

The EU Green Deal: what's in for the woodworking industry?

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GOOD WOOD Project*

Transnational event 13 November 2020



The new growth strategy of the EU

Goal: **climate-neutrality, decoupling of growth from resource use,** and **nature conservation,** all in a *just and inclusive* way.

- The flagship is a **climate law** aiming at making Europe the first carbon neutral Continent.
- Revision of 2030 Climate targets (to 55% reduction)

Also 50 other specific policy measures such as:

- **New Circular Economy Action Plan** (including Sustainable Built Environment Initiative)
- **Renovation Wave Initiative**
- **Forest Strategy and Biodiversity Strategy**

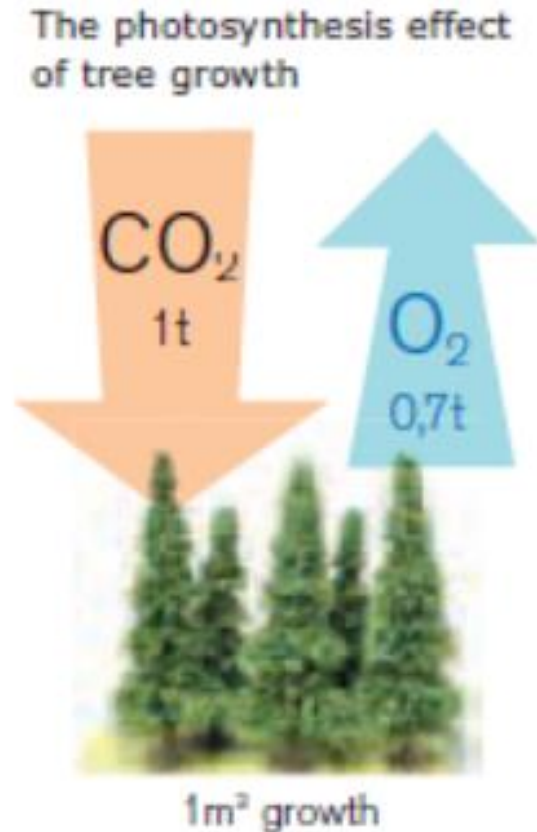
A graphic featuring a large green leaf with blue veins. The text 'The European Green Deal' is written in large blue letters across the leaf. Below it, 'von der Leyen Commission' is written in a smaller, lighter blue font. The bottom right corner of the graphic shows a blue leaf with a white circle containing the text 'good wood' in green and orange.

