

Forestry Statistics 2026

Chapter 9: International Forestry

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Issued by: Forest Research,
Northern Research Station, Roslin, Midlothian, EH25 9SY

Enquiries: Official Statistics Team, 0300 067 5238

statistics@forestresearch.gov.uk

Website: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/statistics/>



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Forestry Commission

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Introduction

This chapter contains information about world forestry, presenting global figures by region alongside data for the UK and the EU. Topics covered include woodland area, carbon stocks, wood removals, production, and apparent consumption of wood products and international trade in forest products.

The data is produced by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). All of the statistics presented in this chapter have been previously released by the FAO. Further information on revisions, data sources, and methodology used to compile the figures is provided in Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Data for the European Union (EU) relate to all 27 current EU members, excluding the UK, for all the years shown. Data for Europe cover 26 of the EU members (excluding Cyprus), Russia, and a number of other European countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, and Ukraine. Cyprus is included in the EU total, but is part of FAO's Asia region and is thus not included in the Europe total.

These figures are outside the scope of Accredited Official Statistics. For further information see Chapter 10: Sources and Methodology.

Please refer to [Glossary - Forest Research](#) for a glossary of terms used in this release.

Figures in tables have been independently rounded, so may not add to the totals shown. Percentage changes quoted in this release are based on unrounded figures.

Key findings

The main findings are:

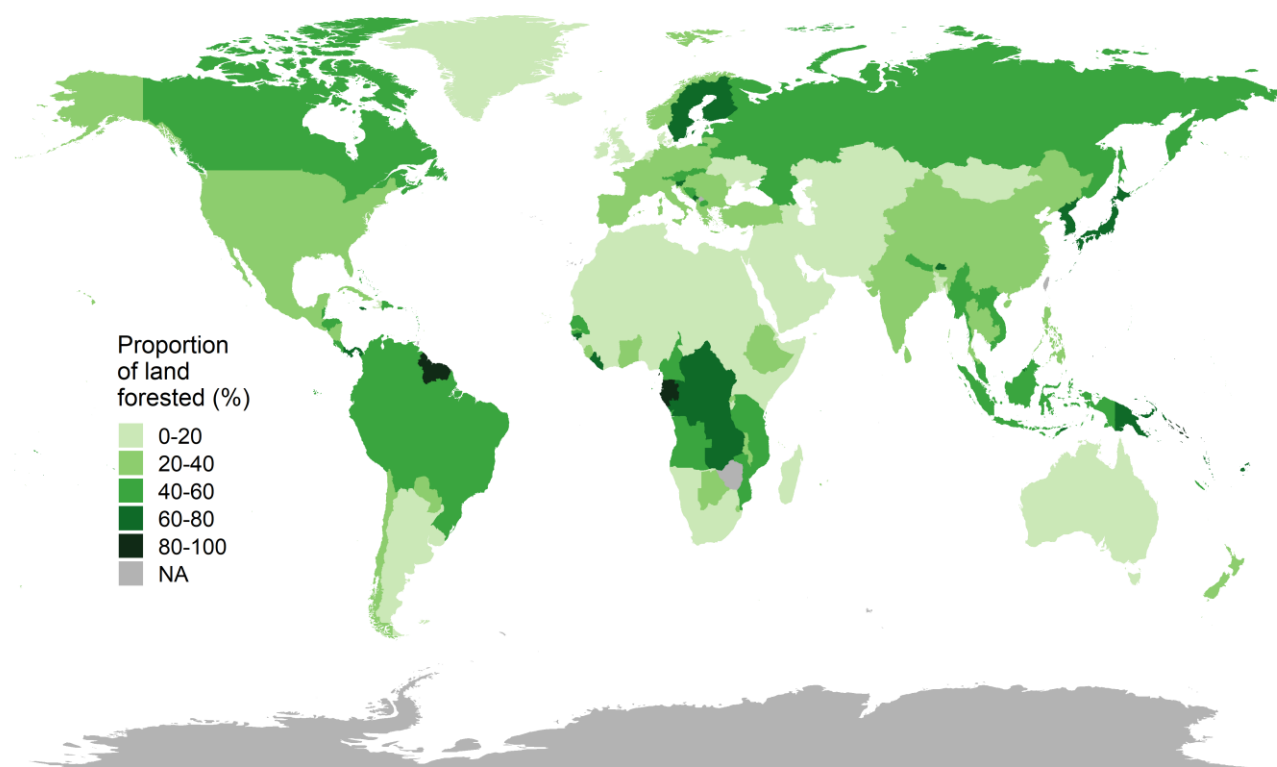
- At around 14% forest cover in 2025, the UK is one of the least densely forested countries in Europe. This compares with 47% for Europe as a whole and 32% worldwide.
- The global forest area reduced by around 7.7 million hectares (0.1%) per year between 2020 and 2025.
- Carbon stocks in forest living biomass have increased in Europe, North & Central America, and Asia between 1990 and 2025 and have shown an overall increase at a global level over this period.
- Around 3.9 billion cubic metres underbark of wood was removed from global forests in 2024, of which around one-half (50%) was used as industrial roundwood (for use by wood processors) and the remainder as woodfuel.
- Global production of wood products in 2024 totalled 445 million cubic metres of sawnwood, 393 million cubic metres of wood-based panels, and 423 million tonnes of paper and paperboard.
- Europe consumed 25% of all sawnwood, 20% of the world's wood-based panels and 20% of all paper and paperboard in 2024.
- The UK was the third largest net importer (imports less exports) of forest products in 2024, with net imports of US \$8.1 billion. The largest net importer was China, with net imports of US \$26.9 billion.

