

Press Release

Former Minister of Environment Lena Ek takes on leadership to strengthen the role of the forest-based sector in the European bioeconomy

Chair of the Board of Södra and former Swedish Minister of Environment, she is the new Chairperson of the Board of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform

BRUSSELS, 20 April 2016 – Lena Ek, Chairperson of the Board of the Södra Skogsägarna and former Member of the European Parliament (MEP), is named the new Chair of the Board of the Forest-based Sector Technology Platform (FTP). She replaces Kaija Pehu-Lehtonen, Senior Vice President for Business Development in Metsä Fibre, who has been chairing FTP's Board for the last two and half years.

“Our objective is to advance the competitiveness of the whole sector by supporting European innovation and research”, stated Lena Ek after recognizing the substantial progress of the sector within the European research framework programmes, particularly *Horizon 2020*. “The forest-based sector will help to unlock Europe’s potential to make the transformation towards a biobased society. This fact should not be overlooked on the decisions about application of funding for research, innovation and technological development”, she added.

“It has been a privilege to work with such a competent Chair and strong industry representative as Kaija. We are truly grateful for her work and happy to see increased cooperation among industry, forest owners and researchers, as well as elevated success rates of proposals submitted by the sector,” stated FTP Managing Director Johan Elvnert. “We are excited with the new directions that FTP will take chaired by Lena Ek”, he concluded.

Lena Ek holds an honorary doctorate degree in Law and a distinct reputation in public affairs. Formerly, Lena served as Minister for the Environment of Sweden, Member of the European Parliament, Member of the Swedish Riksdag and hold prominent positions at the board of renowned political, scientific and industrial organisations. //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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