The European Green Deal

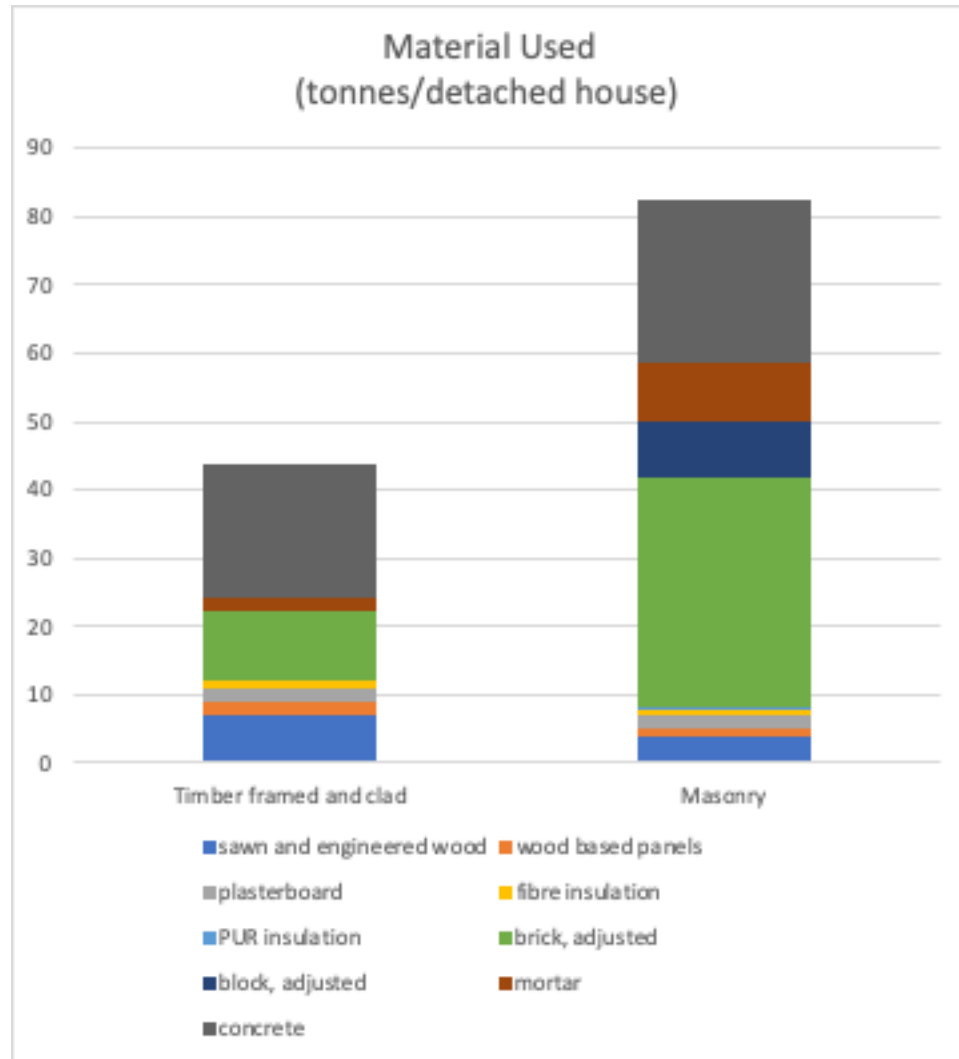
von der Leyen Commission

Environmental Benefits of Wood:

- **Stores carbon** removed from the atmosphere
- Can replace materials with higher GHG impact (**substitution effect**) → **Lower carbon footprint**
- Sourced from **sustainably managed forests**
- **Renewable**
- **Resource efficient** manufacturing process
- At end-use, wood compounds **can be recycled**
- **High mechanical properties** in particular through engineered wood products
- Excellent **thermal insulator**
- Effective in terms of **fire safety**
- High potential for off-site fabrication and **quick building**



