

Press Release

Strong growth in EU financing for implementing the Strategic Research & Innovation Agenda of the forest-based sector

The outcome was celebrated at the 10th Anniversary of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP)

BRUSSELS, 20 November 2015 – “We have built a stronger network that is acknowledged for its achievements over the past decade and is able to respond to Europe’s socioeconomic and environmental challenges with innovative solutions.” That was the main conclusion of the activities that took place on Wednesday in Brussels on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the **Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP)**. The whole value chain of the forest-based sector and the members of FTP National Support Groups (NSGs) took part in panel debates, dynamic brainstorming sessions and social activities. Representatives of the European Commission, the founders and owners of FTP, as well as other European Technology Platforms also joined in FTP’s jubilee.

“The ambitious Vision Targets and Strategic Research Agenda of FTP are the foundation on which we contribute together to a better future for both society and the forest-based sector,” declared Johan Elvnert, FTP’s Managing Director. “In addition, the positive trend of public investment in research and innovation projects proposed by the sector over the past years demonstrates confidence that forest owners and industry are capable of delivering sustainable bio-based products and services that will serve as the foundation of a fossil-free society.”

“The challenge is to move from promises to real facts and figures. There are still value chains that should be created and assessed. Financial mechanisms and regulatory barriers for the development of a bioeconomy shall not be overlooked,” underlined Waldemar Kutt, Head of the Unit BioBased products and processes of the European Commission’s Research & Innovation Directorate General.

According to FTP shareholders, there have been significant improvements in the dialogues with policymakers concerning particular needs for research and technology development in the forest-based sector. “FTP’s work to make research and technology development a subject is remarkable,” affirmed Aljoscha Requardt, Secretary General of the Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF). “We appreciate immensely the added value that FTP brings to our sector and also the broad networking opportunity to build partnerships across Europe,” said Per-Olof Wedin, President of the European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR).

“Overcoming the fragmentation challenges of our value chains and better communicating the representative role of FTP internally is crucial for raising the voice of the sector,” stated Patrizio Antonicoli, Secretary General of the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois). “Nowhere else in the world is there such a robust structure to advocate for more innovation in the forest industry,” concluded Bernard de Galembert, Innovation and Bioeconomy Director of the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI).

The panel debates also featured the participation of representatives of other European Technology Platforms: Europabio, European Technology Platform on Sustainable Mineral Resources (ETP-SMR), the European Technology Platform 'Plants for the Future' and the cross-cutting initiative NANO futures.

Greetings to FTP from the Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, Mr Carlos Moedas, were broadcast at the cocktail reception: “You have been successful in building an EU-wide community of partners. Your passion and commitment really come across in your Vision Targets for 2030, a vision to secure livelihoods and to manage our forests sustainably. By pursuing those targets you are helping the EU to significantly reduce

CO2 emissions. You are growing the European bioeconomy and you are securing the supply of a sustainable and renewable raw material.”

Preparing the future of the forest-based sector – The celebration of FTP’s 10th Anniversary provided a unique opportunity to bring together the whole network of FTP from across Europe. In the brainstorming sessions and group work that followed the panels, participants actively engaged with discussions aimed at monitoring progress towards FTP Vision Targets and reviewing items of the Strategic Research Agenda (SRA). “This will serve as a guide for FTP’s input towards the upcoming Work Programme of the Horizon 2020 and to other beneficial policies and political frameworks,” explained Johan Elvnert. // FTP

About FTP – FTP is the European Technology Platform for the Forest-based Sector. Since 2005, when FTP was established, more than EUR 1 billion of public funding have been invested in cooperative research and innovation projects addressing the vision and improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the forest-based sector in Europe. The long-term strategy of FTP is established in its Vision 2030 to be implemented through the Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda for 2020. These documents were revised in 2013 and updated according to changing realities. The Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI), Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR) and European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois) are FTP shareholders.

About the European forest-based sector – The forest-based sector is one of Europe’s largest business sectors. It includes woodworking industries, pulp and paper industries as well as forest owners. It contributes some 8% of the EU’s total manufacturing added value, and sustainably manages forests covering 37% of the EU’s land area. It supports 3-4 million industrial jobs in sectors including transport, machinery, construction, instrumentation, information technology, chemicals and energy. The sector is also Europe’s biggest producer and user of bio-based energy.

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