

Forestry and the European Green Deal

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Forestry is of rising Importance in Europe because of :

- Climate change;
- Loss of biodiversity

“Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world.”

(Ursula von der Leyen,
President, European Commission)



European Green Deal

Launched in 2020 by European Commission.

Aims to transform the Union into a modern, resource-efficient economy :

- no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050
- economic growth decoupled from resource use
- moving to a clean, circular economy
- restoring biodiversity and cutting pollution.

EU Biodiversity Strategy

“We are losing nature like never before because of unsustainable human activities.”

The global population of wild species has fallen by 60% over the last 40 years.

1 million species are
at risk of extinction.

Strategic aim :

30% of the Europe's land
area to be protected for biodiversity by 2030



Role of forests

Forests currently cover nearly half of the EU's territory.

They hold large stocks of carbon, preventing its escape into the atmosphere.

They absorb equivalent of c. 10% of all

EU greenhouse gas emissions each year.

They are home to high diversity of wildlife

So, they can contribute to a robust climate and biodiversity strategy.



“**Restoring forests**, soils and wetlands and creating green spaces in cities is essential to achieve the climate change mitigation needed by 2030”.

Forestry policy

- Till now, the European Union has not had a formal multinational policy of forestry, in the way that it has for agriculture or regional development.
- The Commission now plans to take very serious interest in the role that forests can play in contributing to the attack on climate change and to the strengthening of biodiversity.
- Moreover, forestry as an economic sector is likely, for the first time, to become a serious beneficiary of EU funds.

More forests ... or more fires ?

- So, we can think about significant extensions of forests in Europe
- But meanwhile we have to cope with the grave loss of forests because of global warming, climate change and **fires**.



Fires



Terrible fires of 2019 in

- Mediterranean countries,
- Germany
- Sweden ...as far north as the Arctic Circle !

Why are fires becoming more frequent, extensive and damaging ?

- Drying of the air
- Drying of the vegetation
- Drawing down of water levels and water supplies
- Build-up of tinder-dry material
- Lack of management of undergrowth

Rural depopulation

- Eucalyptus forests, owned by paper-making companies
- Limited on-site management
- Fires rip through in the dry seasons
- Eucalyptus flourishes : pines and other native trees are suppressed
- enormous damage to property, deaths, mass emission of carbon

Burnt-out woodland in Madeira



Sweden and Norway -Striking contrast

Sweden

Large scale forests, often a monoculture of conifers

- Planted by distant contractors
- Without regular management
- Very low value for wildlife or local economy
- Felled in large coups by distant contractors

So, prone to fires, with nobody on site to detect and put out fires

Norway

- Native forests, varied in species,
owned by State or local people
- National policy to sustain local populations
- Sustainable management of forests by local people
- High value for wildlife and local economies
- Fires quickly detected and put out



Euboea, Greece

Forests of Aleppo pine

Tapping for resin

So, men are in the forest, and can :

- keep undergrowth under control
- notice fires very quickly
- put out the fires

But the viability of resin tapping was threatened by Chinese competition.



Transnational Woodland Industries project helped to increase the efficiency of tapping and added value for resin : this sustained the forest management.

Sustainable forestry

The best way to restore sustainable native forests in areas prone to disastrous fires is to bring back people, re-introduce sustainable management and develop ways to add value to the forests and their products.

*The Four d'Ourse in Val d'Aosta, Italy
Over 1000 years of traditional
craftsmanship in wood*