Light material

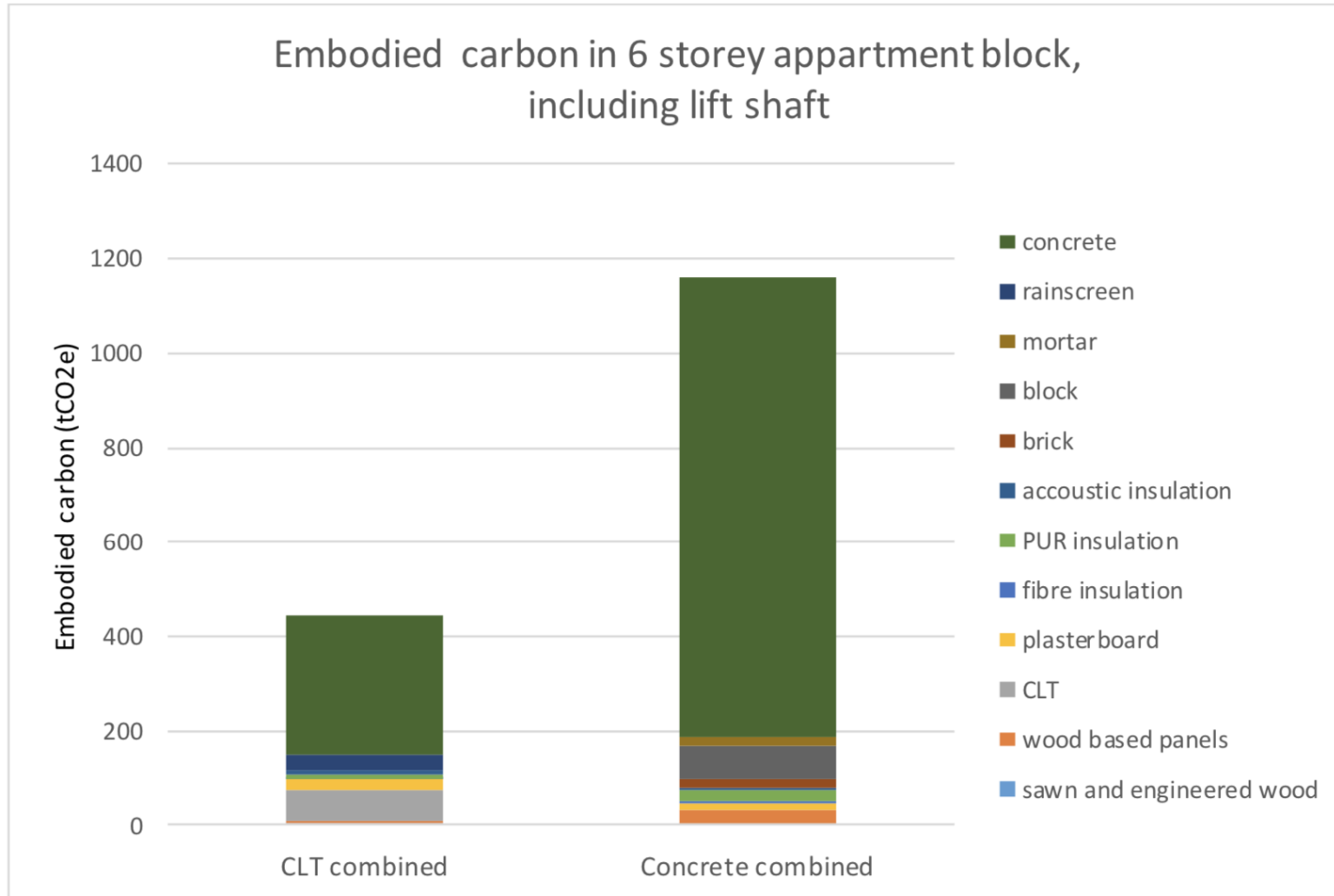


- Timber framing halves total weight
- Cement and bricks dominate weight

Source: UK Climate Change Committee, 2019

Wood in Construction in the UK: An Analysis of Carbon Abatement Potential

Climate-friendly



Source: UK Climate Change Committee, 2019

Wood in Construction in the UK: An Analysis of Carbon Abatement Potential

Benefits are increasingly recognized by the EU

16 September 2020

*“We know that the construction sector can even be turned from a **carbon source** into a **carbon sink** if organic building materials like **wood** and smart technologies as Artificial Intelligence are being used”*

President Von der Leyen in her 2020 State of the Union address to the Parliament.



Key Initiatives of the Green Deal: Biodiversity

Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 (COM/2020/380 final)

- 30% of EU land and ocean area protected, including Natura2000 areas; of which at least 1/3 **strictly protected**
 - **Restoration objectives** to be set in 2021
 - Increase forest areas covered by ‘biodiversity friendly’ management
-
- Identification, mapping and protection of **old-growth forests**
 - Biodiversity-friendly afforestation and reforestation **guidelines**
 - Guidelines on **Closer-to-nature forestry practices**



Key Initiatives of the Green Deal: Forests

EU Forest Strategy

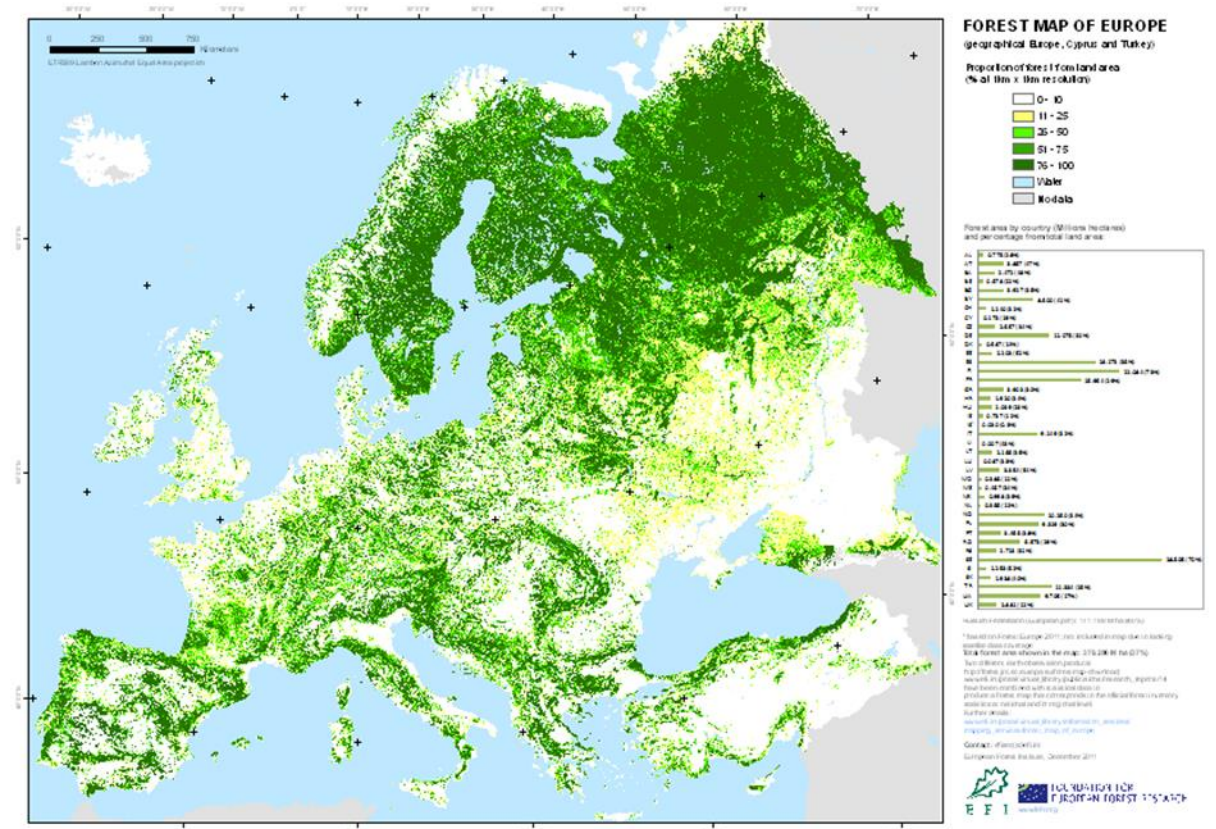
Focus on Afforestation, Reforestation, Restoration, although the importance of the bioeconomy is also mentioned in Green deal; built on Biodiversity Strategy

