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A new role for EU forests and the forest sector in the climate targets beyond 2020

ThinkForest, 1 December 2015, Paris



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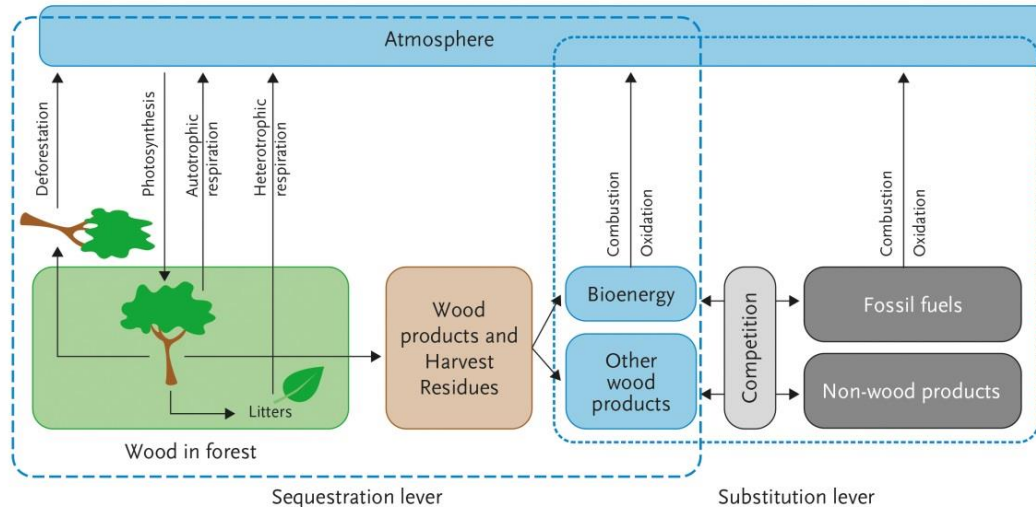


1599 map of arctic exploration by Willem Barentsz



Current role of European forests

- Sink of 450 Mt CO₂, or **10%** of total EU emissions
- Harvested wood products: sink of 44 Mt CO₂
- Biomass for bioenergy producing 3% of total EU energy need
- Some signs of possible saturation



Correlation of GDP and CO₂ sink

Biomass sink as reported to UNFCCC (2000-2006)

