

EU ADVOCACY

Focus on the main EU ongoing dossiers

This bi-monthly newsletter aims at providing an overview on some selective EU ongoing topics that are of primary interests for the woodworking industries. In order to have a comprehensive overview of the different issues, members are invited to read the correlated circular letters containing detailed updates.

Enjoy the reading!

The CEI-Bois & EOS Team

NEW EU COMMISSION

On 1 December 2024, a new European Commission took office. Re-elected for a second mandate in July, President Ursula von der Leyen leads a new College of Commissioners to deliver the 2024-2029 work programme. Over the next five years, the College will work on seven ambitious political priorities to make Europe stronger, safer and fairer.

CEI-Bois and EOS look forward to working together and building a strong, collaborative partnership to address Europe's key challenges as the woodworking industries plays a vital role in shaping sustainable solutions for the environment, economy, and society.



JANUARY 2025

Informative bi-monthly newsletter
by CEI-Bois & EOS



WHAT'S NEW

EUDR

One-year postponement

On 19 December, the Regulation (EU) 2024/3234 of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EU) 2023/1115 as regards provisions relating to the date of application was published on the European official Journal. It entered into force on 26 December 2024.

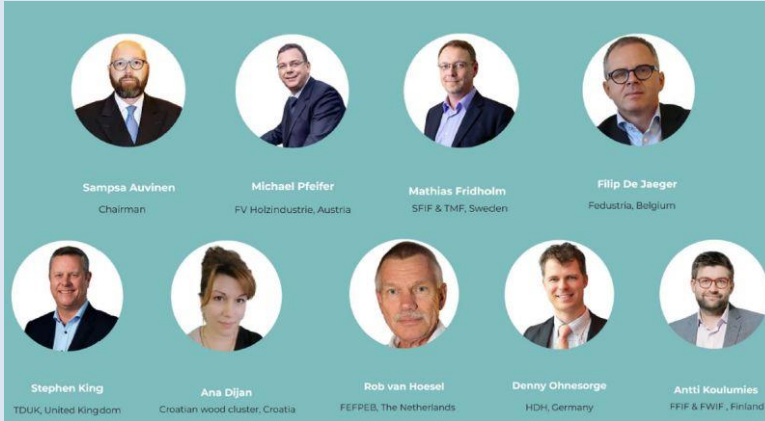
This postponement will allow third countries, member states, operators and traders to be fully prepared in terms of their due diligence obligations, in order to ensure that certain commodities and products sold in the EU or exported from the EU are deforestation-free. The deforestation regulation has already been in force since 29 June 2023 and its provisions are to be applied from 30 December 2024. Following this targeted amendment, its rules will start to apply on 30 December 2025.

This will give legal certainty, predictability and sufficient time for the smooth and effective implementation of the rules.

➔ [**Official Journal - all EU languages**](#)

ELECTION OF CEI-BOIS BOARD

During its General Assembly of 21 November, CEI-Bois elected its Chair and Board members, who now have a two-year mandate running from November 2024 to November 2026.



The elected Board members are:

- Sampsa Auvinen - Chair
- Michael Pfeifer (Fachverband der Holzindustrie Österreichs, Austria)
- Mathias Fridholm (Svenskt Trä & Trä- och Möbelföretagen, Sweden)
- Filip De Jaeger (Fedustria, Belgium)
- Stephen King (Timber Development UK, United Kingdom)
- Ana Dijan (Croatian Wood Cluster, Croatia)
- Rob van Hoesel (Federation Europeenne des Fabricants de Palettes et Emballages en Bois (FEFPEB), The Netherlands)
- Denny Ohnesorge (Main Association of the German Wood Industry, Germany)
- Antti Koulumies (Finnish Forest Industries Federation & FWIF, Finland).

