

Foreword



"In March 2000, the European Council in Lisbon set out a ten-year strategy to make the EU the world's most dynamic and competitive economy. A key factor in turning this strategy into reality is the concept of sustainable development, a concept which requires progress towards promoting growth and jobs to be pursued alongside progress towards ensuring social cohesion and a better environment. Tackling climate change is one of the issues that are crucial for sustainable development.

The European Union is actively involved in ensuring Member States co-operate on tackling climate change. For example, the EU is currently dealing with major issues like the sustainable management of natural resources and the halting of biodiversity loss in Europe. 2006 will be an important year for creating a worldwide approach to climate change, as commitments will be undertaken for the post-2012 period of the Kyoto Protocol.

The European woodworking industries are genuinely committed to sustainable development, not least because their raw material comes from sustainably managed forests. As the European Commission concluded recently, 'Forest products definitely play a role in mitigating Climate Change by increasing carbon removals from the atmosphere. Their specific properties, such as carbon storage capacity, high recyclability, renewability of their raw material, and the fact that they are less fossil-fuel intensive than other materials, make them the products of choice in the context of policies to fight Climate Change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing greenhouse gas removals' (DG Enterprise, Report regarding the role of Forest Products for Climate Change Mitigation, 2004).

With this publication we want to contribute to a better understanding of the environmental benefits to be gained by making wider use of wood and wood-based products. In addition to the inherent positive qualities of wood-based products, the handbook also aims to show the substantial contribution of the woodworking industries to employment and welfare creation in Europe, particularly in rural areas."

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Catherine GUY-QUINT'. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Catherine GUY-QUINT
Member of the
European Parliament
Brussels, 18 January 2006