



THINKFOREST

Facilitated by European Forest Institute

Public perception of forestry and forest-based bioeconomy in the European Union

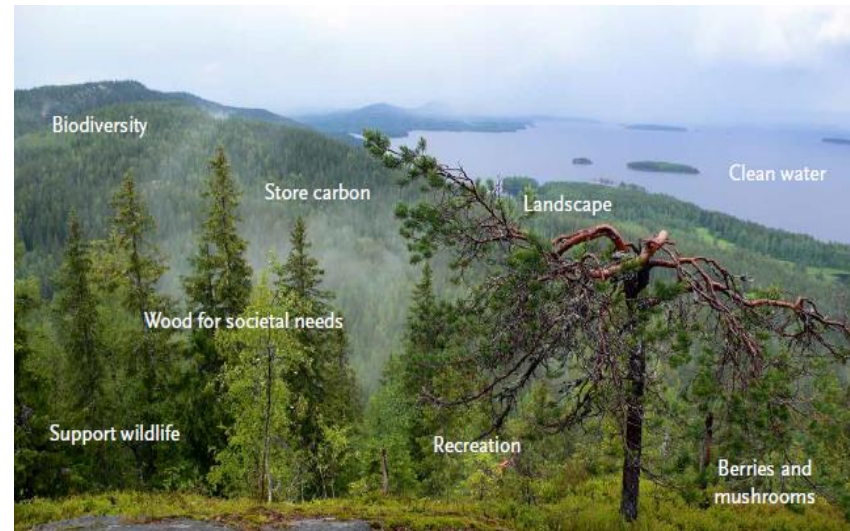
Lea Ranacher

27th October 2020, Webinar.



Background & Motivation

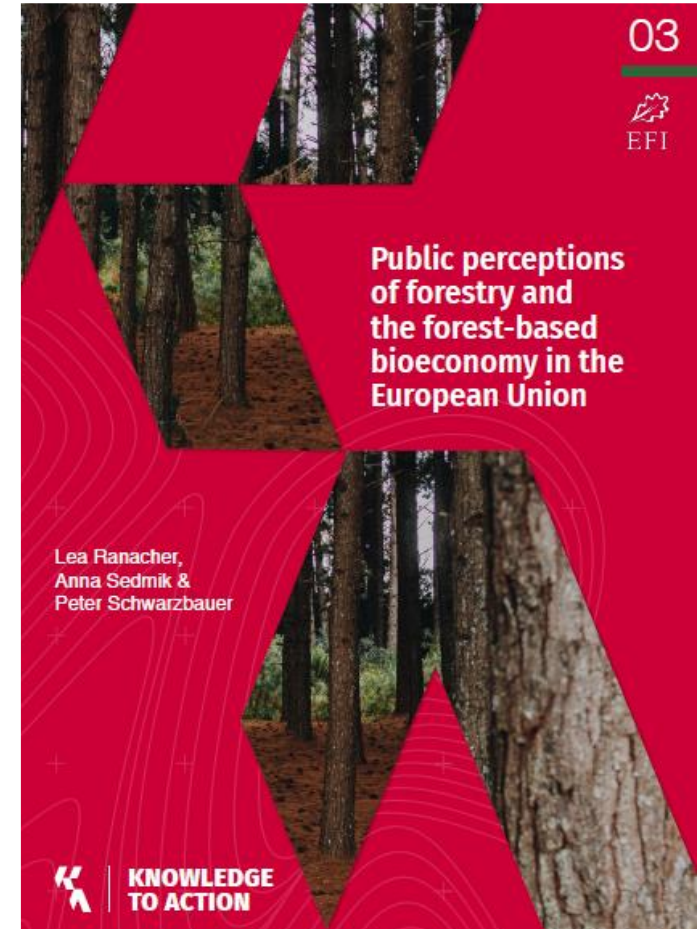
- **Forests are increasingly important** in European policy agenda, media and public discussion
- **Different expectations towards forests** and forest-based sector - climate change mitigation, biodiversity, bioeconomy, etc.
- **Agenda & discussion is shaped by public** (\approx voters) perceptions about forests and their use
- **Important to know public perceptions** of European forests and forest-based sector



