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

Brussels, Think Forest, 13 October 2015



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1599 map of arctic exploration by Willem Barentsz

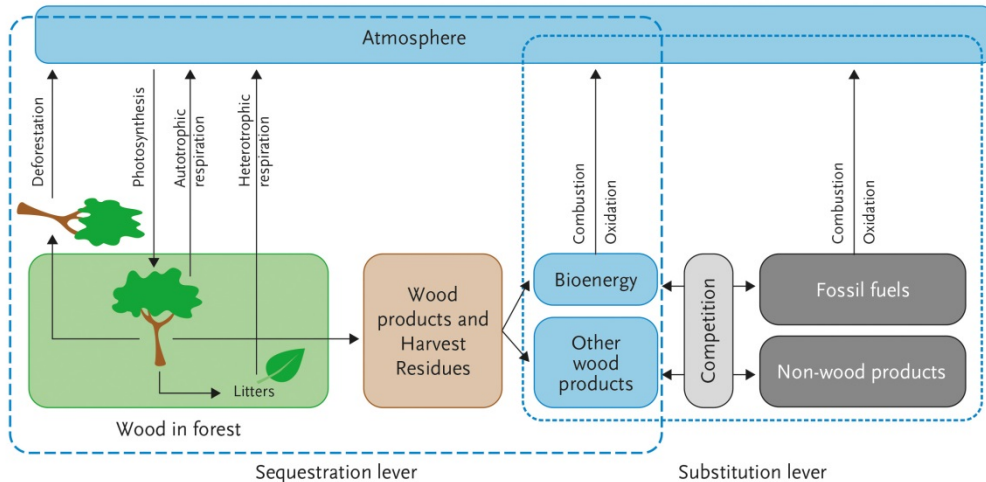




Current role of European forests

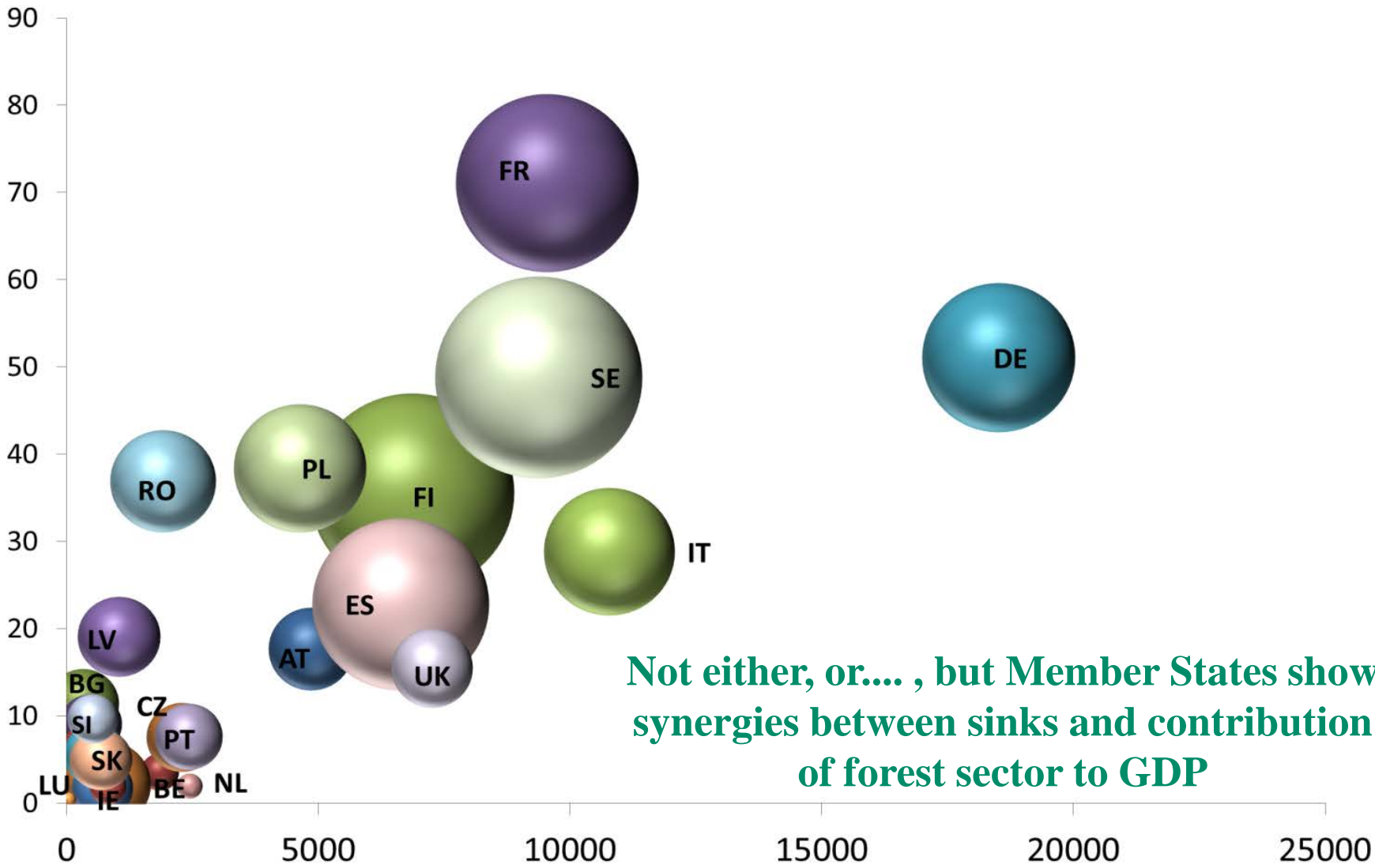
- Sink of 450 Mt CO₂ , or 9% of total EU emissions,
- Harvested wood products sink of 44 Mt CO₂
- Biomass for bioenergy producing 3% of total EU energy need