Sampsa Auvinen, commented on his re-election as CEI-Bois Chair: *"I am deeply honoured to have the opportunity to continue serving as Chairman of the Board of CEI-Bois for the next two years. It is a privilege to work alongside such a highly professional and dedicated team, as well as an exceptional Board of Directors, who share a collective passion for advancing the European woodworking industry. I would like also to sincerely thank all CEI-Bois members for their ongoing trust and support."*

ADVOCACY REPORT

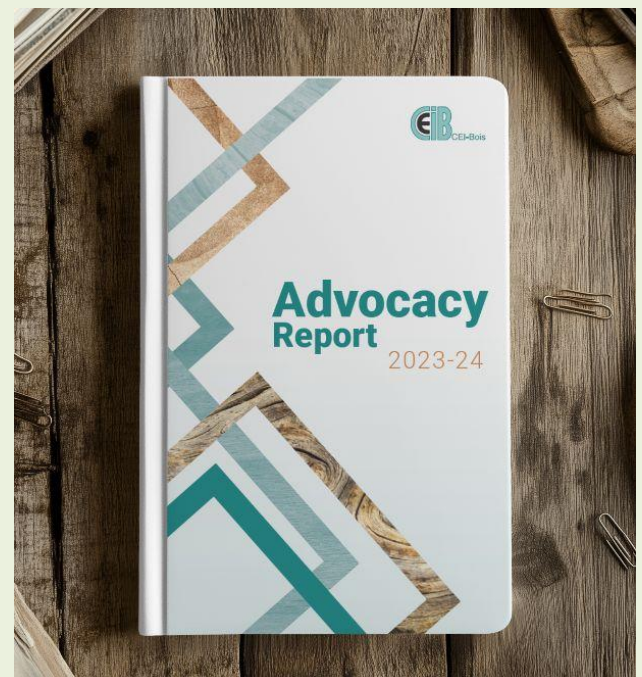
During its General Assembly of 21 November, CEI-Bois presented its 2023-24 Advocacy Report.

This comprehensive document showcases our key achievements, activities, and policy priorities over the past year, including:

- The European Parliament recognition of CEI-Bois' efforts in promoting the elections,
- CEI-Bois' engagement in the European wood policy platform (woodPoP),
- The follow-up of EUDR,
- The finalising of the Carbon Removals Certification Framework,
- The completion of the EU-funded RESILIENTWOOD Project
- The publication of two important advocacy documents: 'Biomanufacturing, the circular bioeconomy and the Manifesto for the 2024-29 political term'.
- The delivery of the recently published book 'Timber!' to key members of the European Parliament

→ [Full report](#)

→ [Press release](#)



CONSTRUCTION

1st informal meeting of the CPR Acquis Subgroup on Structural Timber

At the end of November, CEI-Bois attended the 1st informal meeting of the new CPR Acquis Subgroup on Structural Timber Products/Elements and Ancillaries (STP). During the meeting, the European Commission (DG GROW) has presented the subgroup's Work Programme, consisting of 4 milestones to be completed throughout 2025.

As part of Milestone 1, the European Commission is asking the representatives of the Member States involved in the work of the STP to fill out a template (table) by providing information regarding:

1. The products that should fall under the scope of this subgroup
2. The applicable national regulatory requirements (essential characteristics) per product.

Members who are not directly involved in the work of the STP are encouraged to be in close contact with their national authorities and provide these with their industry input. Kindly note that the Member States must submit their filled-out templates to the European Commission by 31 January 2025. Those CEI-Bois Members that, for whatever reason, cannot cooperate with their national authorities on this topic are welcome to fill out the template and share it with CEI-Bois **by 20 January 2025**, so that we can then submit it to the European Commission on their behalf.

BIOMASS

Prioritising biomass use in support of EU climate and resilience goals

On 12 December, EOS attended the first workshop organised by Agora on a report that they are producing on biomass use in support of EU climate and resilience goals. According to Agora, the gap between future biomass demand and supply and the lack of strategies for steering biomass sources towards optimum uses, and away from key sectors such as heating, power, transport and industry, is a threat to the success of the energy transition in Europe. Given the cross-sectoral nature of biomass production and use and the urgent need to reconcile climate and resilience goals in a fair and cost-effective manner, Agora Energiewende, supported by IFEU and SYKE, is looking in details into the future of biomass demand in achieving climate neutrality.

