EPF and ZWE proposal for a comprehensive EU strategy for wood under The New Circular Economy Action Plan

The European Panel Federation (EPF) and Zero Waste Europe warmly welcome the New Circular Economy Action Plan to stimulate lead markets for climate neutral and circular products. Material efficiency is of the utmost importance to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and, in this respect, sustainable product initiative will play a major role in reducing products externalities.

EPF and ZWE call for the development of a **comprehensive EU strategy for wood** based on the input from industry and other relevant stakeholders. Such a strategy should be aimed at stimulating the market for sustainable and circular wood-based products including wood-based panels, furniture and packaging. The strategy should aim at stimulating the competitiveness of the forest-based industry and to boost circularity and innovation through a set of concrete measures.

EPF and ZWE believe therefore that the following actions under the New Circular Economy Action Plan should be considered in order to ensure circular use of harvested wood products:

- Broaden the application of the **waste hierarchy principle to wood materials**;
- Stimulate the **cascading use of woody biomass** for better resource efficiency throughout the value chain to achieve biomass circularity;
- Ensure a **level playing field** by discontinuing financial incentives for biomass energy;
- **Increase recycling targets** for all wood wastes and facilitate waste separation;
- **Facilitate sound consumption choices** for wood-based products by considering substitution into the carbon accounting;
- **Assess the biogenic carbon storage and substitution** into wood-based materials and products for enhancing the life span of carbon sinks.

Zero Waste Europe is the European network of communities, local leaders, businesses, experts, and change agents working towards the same vision: phasing out waste from our society. We empower communities to redesign their relationship with resources, to adopt smarter lifestyles and sustainable consumption patterns, and to think circular. www.zerowasteeurope.eu

The European Panel Federation represents the manufacturers of wood-based panels being particleboard, dry process fibreboard (MDF), oriented strand board (OSB), hardboard, softboard and plywood. EPF has members in 32 European countries. The EU wood panel industry has a turnover of about 22 billion euro every year, creates over 100,000 jobs directly and counts more than 5,000 enterprises in Europe. The production of wood-based panels in the EU-28 (+EFTA) in 2019 was an estimated 57.6 million m³. www.europanels.org