Some signs of saturation



Biomass sink as reported to UNFCCC (2000-2006)

Mt CO₂/y



Not either, or... , but Member States show synergies between sinks and contribution of forest sector to GDP

Contribution to GDP (M Euro/y)

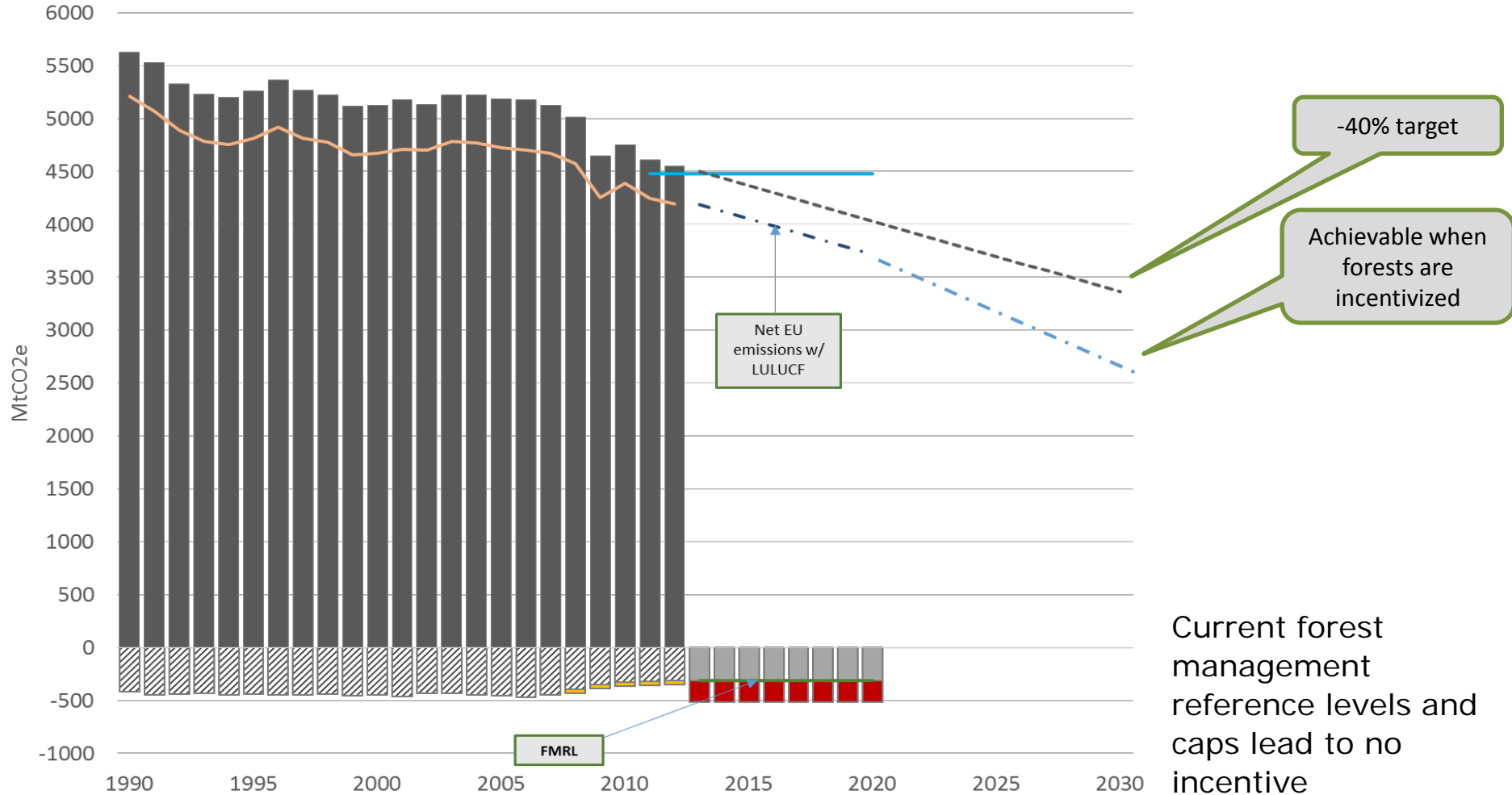


Why has nothing happened in the forest sector

- 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

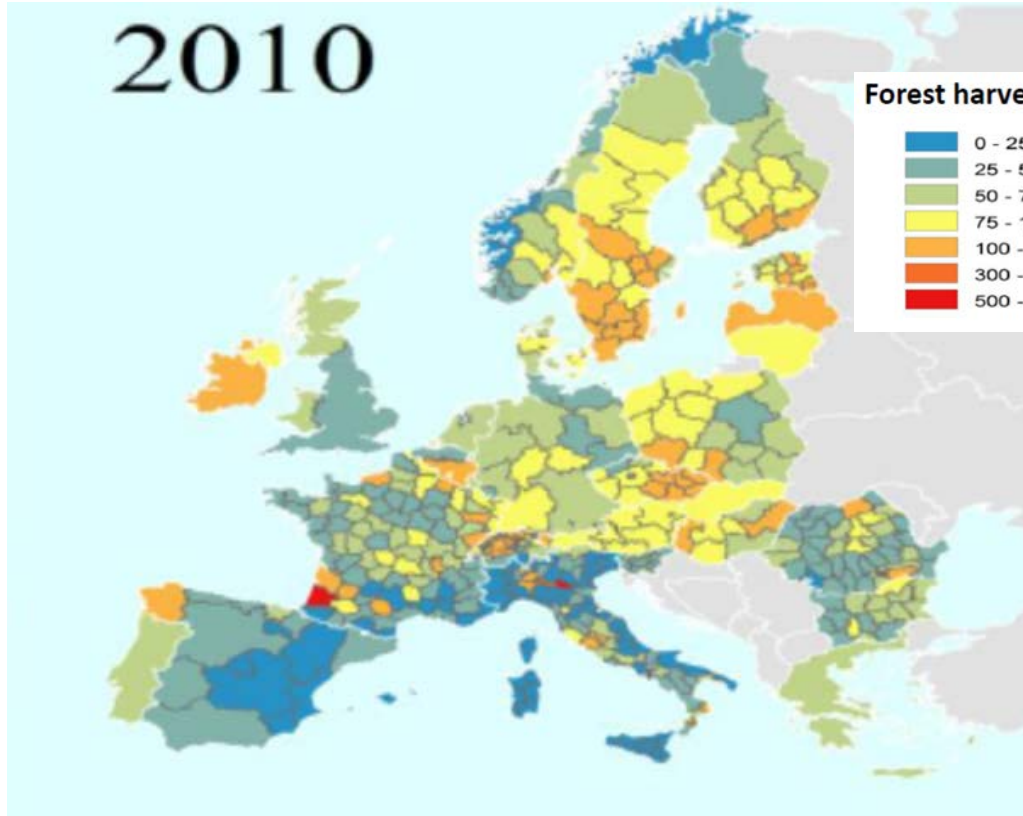


The challenge: how to take up forests





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 the overall target (phased-in), with own increasing role.

Why:

- ✓ We in 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

- ✓ **Great scope** to further enhance the role of EU forests in tackling climate change (up to another 10% of all emissions compensated) ;
