NAT/696
Effortsharing 2030 and land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF)

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What is the EESC?

A consultative body that represents Civil Society

“The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission shall be assisted by an Economic and Social Committee and a Committee of the Regions acting in an advisory capacity.”

Treaty on European Union, Art. 13
Mission statement

Committed to the European project, the EESC helps strengthen the European Union’s democratic legitimacy and effectiveness by enabling civil society organisations from the Member States to express their views at European level.

It has three main tasks, which are to:

- ensure that EU policies reflect the true economic, social and civic picture,
- build a more participatory EU, closer to its citizens, and
- promote EU values and civil society organisations globally
What does Civil Society mean?

People “on the ground” - those most directly affected by EU legislation!
That is, representatives of organisations of

• employers
• workers
• various interests *(including farmers, the professions, consumers, NGOs…)*

**Those who are committed to defending their interests** *(trade unions, employers, consumers ...) or convictions* *(human rights, children's rights, environment, poverty, the fight against racism and discrimination...)*
Working methods

• The EESC works in all **24 official languages** of the EU, so that each member is able to speak and draft texts in his/her mother tongue

• To issue opinions (mandatory, own-initiative or exploratory opinions), the sections usually set up **“study groups”**, each with a **rapporteur**

• There is a continual quest for a **“dynamic compromise”**

• **Constructive debate** takes place, on the basis of real expertise

• **A vote** is taken in the **section**, and then in the **plenary session**

• The **final opinion** is sent to the **European institutions** and published in the **Official Journal of the EU**
Background

- Staring point NAT 655 Implications of climate and energy policy to agriculture and forestry back in 2015
Given the expected very positive economic and social impact, especially for job creation in rural areas,

the EESC encourages an active strategy, taking into account the potential for sustainable and economically viable growth of biomass for bioenergy and the bioeconomy in general as well as sustainably intensified agriculture,

guaranteeing stable additional high income for farmers,

forest owners and rural communities and boosting investment in infrastructure and the social needs of rural areas.
Forests and wood products can store more CO2.

Active forest management and increased use of wood products can increase the removal and storage of CO2.

Additional substitution effects can be expected where wood products replace conventional products or materials.
Agriculture and forestry sectors are complex, not fully understood biological structures, where major changes should not be proposed and implemented as temporary solutions to reach short-term targets.

Concentrating on 2020 and 2030 targets is too short a period for biological systems.

No global solutions on biological systems should be proposed for the whole EU region, given the very diverse and sometimes unexpected local circumstances.
Research, innovation and development are the main drivers for the transition to sustainable agriculture and forestry, including for bioenergy and the bioeconomy, in line with climate policy objectives.

The EESC calls on the EU institutions and Member States to increase the funding for work in this field, and calls for a joint effort where findings are shared between the research communities.

The key to successful implementation of innovation is to actively promote it via consultative and educational bodies to the end users in the agricultural and forestry sectors.
The EESC stresses that civil dialogue and civil initiatives between stakeholders and local, regional, national and European institutions are the most efficient way of creating the policy framework for the agricultural and forestry sectors.

The best examples of such involvement, including successful public-private partnerships, should be shared among the Member States.
The EESC welcomes the timely proposals from the Commission to implement the EU's commitment to reducing its greenhouse gases by 2030 in all sectors of the economy and society.

EESC emphasises the need to simultaneously take into account the global long-term challenge of climate change mitigation.

This requires a thorough evaluation of whether the EU's current climate policy approach, with regard to efforts at global, EU and national levels, is appropriate in paving the way for a carbon-neutral world.
Integration of land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) into the 2030 framework brings a remarkable new element into EU climate policy.

Integration should take place in a way that enhances long-term carbon neutrality. Sustainable use and active management of bio-based natural resources.

Sustainable bioeconomy - including sustainable forest management and climate-smart food production - is a key element of this transition and should be carefully addressed in order to achieve environmentally, economically and socially sustainable growth.
• The Paris Agreement introduces a strong obligation to act in order to keep global warming "well below 2°C [...] and pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C",

"to increase the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production".
The role of agriculture and forestry calls for a holistic approach from EU climate policy.

