure that wood, fibre-based and paper-based products are regulated as biobased, sustainable and complementary recycled solutions to reusable options

Climate and Energy

Our combined sectors collectively provide integrated solutions to the global climate challenge on a significant scale. These solutions could deliver on carbon mitigation equivalent to 30% of all fossil fuel emissions in the EU by 2030, but the Coalition's competitiveness is dependent on secure access to affordable clean energy sources. An enabling policy framework is needed to ensure that industry has the capacity to further invest in industrial transformation in order to achieve the 2050 climate neutrality targets.

- Incentivise industrial symbiosis and voluntary integration of industry with energy systems to ensure systemic emission reductions
- Unlock funding opportunities for de-risking investments in improving energy efficiency, CO₂ avoidance and switching to renewable energy
- Facilitate on-site renewable energy production in order to contribute to the strategic autonomy of European energy resources

Strategic Autonomy

To strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy and resilience, we must embed the bioeconomy in the European value chain, and ensure an integrated and flexible EU single market for industry to remain globally competitive. Strategic autonomy at home also relies on how the EU positions itself externally in defence of its trade and commercial interests.

- Establish a wood and fibre-based Industrial Alliance tasked with ensuring the optimal use of raw materials and enhancing material efficiency of such products on an industrial scale
- Secure fair competition on global markets for renewable EU products and ensure compliance with global trade rules and EU regulations for the import of goods to the internal market
- Recognise that the underperformance of the standardisation process is a crucial obstacle to the smooth functioning of the Single Market, and for this reason act on the importance of well-defined and reliable guidelines for standardisation committees, as well as consultation and involvement of Member States and industry stakeholders in the evaluation and adoption process of standardisation deliverables

Sustainable Forest Management

Sustainable and multifunctional forests are important contributors to a European circular bioeconomy. In this context, the recognition of the EU subsidiarity principle is a pre-condition to support the value of sustainable forest management across the EU. This requires active forest management practices tailored to local circumstances and needs.

- Acknowledge the value of, and need for, multifunctional management of forests and diverse forest management practices as guiding principles for EU forest-related policies
- Support wood mobilisation in line with societal needs to meet the increasing demand for sawn wood, paper and fibre-based products and bioenergy, and diversify income sources for forest owners through the development of payments for other ecosystem services

We ask the European Commission to support the vision⁴ of our Coalition so that we can deliver on our commitments and ambitions, including raising our climate contribution from 20% in 2020 to 30% in 2030.

4. The extended version of the cross-sectoral Coalition for Circular Choices' vision is available here ([hyperlink to pdf](#))