Main take home message: as we hear more and more, there is a gap between demand for and supply of biomass - demand will exceed supply - so biomass use will have to be optimized. Based on the criteria used - material or resource efficiency, GHG emissions savings, health and environment and economic sustainability, the best use of woody biomass is construction wood.



REVISION OF PUBLIC PROCUREMENT DIRECTIVES

CEI-Bois is planning to respond to the EU consultation on a revision of the Public Procurement Directives to help ensure security of supply for certain vital technologies, products and services, while simplifying the rules and reducing administrative burden. It should enable preference for European products in public procurement for certain strategic sectors and technologies.

Indeed, at the end of December 2024, the Commission launched an evaluation of three legislative acts that regulate public procurement in the EU ('how to buy'): Directives 2014/23/EU (the Concessions Directive), 2014/24/EU (the Public Procurement Directive) and 2014/25/EU (the Utilities Directive). It will assess their performance and impact across the EU, whether they remain fit for purpose, deliver on their intended objectives at minimum cost and are adequate to address current challenges.

INTERNATIONAL HARDWOOD CONFERENCE



The 10th edition of the International Hardwood Conference, held in Vienna on November 7-8, 2024, brought together around 150 professionals from 26 countries.

Organised by the Fachverband der Holzindustrie Österreichs, alongside EOS and ETTF, the event featured a study tour of Austrian hardwood companies and insightful presentations on global market trends, challenges, and opportunities for the sector.

Keynote speakers highlighted the impact of global tensions, climate change, and pests on the European hardwood industry. Experts emphasised the need for adapted forest management and innovative uses of hardwood to ensure a stable supply. Presentations on market trends discussed the industry's difficulties in Europe and the U.S., with experts forecasting a potential recovery in 2025. The Chinese market also faces challenges, but new sales channels like social media offer growth opportunities.

A significant focus was on the EU Deforestation-free Regulation (EUDR), which the industry is working to comply with, aided by certification schemes like PEFC and FSC. Panel discussions also delved into innovation in hardwood applications, exploring new materials and hybrid constructions. The conference underscored the importance of promoting sustainable hardwood products to younger, environmentally-conscious consumers.

→ [IHC2024](#)

TRADE - ANTIDUMPING

Multilayered wood flooring from China

On 18 December, in the so-called pre-disclosure, the European Commission announced that it intends to impose provisional anti-dumping measures on imports of multilayered wood flooring originating in China.

Rates of the provisional anti-dumping duty are expressed on the CIF Union border price, customs duties unpaid, and are quite substantial, being above 40%. Interested parties have been given 3 working days to comment in writing on the accuracy of the calculations.

This pre-disclosure is for information purposes only and will not prejudice any subsequent decision which may be taken by the Commission.

In accordance with the basic Regulation protection against dumped imports from countries not EU members, the Commission has provided information on the planned imposition of provisional duties four weeks before the imposition of provisional measures, which should be 16 January. These measures should have a maximum duration of 6 months and by latest mid-July the Commission will decide whether to impose definitive measures. Definitive measures would normally be imposed for a period of five years with the possibility to request a review of the measures at the earliest one year after imposition.



SOCIAL AFFAIRS

Labour and skills shortages in the EU

On 2 December, the Council approved conclusions on labour and skills shortages in the EU, with a focus on mobilising untapped labour potential. The conclusions follow up on the Commission's action plan from March 2024 and focus on two of the five identified areas for action: helping underrepresented people access the labour market, and support for skills, training and education.

→ [Press release](#)

CONSTRUCTION 2050 ALLIANCE

CEI-Bois cosigns letter to President von der Leyen

On 4 November 2024, ahead of the hearings of the Commissioner-designates at the EP, and following the political guidelines for her second mandate, the Construction 2050 Alliance addressed a letter to Ursula von der Leyen, to emphasise the commitment and willingness of the construction industry to be a key partner in addressing Europe's housing and sustainability challenges.

The Construction 2050 Alliance expressed its support for the directions outlined in the political guidelines for the 2024-2029 mandate and is firm in its commitment to ensuring that the fundamental contribution made by the construction industry is recognised and supported by policymakers, with the aim of building tomorrow's Europe today.

