

Nine points on biomass and the RED

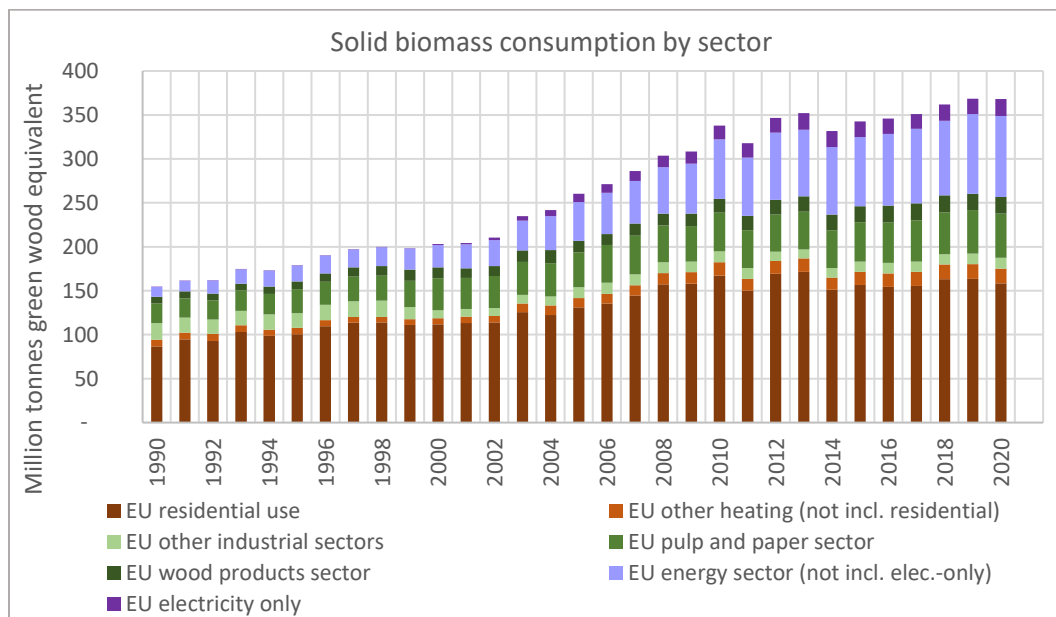
1. The RED III is not relevant to addressing the fuels crisis this winter, or even the next. The RED concerns investments the EU is making in technology for the future. If the EU does not take meaningful steps to reduce wood-burning for renewable energy, the EU's climate targets will be unachievable, and the next RED revision will be dealing with the exact same questions. Except by then, there will be far fewer forests left. Our ["Sinks" report](#) shows the alarming degradation of the forest carbon sink already occurring, and connects it to biomass harvesting.
2. For a jaw-dropping example of the perversity of the EU's wood-burning incentives and the sheer scale of forest destruction required to fuel just one plant, use google translate to view [Polish Newsweek's article about the Polaniec plant](#) (also featured in our ["Sinks" report](#), page 8, as receiving over 65 million euro in renewable energy subsidies in 2021). Also see our example, below:



3. Burning wood is an important source of climate-warming CO₂. As our analysis showed ([Forest fire CO₂ emissions vs. biomass energy emissions – which is worse?](#)), the EU's yearly bioenergy emissions exceed those from the forest fires of last summer.
4. The RED II and RED III "sustainability" criteria do not prevent loss of the forest carbon sink, because of the wide range of harvesting intensities that can be considered sustainable and therefore zero carbon under the RED. But in fact as the EC itself has admitted, "ensuring that

the harvest level stays below the growth rate of the forest is not sufficient to ensure climate change mitigation.” See our one-pager on the [“myth of sustainable biomass”](#) for the explanation.

5. Burning wood is extremely inefficient. It’s unrealistic to think that wood-burning can play a meaningful role in replacing fossil fuels. For instance, our analysis showed [replacing just 10% of Russian fossil fuels with wood would obliterate even more forests](#). We provide a transparent analysis there.
6. No one is talking about “banning” wood-burning. Whatever happens with the RED in the short-term, it’s highly likely that people will continue to burn wood in their homes, for instance. This is important, because residential wood-burning is the largest category of biomass consumption – see graphic, whole report is [here](#).



7. However, by continuing to *rely* on wood-burning for hitting renewable energy targets, the EU is locking people into continued energy poverty and ensuring the problems continue to deepen. See [It’s time to transfer billions in biomass subsidies to heat pumps and solar](#). The best way to change this trend is to put pressure on member states that currently rely on wood-burning for meeting RE targets. **Stopping counting burning forest biomass as renewable energy is the only thing that will induce member states to make the necessary investments into truly clean energy** (and will free up subsidy support to be reallocated to heatpumps, solar, etc).
8. The over-reliance on wood-burning by some member states – and their gaming of the system – is highlighted in this very thorough article by Euractiv: [Exposed: How EU countries use firewood to bloat their renewable energy stats](#)
9. We’re not the only ones worried about accelerating use of biomass. The wood-products industry is also increasingly alarmed about support for bioenergy – see [Wood product manufacturers sound the alarm about burning wood for energy](#)