9.1 Forest cover: international comparisons

The FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) is a collation of forest data undertaken by the United Nations FAO at the global level every five years.

The UK is one of the least densely forested countries in Europe, with around 14% of its total land area covered in forest in 2025 (Figure 9.1, Table 9.1). This compares with 47% for Europe as a whole and 32% worldwide.

Figure 9.1 Forest cover as a percentage of total land area, World, 2025



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

Table 9.1 Forest cover as a percentage of total land area: international comparisons, World, 2025

Region/country	Forest area (million ha)	Total land area (million ha)	Forest area as a percentage of land area (%)
Europe	1,039	2,213	47
UK	3	24	14
EU	162	396	41
Denmark	1	4	16
Finland	23	30	74
France	18	55	32
Germany	11	35	33
Ireland	1	7	12
Italy	9	30	32
Spain	19	50	38
Sweden	28	41	69
Other EU	52	145	36
Russia	833	1,638	51
Africa	649	2,953	22
Asia	630	3,110	20
North & Central America	776	2,120	37
Oceania	184	850	22
South America	849	1,746	49
World	4,127	12,993	32

Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

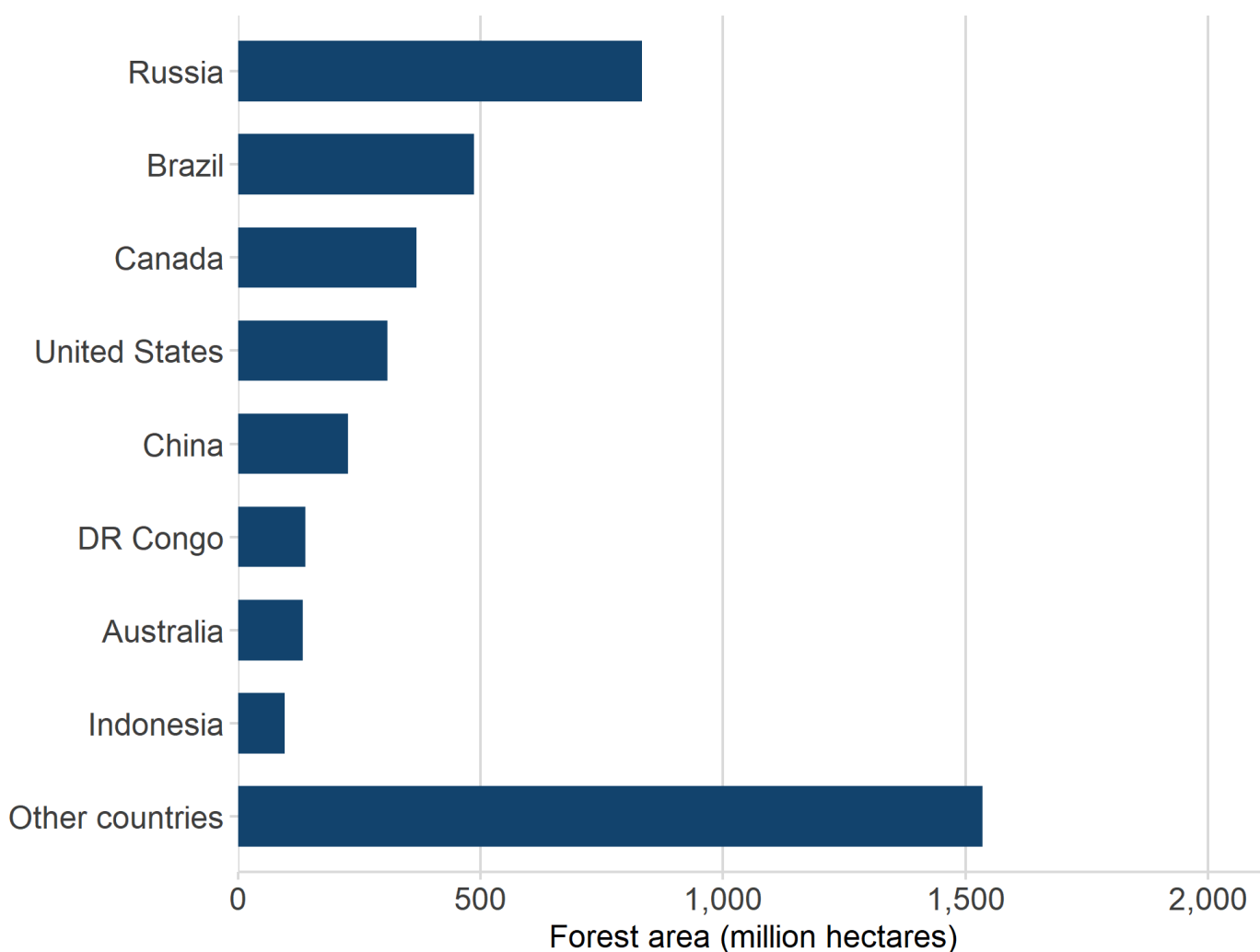
Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.
2. The EU covers 27 member states as at October 2026. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

9.2 Forest area by country

