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New Study Reveals Substantial Carbon Mitigation Potential in European Forests

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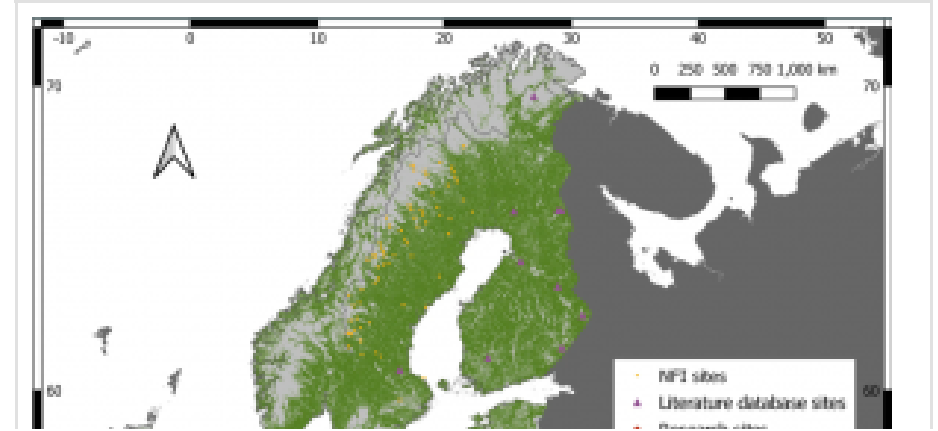
PRAGUE , PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC, August 7, 2024 /[EINPresswire.com/](https://einpresswire.com/) -- A new study has highlighted the significant role that primary forests in Europe can play

in carbon mitigation. Researchers from Czech University of Life Sciences measured and collated tree inventory data from primary forest sites, drawing

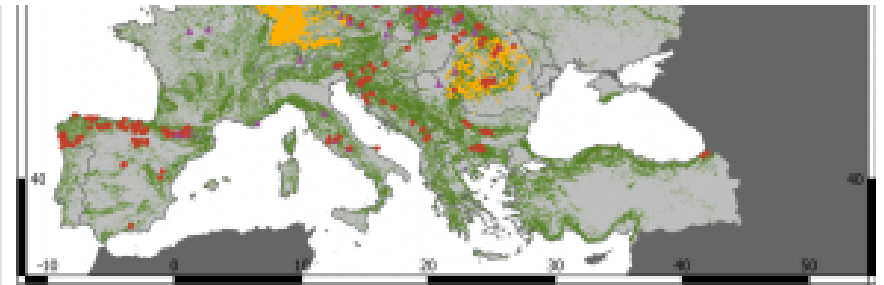
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analysis covered 7,982 sites, 288,262 trees, across 27 countries, spanning boreal, temperate, and subtropical Global Ecological Zones within Europe.

The study underscores the importance of establishing a reference level for carbon accounting in the land sector to accurately calculate past carbon losses



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Primary forest sites included (i) research sites and (ii) sites reported in the literature that were selected by observation of ecological characteristics, and (iii) forest inventory sites described as

and potential gains. The carbon carrying capacity, represented by the carbon stock

primary forest or as natural forest
>100 years old an

in primary forests, serves as an

ecologically-based reference level. This reference allows for the estimation of mitigation potential through the protection and restoration of forests to enhance their carbon stocks.

Key findings from the study reveal that the total biomass carbon stock per hectare (including above- and below-ground and dead biomass) in primary forests is, on average, 1.6 times larger than modelled global maps for primary forests, and 2.3 times larger for all forests. Large trees, with a diameter greater than 60 cm, account for 50% of this biomass, underscoring their role as critical carbon reservoirs.

The research also identified the carbon stock foregone due to harvesting, ranging from 12% to 52%, highlighting the mitigation potential through improved forest

management. The estimated carbon gain by protecting, restoring, and promoting the ongoing growth of existing forests is equivalent to 309 megatons of carbon dioxide equivalents per year. This potential gain surpasses the current forest carbon sink and is comparable to the European Green Deal's 2030 target for carbon dioxide removals.

This study highlights the urgent need for policymakers, conservationists, and stakeholders to prioritize forest protection and restoration as a key strategy in combating climate change. The results provide a strong scientific basis for developing policies and initiatives aimed at maximizing the carbon sequestration potential of Europe's forests.

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