

Forest policy: implementation of the European Union's forestry strategy

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Heinz KINDERMANN (PES, DE) in response to the Commission paper on the implementation of the EU forestry strategy. MEPs welcomed the Commission's proposal to draw up a five-year Action Plan for Sustainable Forest Management. They called on the Commission and Council to have "an objective report" drawn up to examine the scope for creating a separate legal basis for forestry in the EU Treaties or in a future draft Constitution. They also urged the Member States and the Commission to arrive at a mutual understanding and uniform interpretation of the concept 'forest' - the definition of which varies widely among the Member States - so as to make it easier to assess Community forestry measures.

The report identified 11 'strategy elements' which need to be addressed in order to develop a common forestry strategy: active participation in international processes relevant to forestry; compliance with international commitments when implementing national forestry programmes; improving coordination, communication and cooperation in all forestry-related policy fields; promoting sustainable forest management as part of policy on conserving and developing rural areas; protecting Europe's forests; protecting tropical forests; mitigating climate change and contributing to sustainable energy supplies; promoting competitiveness, employment and income in the forest-based sector; promoting forest-related research and development; promoting sustainable forest management by means of training and further training programmes; and promoting sustainable forest management by means of information and communication strategies.