Mt CO₂/y

0

10

20

30

40

50

60

70

80

90

0

5000

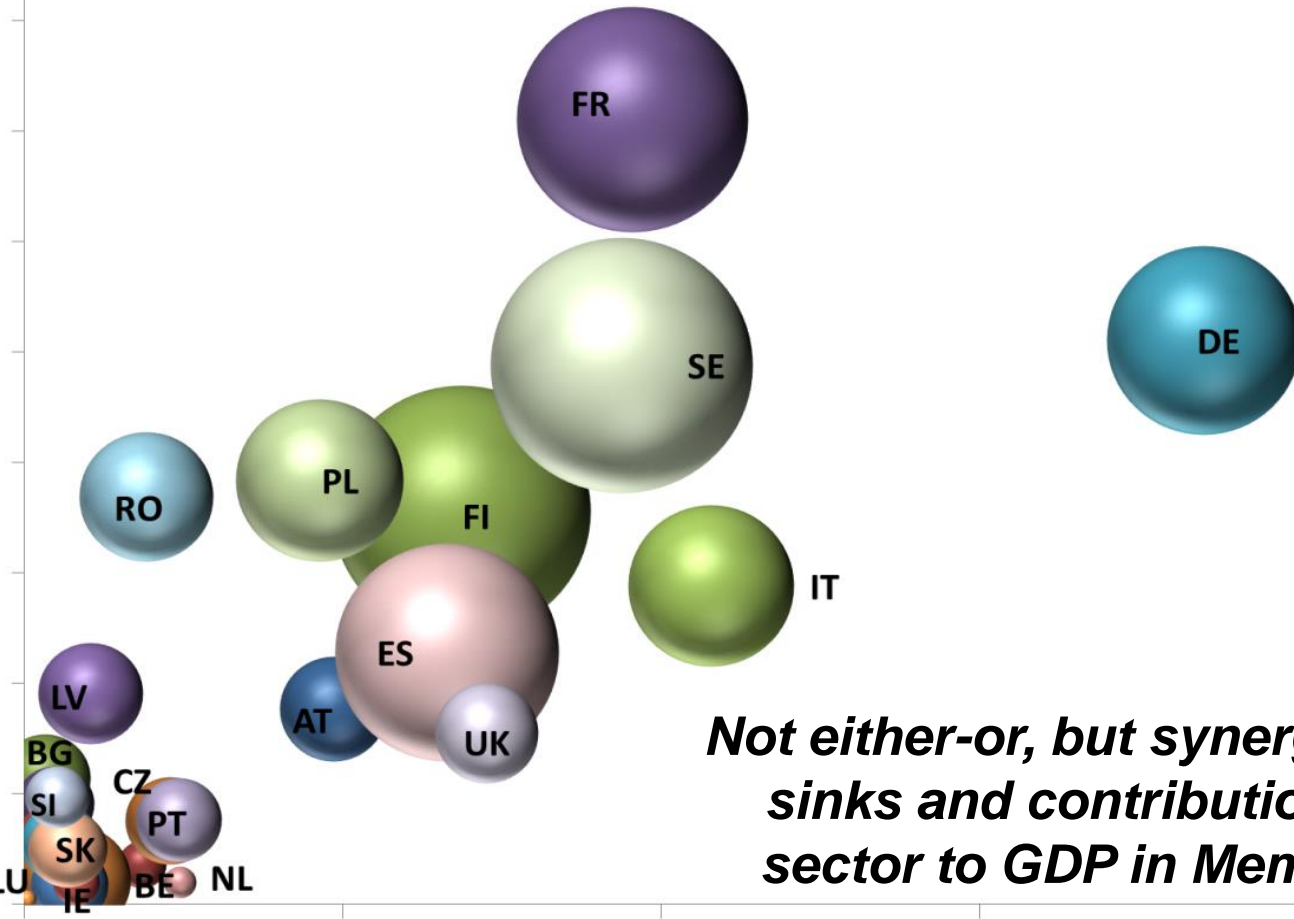
10000

15000

20000

25000

Contribution to GDP (M Euro/y)



