

PressRelease

Brussels, 6 September 2011

A sustainable bio-economy needs the forest sector

In recognition of the International Year of Forests 2011, MEPs Riikka Manner, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos and Gaston Franco are hosting the exhibition and workshop "Forest Sector's Contribution to the EU Bio-economy" at the European Parliament, 6-9 September 2011. The aim is to highlight the vital role that Europe's forests and forest products play in contributing to the overall 2020 objective of the European Union of achieving a sustainable bio-economy.

From responsible resource stewardship and supply of solid wood products, from packaging to ground-breaking materials, like food additives and hi-tech chemicals, via innovative wood architecture construction and bio-energy, the European forest sector's contribution to the bio-economy is far-reaching.

"Not only does it use a renewable raw material extracted from an ecosystem that grows both in area and in volume, but it also delivers many non-wood goods and services that contribute to a better planet and to a better society. Promoting wood in construction is undoubtedly a way of fostering sustainable growth provided that the material stems from forests managed sustainably. Wood has an important role to play in the energy and green growth challenge" Ms Manner said.

The week of events held in the European Parliament will showcase the most remarkable values, goods and services that forests and related sectors deliver to society.

"At a time when greenhouse gas mitigation and a shift to new sources of energy are top priorities, forests have an essential role that must be better recognised by European policy makers" according to Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos.

Forestry is an important motor for rural development, creating jobs for about 3.5 million people, providing income and contributing to strengthen the less developed regions in Europe.

European forests are also crucial in maintaining and offering other environmental benefits to Europe's citizens. *"Pure water, rich biodiversity, prevention of erosion and carbon absorption are just some of the multiple environmental benefits that sustainably managed forests are delivering today and will continue to deliver in the future. A balance needs to be found between these benefits and the other economic and social functions of forests.* Mr Gaston Franco added.

Riikka Manner continued: *"The International Year of Forests shouldn't be seen as an achievement in itself but rather as a step towards a better and more concrete recognition of all the benefits that forests can provide in a well thought-out policy context"*.



These events are organized by:



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Note to the editor:

Programme of the "Forest Sector's Contribution to the EU Bio-economy":

- Exhibition on innovations of the forest-based sector: "*From forests to packaging, intelligent paper and ... lipstick!*" Tuesday, 6-9 September. Location: European Parliament, ASP Espace Couloir Cheval. Opening of exhibition with cocktail reception on Tuesday, 6 September at 18.00hrs.
- Morning workshop "The Forest Sector's Contribution to the European Bio-economy" hosted by MEPs Riikka Manner, Luis Manuel Capoulas Santos and Gaston Franco. Speakers: Maive Ruthe, Director EU Commission; Krzysztof Janeczko, Polish Ministry of Environment; and others. Thursday, 8 September; Room: JAN-4A1 at 09.00 - 12.30hrs.