Expected in Q1-Q2 2021

Role of Sustainable Forest Management?

"The stewardship and use of forest lands in a way and at a rate that maintains their productivity, biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future relevant ecological, economic and social functions at local, national and global levels and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems."

Image source: European Forest Institute



Key Initiatives of the Green Deal: Forests

EU Parliament Report *The European Forest Strategy - The Way Forward (6 October 2020)*

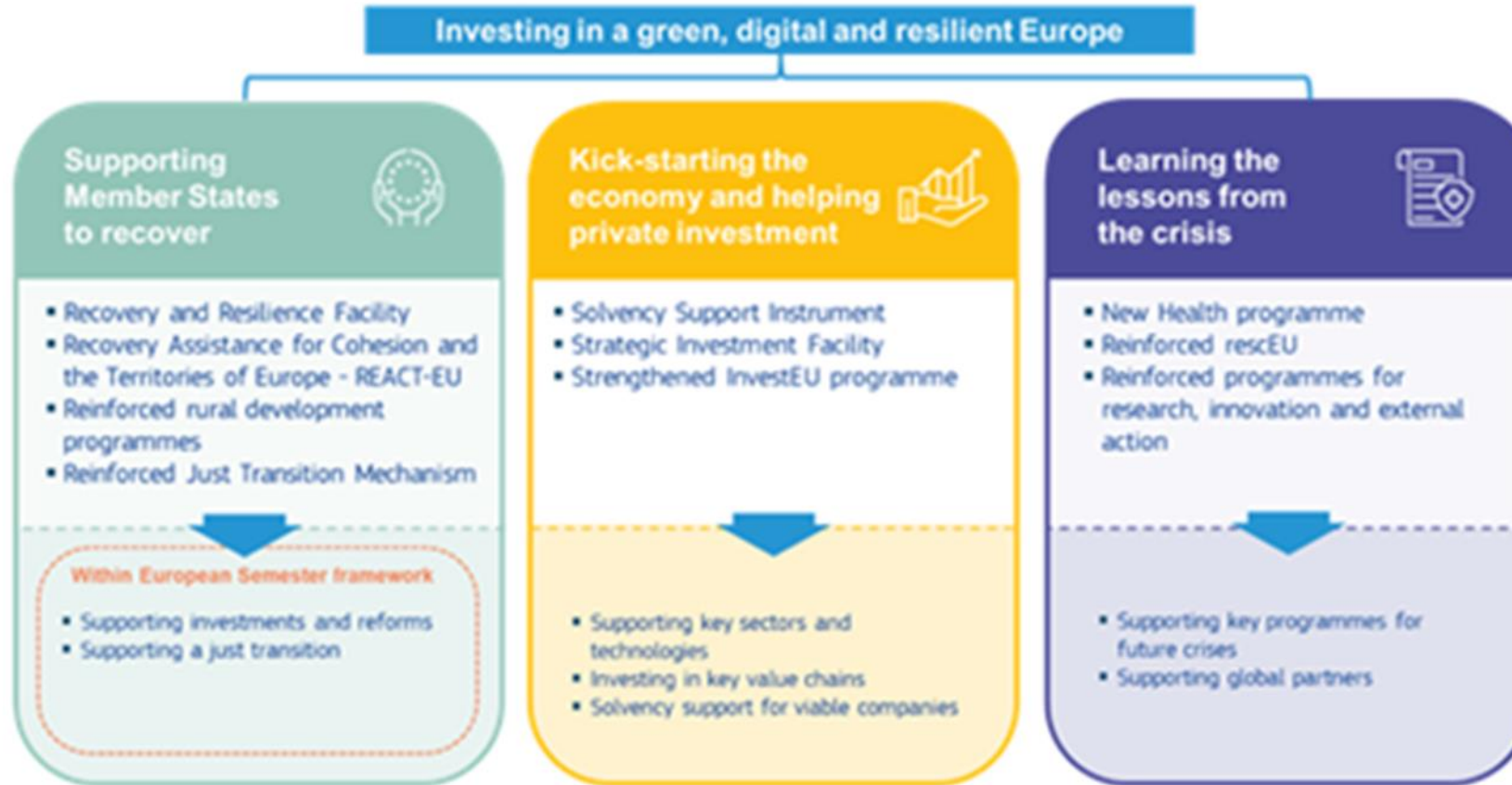
- It calls for a **strong and independent EU Forest Strategy post-2020** that should mainstream a **holistic approach on sustainable forest management**, which builds on the economic, social and environmental sustainability in a balanced way.
- Recognises the crucial role of **forests, forest-based sector and bioeconomy** in meeting the goals of the **European Green Deal**.
- Acknowledging the severe impact of **natural disturbances resulting from climate on forest**, the Report emphasises the importance of providing real-time, comparative and science-based and balanced information on European forest resources aiming at forecasting change and their consequences on forest's health and **raw material supply**.
- Urges the Member States to **prioritise continuing high-quality vocational training in eco-construction and timber-related trades**, and to provide the necessary public expenditure and investment in the field in order to anticipate the future needs of the EU's timber industry.

