

8th International wildland fire conference

16 May 2023 - Porto

European Court of Auditors: *auditing forest protection*



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ECA reports on forests



Why forests are important?

Environmental purposes:

- preserve landscape and soil fertility
- regulate fresh water supply
- conserve biodiversity
- help mitigate climate change

Social purposes:

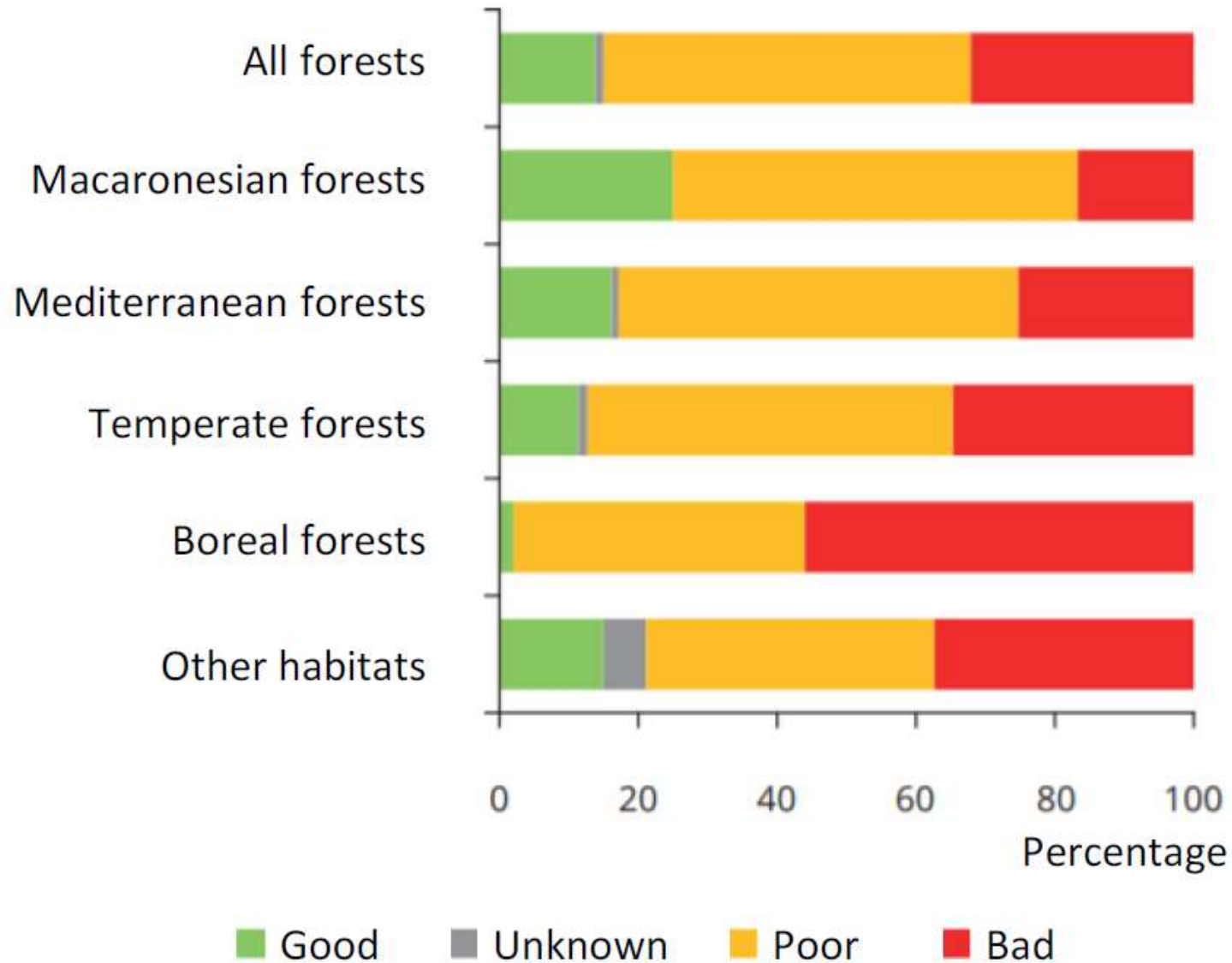
- most EU forests are publicly accessible and provide recreational and cultural services



Economic purposes:

- timber production, which contributes to rural development and provides millions of jobs
- non-wood products, including cork and resins

Conservation status of forests by region (2018)