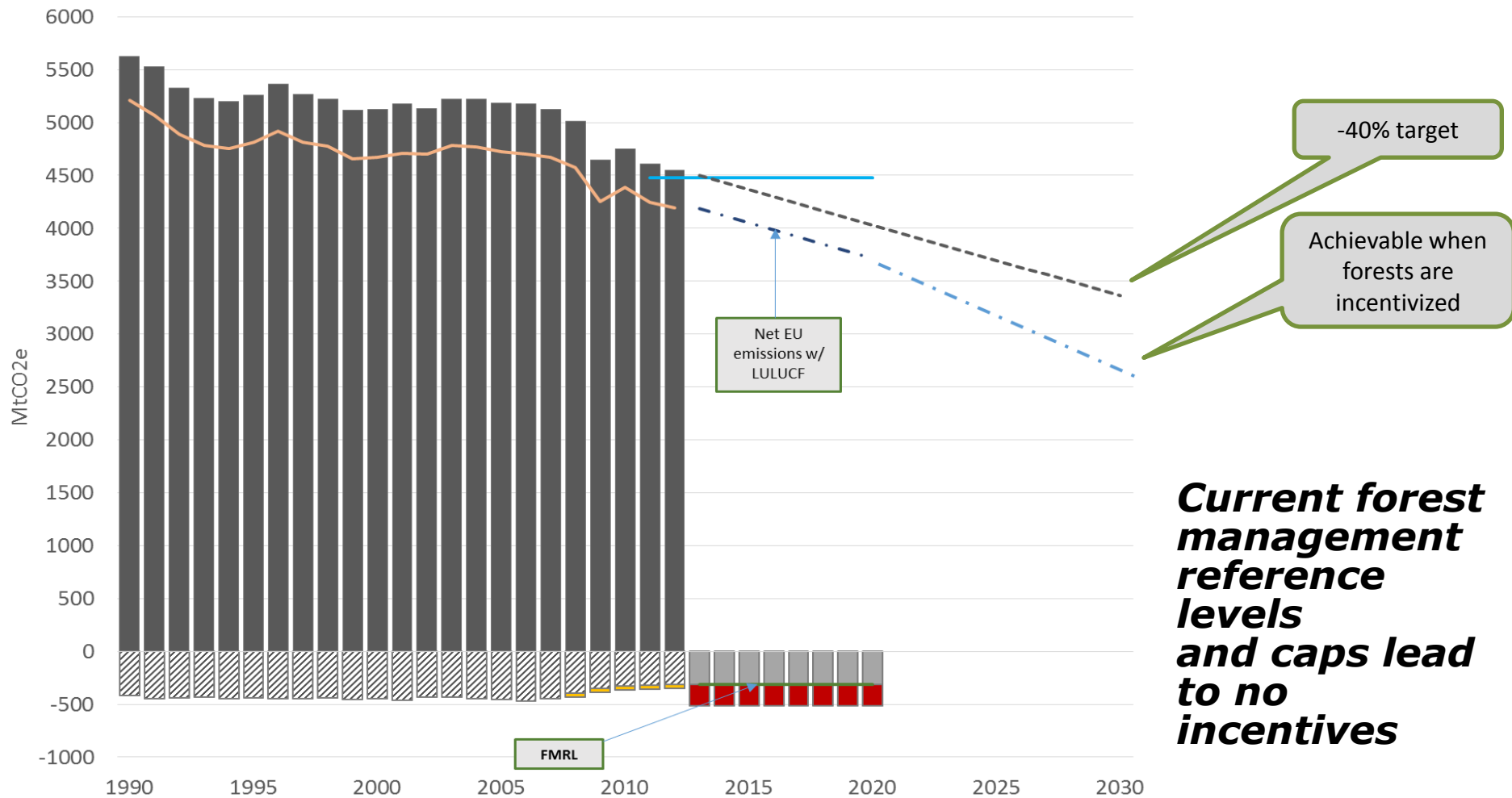
*Not either-or, but synergies between
sinks and contribution of forest
sector to GDP in Member States*



Why has nothing happened in the forest sector?

