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European Organisation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors

Confédération Européenne des Entrepreneurs de Travaux Techniques Agricoles, Ruraux et Forestiers

Europäischer Zentralverband der land- und forstwirtschaftlichen Lohnunternehmer und ländlichen Dienstleistungsunternehmen

## For a human dimension to the European Forest Strategy

On 20 September 2013 the Commission adopted a new EU Forest Strategy, which responds to the new challenges facing forests and the forest sector (COM(2013)659final). A midterm review of the EU Forest Strategy is due to be carried out by the European Commission by the end of 2018 to assess progress in implementing the strategy.

*Why do CEETTAR Members - representatives of agriculture, forestry and rural machine contractors - care for the new European Forestry Strategy?*

In Europe, forestry contractors conduct the majority of different forestry operations in public and private owned forests. They provide silvicultural and harvesting services to a wide scope of clients: public and private forest owners, forestry organizations and wood-based industries.

This outsourcing of forestry work from traditional organizations has been a trend for years. High quality requirements, environment protection rules, productivity claims and higher standards on health and safety at work require modern techniques and a skilful workforce. Contractors can offer this to the forest based value chain.

*What is CEETTAR asking for?*

On 15th October 2018, CEETTAR, together with other EU organisations, issued a joint statement prior to the publication of the mid-term review of the EU Forest Strategy, recalling the importance for forestry contractors to have a clear and consistent reference for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) in the EU policy framework.

In this position paper, CEETTAR highlights additional concerns, which address the specific needs of forestry contractors.

### 1. Add a human dimension to the forest strategy

Most of forestry work is currently performed by private SMEs. There is however a huge lack of data covering people, who work in these companies or organizations. Very few is known upon their working conditions, their age distribution, the gender balance, their salary, their already acquired skills and the ones they need to develop, as well as on how profitable and viable SME companies in forestry are. There is a lack of forestry workers health and safety data in many countries. **Databases on forestry people need to be improved**, in order to identify windows of opportunities for improvement and set goals for future measurement of working conditions.

## 2. Measures to attract more skilled people to the forestry sector

A common European-wide problem is the lack of skilled young workers. Forestry work is still considered as a hard, dangerous and lonely work far from cities. Although it has partly been the fact, modern forestry with modern techniques offers new kind of opportunities for educated workers. In addition to this, volumes of industrial round wood and energy wood will be increasing in Europe, accompanied by higher volume of silvicultural work. One cannot face this challenge without **getting new skilled workers to forestry**. Forest strategy should definitely set goals and targets in this field.

## 3. A better communication to the public on the image of forestry works

Most of Europeans people feel mentally near but physically far from forests. However, they have their own opinions of forests and forestry. Forests has influence on many sectors of everyday life ; it produces wood based products, clean water, binds CO2 emissions, forms a recreational environment, maintains biodiversity, etc. Actually, facts related to forestry works remain mostly unknown for many citizens. In conclusion, **forestry needs to better communicate to the public**.

### About CEETAR:

The European Confederation of Agricultural, Rural and Forestry Contractors, established in 1961, represents about 150,000 companies and nearly 600,000 workers. It aims to represent the interests of land-based contractors in Europe. In 2014, the European Network of Forestry Entrepreneurs decided to merge with CEETAR, resulting in a stronger and more representative single organisation representing land-based contractors at EU level. CEETAR aims to be a proactive force to benefit the contractors and the rural economy at European level.

The picture describes the contractors' role in forest based value chain from forest to mill gate. They are in many ways a linking pin between forest owners and forest industry:

