

A tool like a “REAL-TIME EUROPEAN FOREST MONITORING SYSTEM” represents the essential element to develop a European Forestry Strategy. This instrument will allow the wood processing industries to remain competitive and assure best performance in the context of a circular and sustainable Green Economy. At the same time, this tool will be beneficial to guarantee healthy and resilient ecosystems. Climatic factors, abiotic and biotic disturbances have a direct impact on forests, on the functioning of forest ecosystems and consequently on the wood value chain.

The European Organisation of the Sawmill Industry welcomes the call to develop a Forest Information System for Europe published today in the framework of the [2030 Biodiversity Strategy](#) in which the EU Commission has announced that “a new EU forest data and information architecture will be presented in the upcoming EU Forest Strategy”.

Throughout the last decade European forests experienced a series of abiotic and biotic disturbances which left unprecedented damage. Major abiotic disturbances include various storms, occurring in Poland, Western Europe (particularly in Germany) and in the southern Alpine regions in which besides the damage to forests, the storm and flooding event caused major harm to society and infrastructure. Also, forest fires established new records in the past years and affected forest ecosystems in Mediterranean (Portugal, Greece), the Pyrenees, the Alpine region and since 2018 also the boreal North. Not only do fires destroy timber resources but also vulnerable forests of the Natura 2000 network.

Overall, between 2017 and 2019, it has been estimated that over 270 million m³ of standing timber in Central Europe has been damaged by a combination of factors, primarily driven by changing climate conditions featuring hotter, drier summers and warmer winters. (Source: Forest Economic Advisors Report “[Central Europe Beetle & Windstorm Timber Disaster: Outlook to 2030](#)”.)

The ongoing bark beetle crisis and the abiotic disturbances strongly challenge the long-term availability of timber resources and stable market conditions especially as data on forest resources are mainly available at national level, while bioeconomy actors operate at European and global level. At present, single players (forests companies as well as timber industries) only have limited national data sources to gauge the extent of the damage, while both weather-related disturbances and bark beetles infestations are spanning throughout several countries. Also, timber markets at EU level are fully integrated. Furthermore, wood harvest and damage statistics differ among countries and partly even among regions, making data comparability very challenging.

The European Sawmill Industry chiefly relies on EU wooden materials (almost no logs are imported). This value chain is thus based on security of supply and produces carbon-neutral products. Contributing to more than 80% of the forests owners’ incomes, the European Sawmill Industries play an important role in the development of sustainable forest management and in the forestry value chain.

Wood products create an opportunity to provide long-term carbon storage benefits by storing carbon and by substituting more energy-intensive materials. They offer a reliable and effective way to develop a sustainable and environmentally friendly Europe. Mapping and forecasting disturbances in forests is therefore essentials to both well-informed management plans and to a competitive European wood processing Industry.

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