→ [Read the letter](#)

POLITICO SUSTAINABLE FUTURE WEEK EUROPE

On 3 December 2024, CEI-Bois attended the POLITICO Sustainable Future Week Europe 2025, specifically the session dedicated to climate policy and the EU Green Deal. Of particular importance to CEI-Bois were the discussions on "Beyond the Green Deal: what future for EU green policies?" and "Carbon crunch time: removals, storage, can Europe have it all?".

During the first talk, policymakers such as MEP Sara Matthieu (Greens/EFA, Belgium) and Ms Yvon Slingenberg (Director at DG CLIMA) outlined the main challenges, opportunities, and potential solutions associated with the implementation of the Green Deal in an international context of competition and geopolitical uncertainty, as well as doing it in way that secure societal buy-in within the EU.

Mr Christian Holzleitner (Head of Unit at DG CLIMA) was one of the panelists in the second discussion, which centered around the important role that carbon removals are expected to play in the EU's goals of a 90% emission reduction target in 2040, carbon neutrality in 2050, and carbon negativity beyond 2050. Carbon storage in biobased construction products was mentioned alongside other industrial and land-based carbon removal activities.

BUILT BY NATURE SUMMIT

On 7 November, CEI-Bois' and EOS' Public Affairs Director, Paul Brannen, was interviewed in front of an audience of 'front runners' at Built by Nature's annual summit.

Built by Nature (BbN) exists to create and support a network of pioneering developers, architects and engineers, asset owners and managers, investors and insurers, city leaders, academics, researchers, non-profits and policymakers in their journey to decarbonise our built environment and protect nature.

Paul was interviewed by Tamara Streefland, Head of Programmes at BbN, with the theme being the current and future policy environment in Brussels and across Europe in relation to timber and other nature-based solutions - in the context of the built environment. Questions included: 'Where are we? Where should we go? Who drives the change? What is the recipe for success?'

The ensuing wide-ranging discussion saw mention of the Commission's newly proposed 2040 target of 90 per cent emissions reductions, the recent EU election results, the arrival of housing as a major issue including a Commissioner with responsibility, the increasing recognition of the importance of removals, the continuation of the New European Bauhaus, the energy efficiency of buildings and the survival and repackaging of the Green Deal.

There was an interesting exchange on whether the Commission's longstanding material neutrality position is sustainable in the face of the mounting evidence that nature-based materials are better for the climate and healthy living.

The interview ended with Paul making a call to action around our existing level of understanding, knowledge and expertise being more than enough to deliver at least a 15 per cent reduction in global carbon emissions via a significant shift to nature-based building materials. What we need is greater recognition of this potential from politicians backed by their loud support for a transition to nature-based construction and renovation. This in turn would give industry the confidence to ramp up both the speed and scale of the production of nature-based materials for the built environment. Essentially, we need the equivalent of a war time economy that being 'A climate focused economy'.



WOODPOP

Wood policy and innovation conference

The conference was organised in Brussels on 7 November and highlighted the vital role of the wood sector as a key driver of future competitiveness in housing and the climate debate, encouraging greater recognition and support from the new EU Commission and EU Parliament.

It showcased the latest state-of-the-art in building design with wood and how the public sector can support more biobased construction to combat climate change.

Members of the European Parliament and their staff, EC staff and experts, policy makers, and advocacy organisations were invited to join this policy discussion and networking event, in which over 160 participants attended in person.

The event was coorganised by Wood4Bauhaus Alliance, Bioregions, woodPoP and Holzcluster Steiermark.

→ [More information](#)



Policy paper

These WoodPoP Guidelines were agreed upon on 6 November, during WoodPoP's 3rd High Level Meeting in Brussels, Belgium. The document was officially presented during the above-mentioned event the next day.

This policy paper sets out the rationale behind the establishment of the European Wood Policy Platform (WoodPoP), outline the ways in which the platform will work together to accomplish shared goals, and provide structure and basic working modalities to ensure significant impact and preserve the working environment within the platform.

→ [Policy paper](#)

CIRCULAR CHOICES

"Good industrial jobs for the Eu bioeconomy"

On 13 November, the forest-based sector and labour unions united during an event dedicated to a fair transition towards a vibrant and growing bioeconomy. Through the Circular Choices coalition, they called for a policy framework that captures investments in quality jobs and "Made in Europe" manufacturing.

