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PRESS RELEASE: The European Forest-based Ecosystem calls to be eligible for support by the European Recovery Plan and Industrial Strategy

In light of the European Commission's expected announcement of which business ecosystems will be targeted by the European Recovery Plan and new Industrial Strategy for Europe, the partners of the forest-based sector have sent a proposal to EU Commissioner for Internal Market **Thierry Breton** to include the European Forest-based Industries Ecosystem as one of the ecosystems eligible for support in the plan.

"The European forest-based ecosystem has a very strong role in the European economy while also being a climate-friendly, resilient sector already oriented towards a green, sustainable economy. Its basic raw material is wood: a renewable, recyclable resource coming from sustainably managed forests in Europe. Its production processes handle this resource very efficiently, minimising waste and offering the possibility to substitute fossil materials and energy", said **Patrizio Antonicoli**, Secretary General of CEI-Bois.

The sector counts more than 420,000 enterprises (20% of the total EU manufacturing sector), 3.5 million of direct employees (10% of the total workforce in manufacture) and generates an annual turnover of 520 billion euros, 3% of the EU GDP.

"As key pillars in our common European resilience, we are sourced, manufactured, reused and recycled in Europe unlike any other ecosystem and based on European innovations and technology. One in five manufacturing companies in the EU belongs to the forest-based industries ecosystem and offers an important amount of jobs well distributed over all countries and regions and in particular in rural areas. We are also a fertile ecosystem for digital services and applications. We generate a significant export income to the European economy", commented **Beatrice Klose**, Secretary General of Intergraf.

Like most of the EU industries, the sector has been severely hit by the shock caused by the Covid-19 health crisis: the decline in domestic and foreign demand, the interruption of the supply chains and logistic problems took their toll on our industries, which expects on average 20% turnover loss in 2020; some parts of the ecosystem are more seriously hit than others.

Nonetheless, the forest-based industries ecosystem is in a unique position to recover by moving forward, doing so in a way that is in line with the objectives of the EU Green Deal. Linked to most other ecosystems, it would also help other parts of the EU economy to bounce forward.

"Including the forest-based industries ecosystem in the European Recovery Plan would be a healthy injection of green and resilience into all other ecosystems as we are linked to renewable energy, textiles, construction, food and agriculture, low carbon manufacturing, green chemicals, health and hygiene, pharmaceuticals and key packaging solutions. Recent announcements of large investments in biorefineries by our member companies are an example of how this ecosystem can bring new life to old fossil-based sectors with renewable materials that are sustainably sourced in Europe", said **Jori Ringman**, Director General of Cepi.

"Its inclusion in the European Recovery Plan would be the spark that enables its resurgence. A new funding stream would entail supporting economic resilience of industries that provides a range of innovative climate-neutral applications. It is nothing short of investment in the future of Europe", said **Clive Pinnington**, Managing Director, European Wood-based Panels Federation.

"We represent a well-managed, growing and still developing natural resource. We want to be a part of the EU recovery plan, thus, to ensure European forests are resilient and adapted to climate change, whilst supporting an economically viable forest economy. Funding would entail supporting sustainable forest management as a solution to the biological resilience and health of European forests and the manifold ecosystem services they offer", said **Piotr Borkowski**, Executive Director of EUSTAFOR

Together these sectors have already produced a [Vision 2050](#) for carbon neutral Europe and have a significant positive effect, in a [conservative calculation](#) equal to 20% of EU combined greenhouse gases, in preventing CO2 emissions when they substitute fossil-based fuels, materials and products.

The co-signatories of our proposal, [Eustafor](#), [FECOF](#), [FTP](#), [CEPF](#), [COPA-COCEGA](#), [CEI-Bois](#), [EPF](#), [Cepi](#), [Intergraf](#), [EFIC](#) and [Bioenergy Europe](#), ask that the forthcoming EU European Recovery Plan and New Industrial Strategy for Europe give a dedicated space and recognition to the Forest-based industries ecosystem.

CEI-Bois represents 21 European and National organisations from 15 countries and is the voice of the European woodworking sector: close to 180.000 companies generating an annual turnover of 144 billion euros and employing 1 million workers.