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Presentations	Session 3.1	<i>European Forest coalitions – past, present and future.</i>

*Abstract Session 3.1 – Polarization and advocacy coalitions in EU forests. The case of LULUCF negotiations.*

In the EU strategic vision forests feature strongly, both as a carbon sink essential to achieving climate mitigation targets, and as one of the core resources for bioeconomy. The negotiations on integrating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from land-use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) into the EU 2030 Climate and Energy Framework provided an important policy arena, characterized by conflicting views over what is the policy problem and what are possible responses. Numerous actors sought to influence policy outputs on how emissions should be accounted for through formal negotiations and lobbying. This paper provides insights on how beliefs and power relations within the EU forest policy arena shaped the EU LULUCF negotiations. Literature suggests that major beliefs in the EU polarize the debate regarding: 1) the EU common policy (regulation) vs national policies (flexibility); 2) nature conservation (multiple benefits to the society) vs forest production (intensified forest management); 3) climate objectives (forest as a carbon sink) vs economic interests (bioeconomy contributes to climate mitigation); 4) global responsibility vs importance of domestic land uses for economy. We apply the advocacy-coalition framework and investigate actor's policy beliefs and reputational power based on an online network survey with 44 respondents with diverse organizational affiliations. Our preliminary findings suggest that unlike in other regions in the world, beliefs related to climate change do not seem to create a major cleavage, since all involved actors agree on the need for urgent actions. Conflicting views, however, occur over the type of actions needed. Industry and some forested member states believe that current practices under SFM need more acknowledgement, while ENGOS and some member states point out that the Regulation provides many loopholes. The current inertia and failure of the EU in achieving its ambitious climate goals can then be explained by power asymmetries among those involved.

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