

## PRESS RELEASE

# WHY OUR FORESTS AND FIELDS SHOULD DO MORE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

*Brussels, 13/06/2019* – As climate change makes daily headlines, all available solutions to mitigate it must be thoroughly investigated and then deployed in an evidence-based way, fair to our environment and societies.

Figures show that RES consumption has steadily increased over the last decades, with bioenergy counting today for 63% of EU final renewable energy consumption. The time has come to take a step forward and use all means to achieve the 2050 climate goals.

Biomass is supplied from different organic sources such as wood, agricultural residues and crops, and organic waste. Around 70% of the overall biomass supply for energy is estimated to be sourced from the forest sector while biomass from agriculture and waste account respectively for 18% and 12%. There are climate benefits to biomass, and then more: the economic and environmental impacts are plenty and often overlooked.

## AGRICULTURAL BIOMASS AND ABANDONED AREAS

In the current state of play, the potential of agricultural biomass is largely unexploited due to mobilization issues. Recent research shows how the overall energy contribution of bioenergy could sustainably triplicate by 2050 compared to the 144 Mtoe used in 2017, roughly equivalent to the total energy demand in Spain for the same year. Agricultural residues and crops can have a major role in driving this growth in the coming years if properly exploited.

We also have an opportunity with unused and abandoned areas, representing 15,8% of total land in EU28: they could be used to grow energy crops. It is estimated that the land used to grow dedicated energy crops represents today only an area of 117 kha (i.e. around 0,03% of EU28 land area), and equal to 0,2% of the current unused and abandoned areas. By using these areas for energy crops, the production of bioenergy could be ramped up.

To unleash this potential, favorable legislative frameworks should be deployed. This will contribute to climate mitigation and adaptation as well as to job growth and rural development.

## FOREST BIOMASS

In the last two decades the forest area is increasing and most importantly, the annual growth of

forest is consistently higher than the harvesting. In fact, more than 30% of the forest increment stays in the forest, with the pulp & paper and construction industries driving the largest chunk of wood removals in Europe (77%) and bioenergy following at a mere 23%.

Forests, endangered by climate change, have a key role in climate mitigation and adaptation. Proper forest management can lead to environmental, economic and social benefits, and slash the risk of forest fires and diseases.

## **LATEST STATISTICS**

In order to better understand the availability of biomass supply, Bioenergy Europe launches today its 2019 Report on Biomass Supply, providing the reader with data on forest resources, energy crops, land management and much more. Most of the figures are filtered by country and by type of source, helping policy makers and investors to better calibrate their decision-making.

For those who don't have time to dive into detailed figures, a short policy brief has also been made available. The two-pager includes highlights and a selection of graphs, providing an overview of the current dynamics of our electricity system at a glance.

### **About the report**

For the first time since its launch in 2007, the 2019 Statistical Report will be split in 7 different publications, each one covering a different aspect of bioenergy. They will all be made available online for free. Stay tuned for the next release in July on Transport, covering forest resources, energy crops, land management and much more. For more information, visit [www.bioenergyeurope.org](http://www.bioenergyeurope.org).

## **ANNEXES**

Download the [Policy Brief](#)

Download the [Full Report](#)

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