



Dear Ms Rostlund,
Dear Ms Urisman,
Dear Mr Wolodarski,

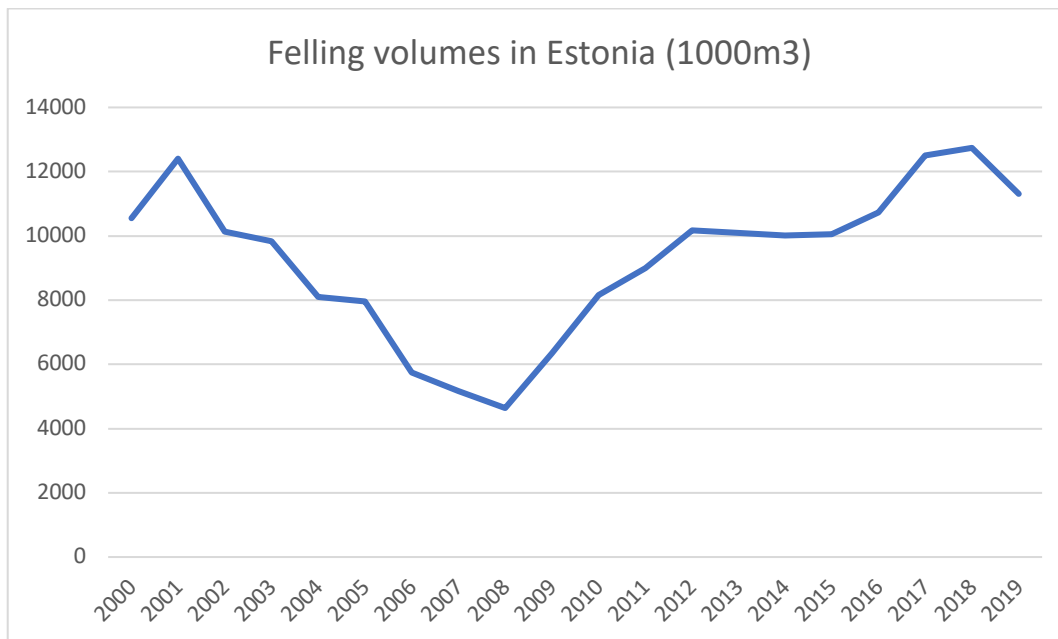
Thank you for taking the interest in Estonian forests, nature and bioeconomy in your [article](#). Forest management, biodiversity conservation and bioeconomy are all topics of high importance and deserve public attention. Unfortunately, the article contains several misleading facts and false argumentation, causing reputation damage to Estonia and Estonian entrepreneurs and creates false narrative around bioeconomy.

1. **Article claim: Between 2008 and 2018, harvesting volumes in Estonia almost tripled from 4.6 to 12.7 million cubic meters of wood.**

The author has chosen misrepresenting numbers from Estonian forestry statistics:

- The author has chosen the lowest and the highest annual harvesting volumes which are not representative of the issue. Annual harvesting volumes can differ consequently from market situation, weather conditions, political impact and should be therefore estimated as an average per decade. The average cutting volume in 2011–2019 was 10.7 million m³, which is less than the sustainable cutting volume of 12–15 million m³ established in the Estonian Rural Development Plan (2010).
- In Estonia, the area of forest land has increased about one and a half times since 1940, and the forest resource has tripled during the same period. Compared to 1975, these changes have been 1.3 and 1.9 times, respectively. Between 1990 and 2016, forest reserves increased by 50 million cubic metres.

(University of Cambridge; 2020; Annela Anger-Kraavi¹, Enn Pärt², Madis Raudsaar², Maris Nikopensius², Karl Eerik Kraavi³, Jill Duggan⁴, María José Sanz⁵;
https://www.envir.ee/sites/default/files/metsad_ja_kliima_muutused_v3.0_eesti_keeles.pdf).



Graph source: https://www.keskkonnaagentuur.ee/sites/default/files/03_raied_20.08.pdf

2. Article claim: Large areas have also been felled in the country's nature reserve, according to the coordinated journalistic review Money to burn, which was published in, among others, The Guardian.

The Estonian Ministry of Environment has brought out that the Guardian article has left out important information about Natura area buffer zones and DN is unfortunately repeating this mistake. All the felling done in Natura area are legal and supported by the government.

