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**PLAYING A VITAL ROLE IN TOMORROW'S EUROPE:
THE FOREST- BASED SECTOR PROMOTES INNOVATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

The Forest-Based sector will today meet at European level and look to innovation and the challenges of a sustainable society to map its role in the 21st century. A two-day forum in Stockholm, **“Innovative and sustainable use of forest resources: Research Forum 2005”**, supported by the European Commission and attended by the Swedish Prime minister, Goran Persson, will for the first time bring together the sector, the research community and the political system to set out how this can be achieved.

Forest-based products and services already play an essential role in our daily lives, providing value goods, comfort, hygiene, security and information. Now, forest-based sector research is moving into an exciting and essential period of development. It has been predicted that the sector will be a key contributor to a sustainable European society by 2030. In a new, bio-based and customer driven European economy, the sector would make significant contributions to society by fostering an extended use of renewable resources; delivering innovation in process, products and services.

In order to realize these predictions, all relevant stakeholders in the Forest-Based sector have joined forces under the umbrella of an industry driven Technology Platform (TP) and are collaborating to produce a Strategic Research Agenda that acknowledges the vital role research and innovation will play in growth and sustainability, and which will be outlined at the forum.

EU Commissioner for Science and Research Janez Potocnik today recognised the sector's vision and efforts:

"I would like to congratulate you for developing one of the most advanced Technology Platforms. I trust that your Strategic Research Agenda will provide a clear view and roadmap for providing answers to some of the challenges that we are faced with in today's global world. One of them is certainly improving European competitiveness. But the same time preserving and improving the quality of life for all citizens of Europe is equally important. I believe that forestry related research can contribute to both goals"

Björn Hägglund, Chairman of the Forest-based sector's TP High level group said:

" Future success for the forest-based sector lies in the development of innovative products and services. If the forest-based industry were invented now, it would be the breakthrough of the twenty-first century. Using sun energy, water and carbon dioxide for the production of millions of tons of useful products for communication, packaging, hygiene, construction and energy."

Potential research based innovations could include enhancing sustainability through the development of a new breed of "green chemicals" from wood, both 'fine' and 'basic', as a

substitute for oil based chemicals. Research could also lead to trees that are more resistant to the stresses caused by climate change. Products providing 'active' information to consumers could be expected through the integration of conventional fibre-based printed products and digital media, leading to "hybrid media". E.g. providing electronic links between newspapers or periodicals and home computers and allowing the delivery of tailored, up-to-date information. And in the future wood materials could be actively used a stabilizer to manage indoor climate (humidity and temperature).

Notes for Editors

- **“Innovative and sustainable use of forest resources: Research Forum 2005”** is a two day forum to be held at the Stockholm City Conference Centre on the **9th and 10th of November**. This will be the first time that all relevant actors are assembled to share their perspectives, experiences and needs. This type of transparent and flexible dialogue is seen as a foundation for future developments.
With respect to the social relevance of this forum, **Swedish Prime Minister, Goran Persson** will give the opening address at 13:00 on November 9th.
A **press conference** is scheduled for **2.30 pm on the 9th** giving journalists the chance to discuss with Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform leaders including representatives of the European Commission and the scientific community.
- The Forest-Based Sector and its relevant partners generate a turn over of €375 billion, offering employment to 3.5 million European citizens. The sector includes: Forestry, woodworking, pulp and paper manufacturing, paper converting and printing industries.
- **The concept of "Technology Platforms"** was established by the European Commission. The Platforms bring together industry, research institutions, the financial world and the regulatory authorities at European level to **define a common research agenda for an industrial sector**. The research agenda is based on a common R&D vision for that sector, signposting how it will move forward. The result should be the mobilisation of resources, scientific, economic and personnel, at national and European, public and private level.
- The Forest-Based Sector Technology Platform is an initiative by the three European confederations representing its interests in Europe: Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF), European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI-Bois), and Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI).
- More details about the Forum are available on **www.fbs-research.com**
For more information on the forest-based sector's technology platform see **www.forestplatform.org**

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