

(English version)

Question for written answer E-000914/26
to the Commission
Piotr Müller (ECR)
(4 March 2026)

Subject: The scope of EU competences and the real purpose of establishing an EU forest monitoring framework

The EU forest monitoring framework currently under discussion aims to create a harmonised system for collecting data on the state of forests across the EU in order to support climate and environmental policies. At the same time, forest management remains the competence of Member States, and the Treaties do not provide for a common EU forest policy. This raises fundamental questions about the actual purpose of creating an extensive data collection system at EU level. If the Commission does not have the competence to manage forests, there is a question as to whether this instrument will not become, to all intents and purposes, a tool for exerting regulatory pressure under the pretext of environmental protection, leading to indirect shaping of forestry policy and extending the Union's competences beyond the scope provided for in the Treaties. This approach raises serious concerns with regard to the principles of conferral and subsidiarity, as well as the potential economic impact on sectors dependent on a stable supply of timber.

1. What is the real purpose of establishing an EU forest monitoring system, given that forest management remains the responsibility of Member States and is not a common EU policy?
2. How will the Commission ensure that data from this system will not be used to exert regulatory pressure to restrict timber harvesting or to indirectly shape national forestry policies?
3. Can the Commission unequivocally confirm that the forest monitoring framework will not be used to extend the Union's powers through environmental regulations, and that any potential economic impact on the timber industry will be thoroughly assessed in advance?

Submitted: 4.3.2026

Answer given by Ms Roswall on behalf of the European Commission
(23 April 2026)

The proposal for a regulation on a monitoring framework for resilient European forests ⁽¹⁾ was rejected by the European Parliament on 21 October 2025 and the Council of Ministers envisaged significant modifications affecting the objectives of the proposal. Consequently, the Commission announced its intention to withdrawal.

EU action on climate, biodiversity and circular economy as well as their benefits inherently relate to natural ecosystems, including forests.

The proposal aimed to set up an EU-wide forest monitoring system on forest ecosystems and resources in the EU for accurate, timely and comparable data on forests across the EU, in view of increasing pressures and stressors, and their cross-border impacts.

By improving and combining national monitoring systems with satellite-based Earth observation, the system would have: (i) supported public authorities in evidence-based policymaking, (ii) provided stakeholders with accurate information for effective decision-making, (iii) supported new business models such as the certification of carbon farming schemes, (iv) supported new markets for digital monitoring services. It did not touch on forest management.

The EU has a variety of competences shared with Member States that address forests and forestry, including climate, environment and agriculture policies.

The Union has repeatedly exercised these competences respecting the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. In exercising the shared competences, the Commission is working in close cooperation with Member States' competent authorities and stakeholders, respecting subsidiarity and based on the adequate legal basis.

⁽¹⁾ https://environment.ec.europa.eu/publications/proposal-regulation-forest-monitoring-framework_en.