



PRIMER EJERCICIO DE LA FASE DE OPOSICIÓN DEL PROCESO SELECTIVO PARA INGRESO EN EL CUERPO DE INGENIEROS DE MONTES DE LA HACIENDA PÚBLICA

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PARTE B

The European Union and forests

What is a forest? This would seem to be a simple question, but there is no one answer valid for all the Member States. Nevertheless, for the purposes of international forestry statistics, Eurostat follows a classification scheme set up by the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and applies the following definition: a forest is land with tree crown cover (or equivalent stocking level) of more than 10% and an area of more than 0.5 hectares. The trees should be able to reach a minimum height of 5 metres at maturity in situ.

Forestry policy and initiatives in the European Union: coherence is the key

As the Treaties make no specific reference to forests, the EU does not have a common forestry policy. Forestry policy is thus still primarily a national matter. Many EU measures do have an impact on forests in EU and non-EU countries alike, however.

A. A new EU reference framework for forestry

In September 2013, the Commission adopted a new EU Forest Strategy, proposing an EU reference framework to be used when drawing up sectoral policies that will have an impact on forests. The strategy's guiding principles are sustainable forest management and promotion of their multifunctional role, resource efficiency and the EU's global forest responsibility. It also sets out a strategic approach governing action by the Commission and the Member States.

B. A wide range of European Union actions affecting forests

1. The common agricultural policy (CAP), the main source of EU funds for forests

Some 90% of EU funding for forests comes from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). During the last programming period, 2007-2013, approximately EUR 5.4 billion was allocated from the EAFRD budget to co-finance forestry measures. Following the



most recent reform of the CAP, the new regulation on support for rural development by the EAFRD was published in December 2013 ([Regulation \(EU\) No 1305/2013 3.2.6](#)). In the interests of simplification, over the period 2015-2020 a single specific measure includes all types of support for investment in forests. The measure covers investment in the development of forested areas and improvement of the viability of forests: afforestation and creation of woodland, establishment of agro-forestry systems, prevention and restoration of damage to forests from forest fires, natural disasters and catastrophic events, investment to improve the resilience and environmental value of forest ecosystems and investment in forestry technologies and in the processing, promotion and marketing of forest products. Another measure is intended to provide rewards for forestry, environmental and climate services and the conservation of forests. Some EUR 8.2 billion has been earmarked for the 2015-2020 period (27% for reforestation, 18% to make forests more resilient and 18% for damage prevention).

2. Other European Union measures which have an impact on forests: a snapshot

The marketing of forest reproductive material is regulated at EU level by Directive 1999/105/EC. The European plant health regime aims to prevent harmful organisms spreading to forests (Directive 2000/29/EC). The EU also helps fund forest research, in particular under the Horizon 2020 programme. In the energy policy sphere, the EU has set itself the legally binding target of meeting 20% of total energy consumption from renewable energy sources by 2020, which should increase the demand for forestry biomass

In addition, some 37.5 million hectares of forest are part of the Natura 2000 nature protection network, set up under the EU's environmental policy. The rational use of forests is one of the thematic priorities of the European Union's new Environment and Climate Action Programme (LIFE 2014-2020, Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013). The EU Biodiversity Strategy stipulates that sustainable forest management plans for publicly owned forests must be in place by 2020. The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) monitors forest fires. The EU also encourages ecological tendering, which may promote demand for sustainably produced timber; the European ecolabel has been awarded for wood flooring, furniture and paper. In addition, the FLEGT Action Plan provides for voluntary partnership agreements with timber-producing countries and a regulation to ban the marketing of illegally harvested timber, which came into force in March 2013 (Regulation (EU) No 995/2010).