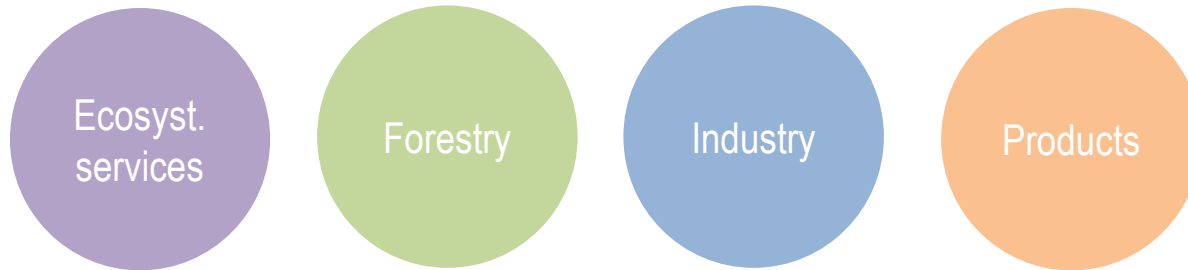
New EFI study on Public Perceptions

- Several studies on public **perceptions** of forests, forestry, forest-based sector
- The new EFI study provides a **synthesis** (meta-study) of the existing studies: what are the key messages coming out of these?

Eurobarometer 2013, Rametsteiner et al. 2009,
Ranacher et al. 201, UNECE/FAO 2016

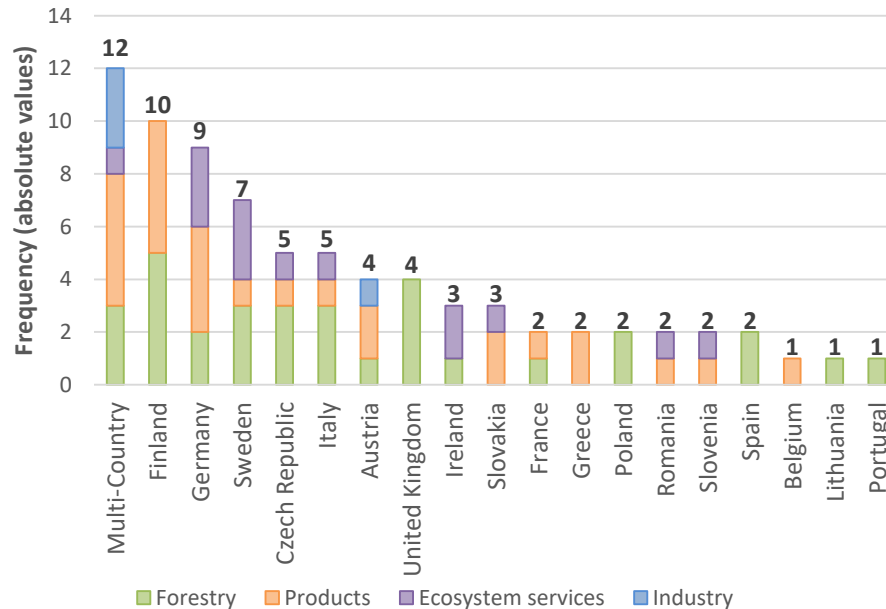


The forest-based sector in a bioeconomy: services, activities, products



Primary survey data
Conducted in EU27 + UK
Published 2010-2019

The 77 reviewed studies



- Few studies on industry
- Target groups
 - population
 - forest visitors
 - students
 - consumers
- Mostly quantitative & convenience sampling

Figure 1: The reviewed studies by country and topic

Forest ecosystem services are highly valued

- **Environmental benefits** more important than social and economic ones
 1. Global climate & biodiversity
 2. Recreation & experiencing nature
 3. Timber production
- **Women, higher educated, urban citizens, no sector involvement** emphasized environmental aspects

Preference for forest protection and diversity

- Worried about forest health vs. well managed
- Negative perception of **intensive use**
 - clear-cuts, exotic tree species, chemicals
- Preference for mixed forests and different ages classes
- **Women, higher educated, younger respondents** value conservation & diverse forest

Scepticism towards the environmental performance

- Few studies – topic under-represented in academic literature
- Limited knowledge
- **Sustainability is questioned**
 - Certified & legally harvested wood
 - Environmental responsibility
 - Overall sustainability performance rated as good

Wood products perceived as environmentally friendly

- **Little awareness** of new wood-based products and few studies
- Renewable, high quality, healthy material but **question climate benefits**
- **Purchasing decision**
 - Product information: safety, labour conditions, wood origin
 - Performance and price more important?
- Higher levels of **income, education and environmental awareness** led to higher valuation of wood products

Forests contribute to bioeconomy. Wood products too?

- Support **environmental benefits** in forest policy & improve communication on **wood harvest**
- Communicate **product information** and track development through sustainability assessments
- **Research gaps:**
 - systematic research/monitoring of forestry in EU
 - new wood-based products & industry, purchasing decision

Further info:

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