Key Initiatives of the Green Deal: Circular Economy

- **Legislative proposal to substantiate green claims** with a proposed Product Environmental Footprint method (2021)
- **Sustainable products policy framework** (2021): establish EU minimum sustainability and/or information requirements for specific groups of products, giving priority to electronics, ICT and textiles but also *furniture* and high impact intermediate products such as steel, cement and chemicals.
 - widening of the scope of the **Ecodesign directive** to cover additional environmental indicators;
 - establishing EU rules to make producers responsible for providing **more circular products** and intervening before products can become waste;
 - establishing EU rules for setting requirements on **mandatory sustainability labelling** and/or disclosure of information to market actors along value chains in the form of a digital product passport;
 - measures on production processes, for example to **facilitate recycled content** or remanufacturing and to track the use of hazardous substances in such processes

Covid-19: EU Recovery Action Plan

Increased EU Budget + “Next Generation EU”



Source: European Commission

Recovery and Resilience Plan

The European Council agreed on an envelope of **€672.5 billion in loans and non-repayable financial support (grants)** to support the implementation of investments and reforms. → Member States can prepare **recovery and resilience plans** that set out a coherent package of reforms and public investment projects to be implemented up to 2026

EC Guidance: Member States should explain how the measures will help the digital and green transition. Examples given in the guidance document:

- **Renovation wave of residential buildings**, social and affordable housing, private or public buildings (with a focus on schools and hospitals)
- **Investments in upgrading skills in construction** and other relevant sectors; curricula reforms, setting up graduate tracking systems and modular vocational education and training programmes
- **Decarbonisation of industry**, investments in energy efficiency in the industry sector and SMEs
- **Investments in circular economy and the bio-economy** (industrial symbiosis sites; incentivising circular business models and resources efficient production; support of tools aimed at increasing sustainable consumption).
- **Investments in biodiversity** and nature-based solutions to increase resilience against natural disasters and climate change (restoration of ecosystems such as **forests**, wetlands, peatlands, free-flowing rivers and coastal ecosystems)

Building back after Covid-19

Wood solutions offer a green construction material.

*Homes have been serving as makeshift workplaces, schools and gyms. **Wood can contribute to happier living spaces.** Research has shown that reducing the amount of man-made materials and introducing natural alternatives, such as wood, lowers stress and anxiety levels at home.*

Marjut Wallenius, a doctor of psychology at the University of Tampere (Finland), declared: “Wood has psychological effects on people and a similar stress-reducing effect to nature”.





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Unique tool for explaining in a easy and intuitive way, the role of wood products in the development of a circular bioeconomy;

It includes information on sustainable forests management, EUTR, life cycle comparison and the role of wood products in decarbonising the construction sector.

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