EU action

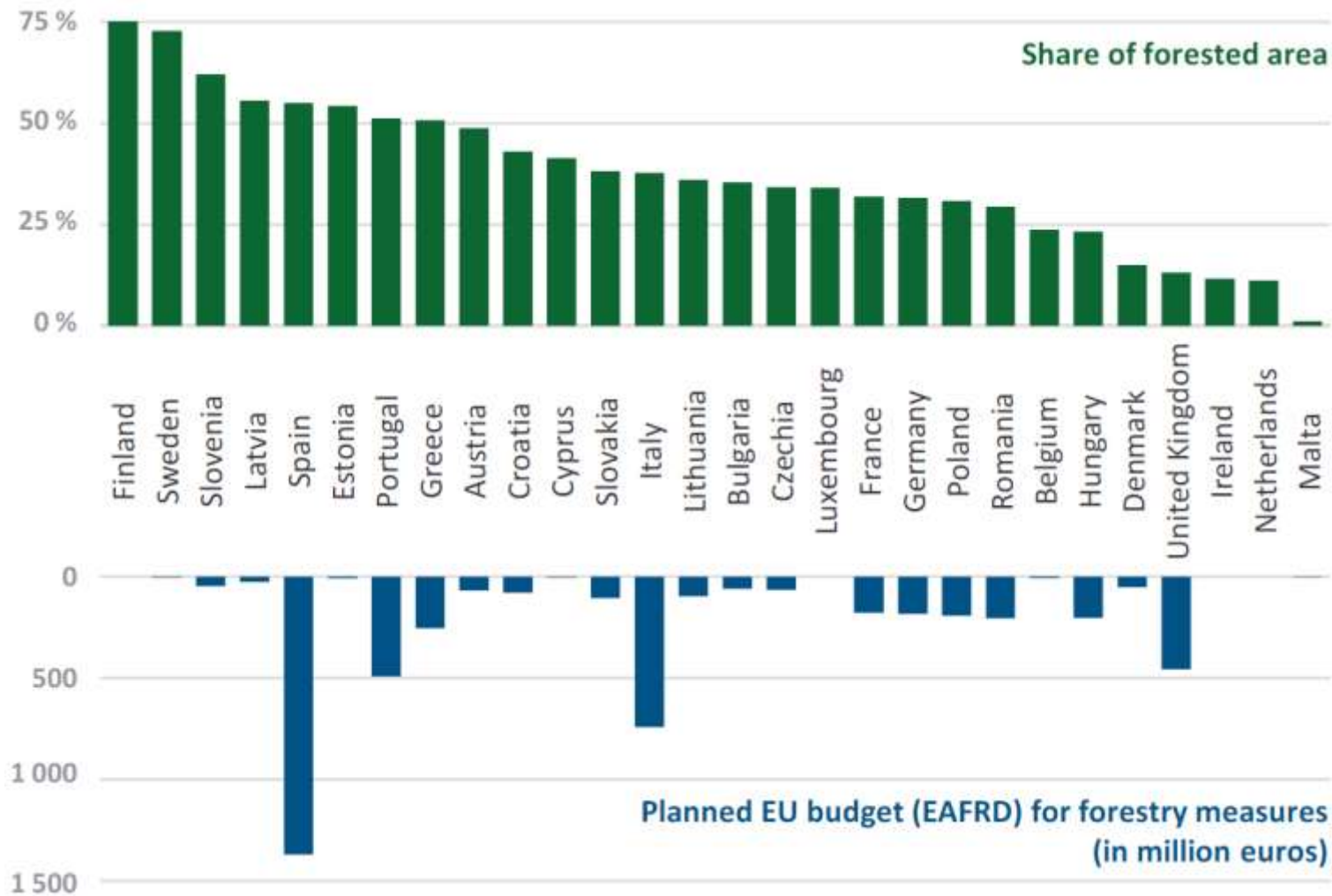


Direct impact



Indirect impact

EU EAFRD budget per Member State (2014-2020)



Some EU projects and their results

Improvement of soil condition in Italy (Sicily)



Afforestation in Portugal



Box 6 – Sustainability concerns of a forestry project in addressing desertification

For an EAFRD co-financed afforestation project in Cyprus, we saw that about 20 % of the trees which had been planted had not survived for at least five years after the project ended, as some species were not well adapted to the climatic conditions.



Source: ECA.

Conclusions of our report on forest fires (2014)

- Preventive actions were not sufficiently targeted
- Actions were found which were not appropriate to achieve the objectives of the measure



- The cost-effectiveness of the actions financed was not adequately ensured
 - Funding to public owned forests for costly labour-intensive activities
- Monitoring tools did not allow the Commission and the Member States to adequately assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the measure

Report on EU forest Strategy (2021)

Overall conclusion

- The EU has had a positive but limited impact on protecting biodiversity and addressing climate change in EU forests

Recommendations to the Commission

- Improve the EU's contribution to biodiversity and better tackling climate change in EU forests
 - Forest conservation measures
 - Disseminate knowledge on adaptation of forests to climate change
- Strengthen the fight against illegal logging
 - Timber Regulation
 - Remote sensing
- Improve the focus of rural development forestry measures on biodiversity and climate change
 - In line with sustainable forest management
 - Collecting performance information

Contact details

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