THE SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT EU FORESTS...

...IN NUMBERS
EU MEMBER STATES SPENT €6.5 BILLION SUBSIDISING BIOENERGY IN 2017

The true figure is likely to be more as it does not include ‘hidden subsidies’ in the form of energy or carbon tax exemptions granted to bioenergy producers.

IT CAN TAKE OVER 100 YEARS FOR A FOREST TO REABSORB CARBON RELEASED FROM BURNING BIOMASS

Known as ‘the carbon payback period’, the older the forest that is burned the longer it takes for the carbon to be reabsorbed.

80% OF EU FORESTS WITH PROTECTED STATUS ARE IN AN ‘UNFAVOURABLE’ OR ‘BAD’ CONDITION

The vast majority of Natura 2000 ‘protected’ forests are not healthy enough to deal with the rigours of climate change - only 15% are considered in a ‘favourable’ condition.

BY 2050 THE EU FOREST SINK WILL BE HALVED IF CURRENT MANAGEMENT PRACTICES CONTINUE

In the midst of a climate emergency, we are increasingly cutting EU forests, mainly to burn them for bioenergy. If we don’t change our path, by 2050 our forests will absorb less than half the carbon they were absorbing in 2000.

EU RULES ONLY REQUIRE 36% OF ALL TREES BURNED FOR ELECTRICITY TO PRODUCE ENERGY

Due to the low threshold set for electrical efficiency, of every 100 trees that are cut and burned, 64 trees are wasted. This is a clearly unsustainable practice.

AN AREA LARGER THAN GREECE (14.5 MILLION HECTARES) IS COVERED BY PLANTATIONS THAT ARE VULNERABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND FIRES

In addition, there are millions of hectares of planted single-species forests that are not officially plantations. Natural forests with a diverse range of species are better at dealing with extreme temperatures, fires and pests.

6.5 billion

14.5 million

80%

50%

36%

100 years
We must protect and restore our European forests; they are a key part of our heritage, are natural carbon sinks and can harbour rich biodiversity for generations to come. EU policies and financial mechanisms should support natural forests, not intensively logged monocultures and plantations.

But there is hope for forests!

By restoring EU forests to their former health, by 2050 we could triple the amount of carbon dioxide they remove each year.

By 2050, EU forests could be absorbing three times more CO2

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