



Brussels, 26th April 2024

## **Joint statement on the forest-based bioeconomy on the occasion of the Agriculture and Fisheries Council 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024**

European forest owners and managers see bioeconomy as a crucial component in the green transition of the European economy and in strengthening the strategic autonomy of the European Union. We therefore welcome the timely initiative of EU Member States to recognize and include sustainable bioeconomy to the work programme of the next European Commission.

The European forests and their sustainable management play, and will continue to play, a key role in the transition towards EU bioeconomy. Renewable biomaterials, such as sustainably sourced wood, have proved to be a realistic alternative to fossil products and -fuels, and have great potential to displace fossil carbon and reduce dependence on fossil resources if the bioeconomy is strategically developed. The range of wood-based novel materials is expanding rapidly, and their use spans from construction materials, textile fibres and renewable wood-based fuels, to innovative applications as bio-chemicals. It is of strategic importance to support the development of the European wood-based sectors through an enhanced EU research and innovation agenda, building on strong public and private collaboration.

The EU bioeconomy needs to build on a bottom-up approach, where primary producers such as forest owners and managers have a strong position in the value chain. The revision of the EU Bioeconomy Strategy in 2025 needs to reflect the changed realities of today and embrace the potential and opportunities of the bioeconomy. A strong bioeconomy enables a decentralised network of local economies (including cross-border cooperation), strengthening rural livelihoods while simultaneously decreasing the EU's dependency on third countries' raw material and energy supplies.

As sustainably managed and constantly growing resource, European forests can largely contribute to meeting the increasing demand for wood in a sustainable fashion, and simultaneously contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as integrative biodiversity. Sustainably managed, resilient, multifunctional forests form the cornerstone of a robust European bioeconomy. To fulfil all these roles and anticipate any future challenges, carefully planned, active management of our forest resources is crucial and requires science-driven and coherent policymaking with a long-term vision, based on constructive dialogue with forest owners and managers.

European forest owners and managers are looking forward to continuous collaboration with the Member States to build a future-fit and de-fossilised European Union with the help of a robust and coherent EU bioeconomy framework with streamlined, simplified administrative requirements.

### Signatories:

**Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)**  
**The European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR)**  
**European Farmers and Agri-Cooperatives (Copa-Cogeca)**  
**The European Landowners' Organization (ELO)**  
**European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA)**