



Joint letter

To: The Ministers responsible for Forests and Forestry in Europe
on the occasion of the Forest Europe Expert Level Meeting on
6-7 November 2014 in Cuenca, Spain

Brussels, 31 October 2014

European forest sector calls for continued and strengthened efforts for a future Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) on Forests in Europe

Dear Ministers,

We, the key actors of the European forest and forest-based sector, are strongly convinced that a Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) on Forests in Europe is needed.

The LBA would form a legal basis for sustainable forest management, which is the key concept for ensuring the sustainable provision of multiple forest goods and services at all levels. The LBA would help to enhance the production of renewable raw materials and energy and thereby contribute to the further development of bio-economy. Moreover, it would ensure consistency between other sectoral policies, such as those of climate, energy and environment. The latter continue to build up their importance in the European policy agenda and thus increasingly influence forest policy and management. Ensuring consistency through an LBA on Forests in Europe would create political certainty and stability not only for forest owners and managers, but also for all the other players along the value chain.

Considering the increasing importance of forests, a holistic policy framework and strong legal reference based on key principles such as sustainable management and the multifunctionality of forests is more than ever needed, to further support existing national forest legislation.

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) succeeded in agreeing on all substantial forest-related issues, building upon the resolutions made by Forest Europe, such as the pan-European definition of and criteria for sustainable forest management. We are therefore disappointed that the INC failed to come to a final agreement, mainly due to governance issues.

Not constructively moving forward towards a future LBA, particularly in consideration of all the efforts already made, would give a wrong political signal. Public opinion will perceive a successful agreement as evidence that sustainable forest management is recognised as a key principle and promoted by the European forest sector.

Having an LBA in the near future would greatly support the European forest and forest-based sector to enhance its political integrity and consistency, which is the way forward to ensure sustainable forest management and the multifunctionality of Europe's forests as well as the competitiveness of the whole forest sector.

We therefore call for a clear commitment and engagement from all responsible ministers and governments to explore all possible solutions in order to move forward with a future LBA at pan-European level.

Thank you for taking our position into consideration.

Sincerely yours,



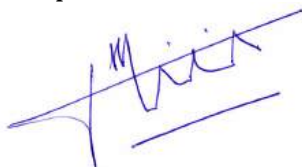
Aljoscha Requardt
Secretary General
Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)



Marco Mensink
Director General
Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI)



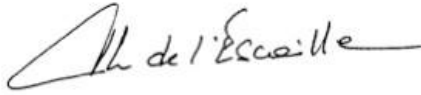
Jean-Marc Jossart
Secretary General
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Marc Michielsen
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European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois)



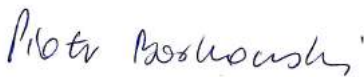
Pekka Pesonen
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