Main take-home message: the transition to a circular economy in the EU must prioritise competitiveness, fairness and inclusivity, aiming to sustain and generate quality jobs while fostering innovation through the development of new and existing bio-based products.

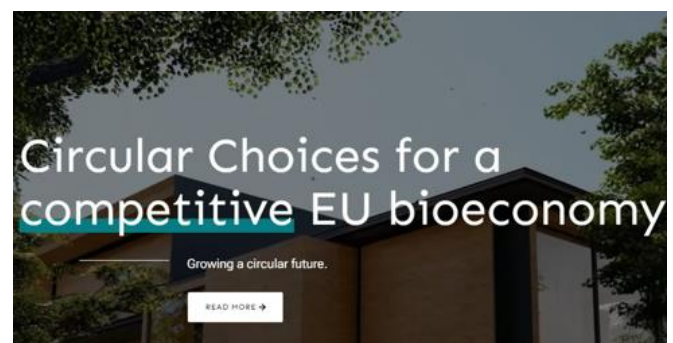
→ [Joint Statement on the need for good industrial jobs in Europe](#)

Policy recommendations

In 2024, the coalition members revised their key policy asks and messages. They drafted a series of recommendations, calling for a new approach to the economic and climate challenges we face.

They stressed that the EU must lead the way in balancing industry and environment, and bioeconomy provides the perfect framework for this. Looking ahead, it is crucial that the EU institutions build on the 2024-2029 strategic agenda aimed at strengthening the European manufacturing value-chains to retain their globally competitive position while optimising the EU internal market for bioeconomy products to scale up on domestic markets. Through this holistic approach and a new European competitiveness deal, Europe could become the leading continent for investing in the circular bioeconomy and creating good quality jobs.

→ [Executive summary](#)



WOOD IN CONSTRUCTION

Ecomondo event



On 8 November, CEI-Bois held an online presentation on “Wood in construction: EU policies and initiatives” during one of the events taking place under the auspices of [Ecomondo - The Green Technology Expo 2024](#) in Rimini, Italy.

The “Conference on Wood and biomaterials for construction: a path to decarbonisation and circular economy” was organised by Ecomondo STC & Confagricoltura (General Confederation of Italian Agriculture), AlberItalia Foundation, and the National Cluster Forestry-Wood. Its stated objective was to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the biobased sector for a reflection on what levers should be activated to spread a model of housing and construction with lower impact, greater efficiency, and more linked to the resources of the territory, at competitive costs.

In its presentation, CEI-Bois informed the audience about its advocacy activities in Brussels, the most relevant EU policies potentially supporting the use of wood in construction (recast EPBD; new CPR; Carbon Removals Certification Framework), as well as other essential non-legislative initiatives (WoodPoP; New European Bauhaus; new Commissioner for Housing).

Attendees were also informed about the Wood Policy Innovation Workshop 2024, co-organised by CEI-Bois, and which had taken place the day before in Brussels.

CARBON REMOVALS

Council greenlights EU certification framework for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products

On 19 November 2024, the Council gave the final green light to a regulation establishing the first EU-level certification framework for permanent carbon removals, carbon farming and carbon storage in products.

This voluntary framework will facilitate and encourage high-quality carbon removal and soil emission reduction activities in the EU, as a complement to sustained emission reductions.

The regulation will be the first step in introducing a comprehensive certification framework for carbon removals and soil emission reductions into EU legislation. It will help the EU to achieve its goal of climate neutrality by 2050.

The regulation covers the following activities across the EU:

- carbon storage activities that capture and store carbon in long-lasting products for at least 35 years (such as wood-based construction products)
- permanent carbon removals
- carbon farming

This certification framework for carbon removals is a good news for the European timber industry as it sends a clear signal that carbon stored in wood products in the built environment has been recognised by the EU as a whole (the Commission, the Parliament & the Council) as being one of the most effective ways in which we can remove carbon from the atmosphere and safely store it!

→ [More information](#)