- ✓ Provided that the right economic incentives towards Climate Smart Forestry and the 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.
- ✓ Then this overall target is **allocated** to the member states
- ✓ Member states should create policies, economic programs and instruments. Locally specific measures can be stimulated in a Climate Smart Forestry & Forest Sector.

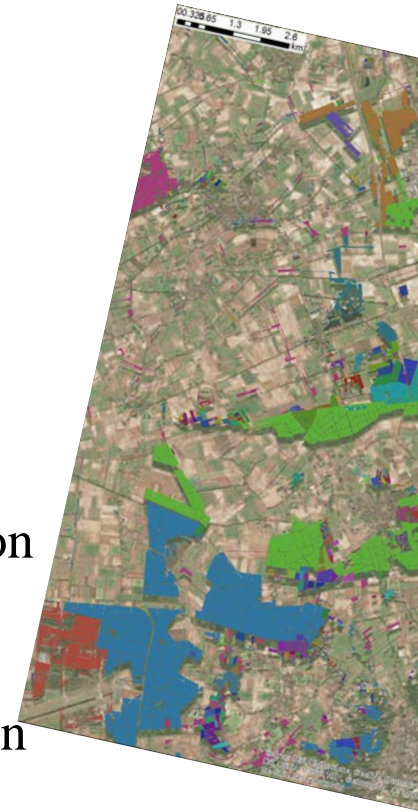


No single sector can solve the whole problem, and no single sector can provide quick fixes

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

Measures are e.g.

- ✓ E.g. 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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