- In Estonia all Natura 2000 areas are protected through nationally protected areas. According to Nature Conservation Act, nationally protected areas are divided to different protection zones: strict nature reserve, conservation zone and limited management zone. In the first two, human intervention is either completely prohibited or at least economic activities are prohibited (including forest management). In limited management zones, economic activities are allowed, but limited. The main purpose of limited management zone is to be a buffer zone between strictly protected areas and conventionally managed forests. **Therefore, the economic activities are allowed in limited manner so they will not compromise set conservation aims.**

In case of forest management, there are additional restrictions compared to the criteria set in the Forest Act, for example stringent limitations to the size of cutting areas, time of cutting or form of cutting, criteria for age composition or amount of retention trees. Impact of possible felling activities are considered during the process of establishing the protection rules and before approval of each felling permit. **This**

stipulates that the conservation goals are achieved, and the economic activities are allowed only to the extent that will not harm those goals. A large part of forest fellings in protected areas have been carried out in those areas where no habitat's directive habitats are found, and the cutting has been necessary to achieve a conservation aim (i.e. restoration of mires or semi-natural grasslands). (Estonian Ministry of Environment Dec 2020)

3. Article claim: In parallel, Estonian exports of forest biofuels - wood that is burned to make electricity or heat - have increased by more than 500 percent.

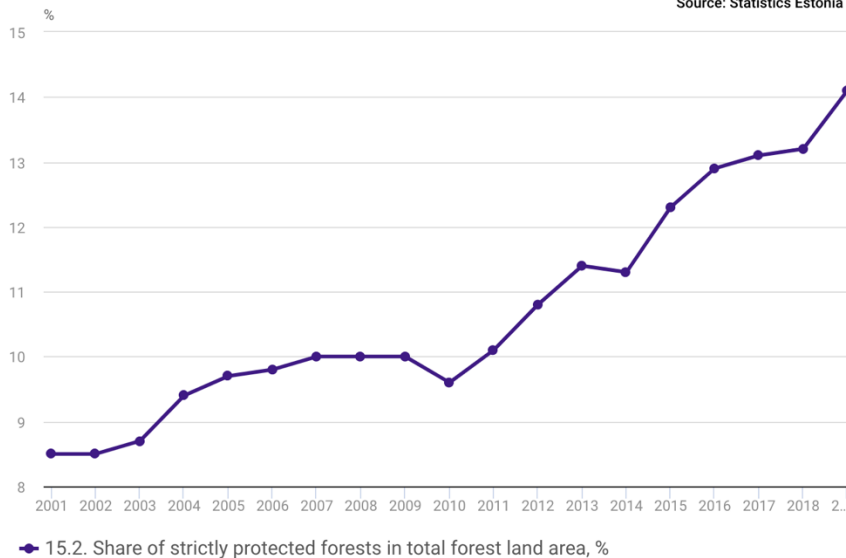
The claim is misleading and out of context. Biofuels export has grown proportionally with other wood industry sectors. **In 2019 Estonia exported wooden products to Sweden in the value of 400 mln € of which pellets accounted for 9 million €.**



We would also like to draw your attention that Estonian legislation regarding forestry is one of the strictest among forestry countries. The majority of Estonian forest land and wood processing is certified under international sustainability certificates like FSC, PEFC and SBP. The strictly protected forest areas are one of the highest in Europe and have doubled during the past decade as could be seen in the following graphs:

Share of strictly protected forests in total forest land area | 2001 - 2019

Source: Statistics Estonia



Source: Statistics Estonia: <https://www.stat.ee/en/find-statistics/statistics-theme/environment/forest?fbclid=IwAR234vnNxS5tQ5XG3UEVEHoBelAHGm9waD9mrbYSi3VlacmgbxKGn4DtLEQ>

As shown, the Dagens Nyheter article contains several misleading facts and false conclusions causing reputation damage to Estonia and Estonian forest and timber sector. **We kindly ask you to correct these facts or remove this article from your website.**

Estonian forest and wood industry is an important economic sector and in the forefront of building a sustainable, renewable resource-based society. It is the most important employer in the rural areas and forestry-based value chain accounts for 15% of added value and 10% of employment in Estonia. Estonian wood industries are world leading in mechanical processing of wood and the main focus of the industry is on products with a long lifespan. The high volume of wood used for energy is an unfortunate result of our turbulent history during the past century which has caused several changes in land ownership and therefore in land management. If you are interested in covering Estonian forest or timber sector in the future, we are open to share information about the wood industry in Estonia.

Yours Sincerely,

Henrik Välja
Managing Director
Estonian Forest and Wood Industries Association