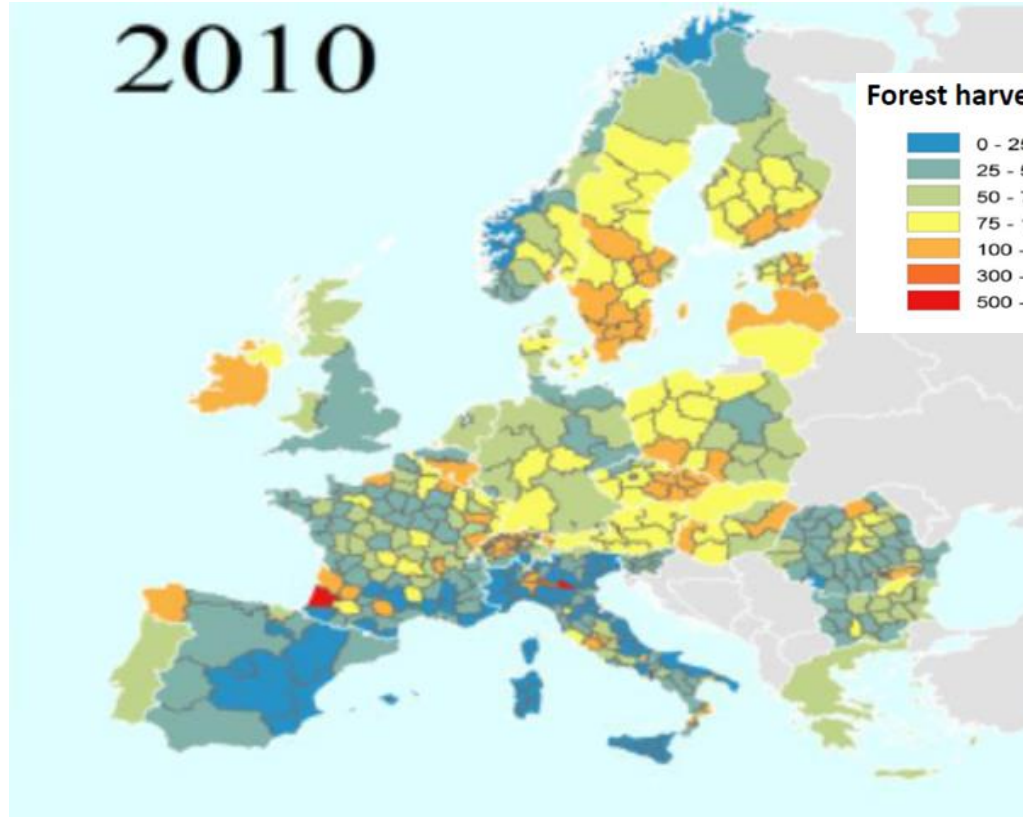
- Believed monitoring uncertain
- Perceived permanence risk
- Perceived that not much can be achieved
- Sink is already there and large. Taking up forest sink was perceived as just reducing targets

The challenge: how to take up forests?





Variety amongst Member States offers opportunities



Harvesting intensity as % of increment
(*Levers et al. 2014*)

Reasoning why we can and should take up forests now

- ✓ Each sector has to take its role
- ✓ Developing countries are phasing-in land use

Forests and forest sector can be taken up in overall target (phased-in), with own increasing role

Why?

- ✓ EU have rather stable sink, with a managed forest resource base
- ✓ New monitoring techniques available - incomparable to 1997
- ✓ Clear synergies; not an either-or!
- ✓ Policies, economic incentives and investments are needed to turn a saturating sink

What we propose (1)

- ✓ **Great scope** to further enhance role of EU forests in tackling climate change; up to another **9%** of all emissions compensated
- ✓ A full inclusion of forests and forest sector is feasible
- ✓ Provided that right economic incentives towards Climate Smart Forestry and forest sector are given - *not only sinks, but also products & energy*
- ✓ **EU should set an overall framework target** which it wants to achieve through its forests and forest sector.
- ✓ The timetable for achievement of this target **could be longer than 2030 for this sector**

What we propose (2)

- ✓ The next step would be to decide how to **share** the effort of meeting EU-wide target across EU
- ✓ **Targets must be much larger** than the current caps of the second commitment period for EU Member States, in order to provide an **incentive**
- ✓ It would be important to ensure that inclusion of the forest sector in the **ESD** adds to the overall EU ambition on climate mitigation
- ✓ Member states should update or create policies, economic programs and instruments. Locally specific measures can be stimulated in a **Climate Smart Forestry & Forest Sector**

No single sector can solve the whole problem, and no single sector can provide quick fixes

Climate smart forestry and forest sector takes into account local circumstances and creates win-win

Example of possible measures:

- ✓ Storm prone areas: bring down stock
- ✓ Drained peat areas: reduce drainage
- ✓ High stocked area: bring down stock and combine with innovation in products
- ✓ Remote areas: strict reserves
- ✓ Outgrown coppice: regenerate, stimulate local biomass innovation and plant adapted species





There are no dragons....only opportunities!

Thank you!

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