Both the reduction of emissions and the sequestration of carbon need to be taken into account, as do the challenges of adaptation and food security.

It is therefore important to address the need for increased resilience in the agricultural sector while mitigating climate change.
The EESC calls on the Commission and the Member States to acknowledge the crucial role and potential of forests and sustainable forest management as a carbon sink and the associated social, environmental and economic benefits.
Carbon sequestration is not just a question of forest land area but first and foremost that of enhancing forest growth and vigorous photosynthesis by means of active forest management and the increased use of wood biomass for products and energy.

Restricting the use of forest resources would in the long term result in diminishing sinks due to ageing, and thus slowly-growing forests.

Similarly, on croplands and grasslands, the cycle of growth and harvest of the yield ensure that the removal of carbon dioxide remains as efficient as possible.

There is also a need for intensive research and innovation to develop and adopt new methods for climate change mitigation.
CARBON ACCOUNTING

- The EESC considers it important for the emission and removal of greenhouse gases to be evaluated scientifically, with transparency and common metrics.
- Commission should develop the accounting rules of land and forest management in such a way that they reflect actual emissions and sequestration rates.
- National forest reference levels need to be established by Member States in accordance with the projected sustainable use of forest resources.
- The EU should also develop a precise satellite-based tool for the global monitoring of forests.
- Proper accounting methods should be developed for carbon sequestration by non-woody plants in agricultural soil.
- Avoid double accounting of biomass-related emissions of LULUCF in other sectors.
The EESC encourages individual Member States to provide ambitious national, bottom-up policies for the LULUCF sector, with the close involvement of civil society in the process at national, regional and local levels.
FINANSING

• Need of substantial financial resources
• EESC encourages the Commission, in addition to the existing financing facilities, to set up a separate financing instrument, in conjunction with the EIB, to support the achievement of these goals.
INT/809 Space Strategy for Europe

- There is an urgent need to establish big data centres to store, pre-process and analyse data downloaded from Copernicus.
- The ability to use historical data in conjunction with Copernicus is also very important for developing new tools in this area.
- The EESC emphasises that satellite-based monitoring systems and big data processing facilities on the ground are key to the successful implementation of both local and global commitments.
• As agreed in the COP21 agreement, LULUCF has a major role to play in absorbing current levels of CO$_2$ in the atmosphere.

• Forests are carbon sinks, and daily precision monitoring of the state of forests can prevent illegal felling of trees and encourage active forest management, including planting more trees with a rapid growth rate and early detection and prevention of forest fires.

• The current EU proposals, allowing CO$_2$ emissions in sectors such as industry or transport to be offset by using forest-based carbon sinks or through growth of forests, put a much stronger emphasis on economic, social and environmental concerns.

• The proposals clearly highlight the urgent need for Copernicus based monitoring tools.

• Internationally these tools are of highest importance, as they can be used to monitor precisely the actual level of progress in mitigation and absorption in different states worldwide.
• Satellite-based monitoring systems and data centres are of great importance for sustainable food production in the future.

• Precision agriculture, not least because Galileo and GNSS can save fossil fuel. Moreover, software using Copernicus images in different spectrums can identify exactly those areas of fields where moisture or nutrient levels are either insufficient or excessive, enabling the amounts of water and nutrients to be adjusted, thereby saving fresh water and minimising the use of fertilisers and pesticides.

• This significantly enhances the sustainability of farming systems, promotes early detection and prevention of plant diseases, predicts future yields and guarantees both significant economic benefits and a very positive social and environmental impact.
Precision meteorology should be further developed in order to facilitate early detection and prevention or preparedness for extreme weather conditions, which can reduce food loss on farms, and also safeguard people from danger to their health and properties.
Monitoring forest regeneration in Finland based on Sentinel-2

Forest Fire detection La Palma Island – SPAIN Fire - Situation as of 09/08/2016

Land cover classification in West Malawi based on Sentinel-2
Thank you for your attention!

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