Figure 9.2 shows the countries with the largest forest areas. Around one-half (48%) of the total forest area of 4,127 million hectares in 2025 is located in four countries (Russia, Brazil, Canada, and the United States).

Figure 9.2 Forest area by country, World, 2025



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

9.3 Annual changes in forest area

The global forest area has reduced from around 4,344 million hectares in 1990 to 4,127 million hectares in 2025. This represents a decrease of around 10.7 million hectares (0.2%) per year between 1990 and 2000; around 3.6 million hectares (0.1%) per year between 2000 and 2010; 3.6 million hectares (0.1%) between 2010 and 2020; and around 7.7 million hectares (0.1%) per year between 2020 and 2025 (Table 9.2).

The forest area has reduced in most regions since 1990, except for Europe and Asia (where areas have increased).

Table 9.2 Annual change in forest area by region, World, 1990 to 2025

Region	percentage change in forest area			
	1990 to 2000	2000 to 2010	2010 to 2020	2020 to 2025
Europe	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
UK	0.6	0.3	0.5	0.2
EU	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.1
Africa	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.4
Asia	-0.1	0.5	0.3	0.1
North & Central America	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Oceania	-0.1	-0.1	0.1	0.0
South America	-0.7	-0.5	-0.4	-0.3
World	-0.2	-0.1	-0.1	-0.1

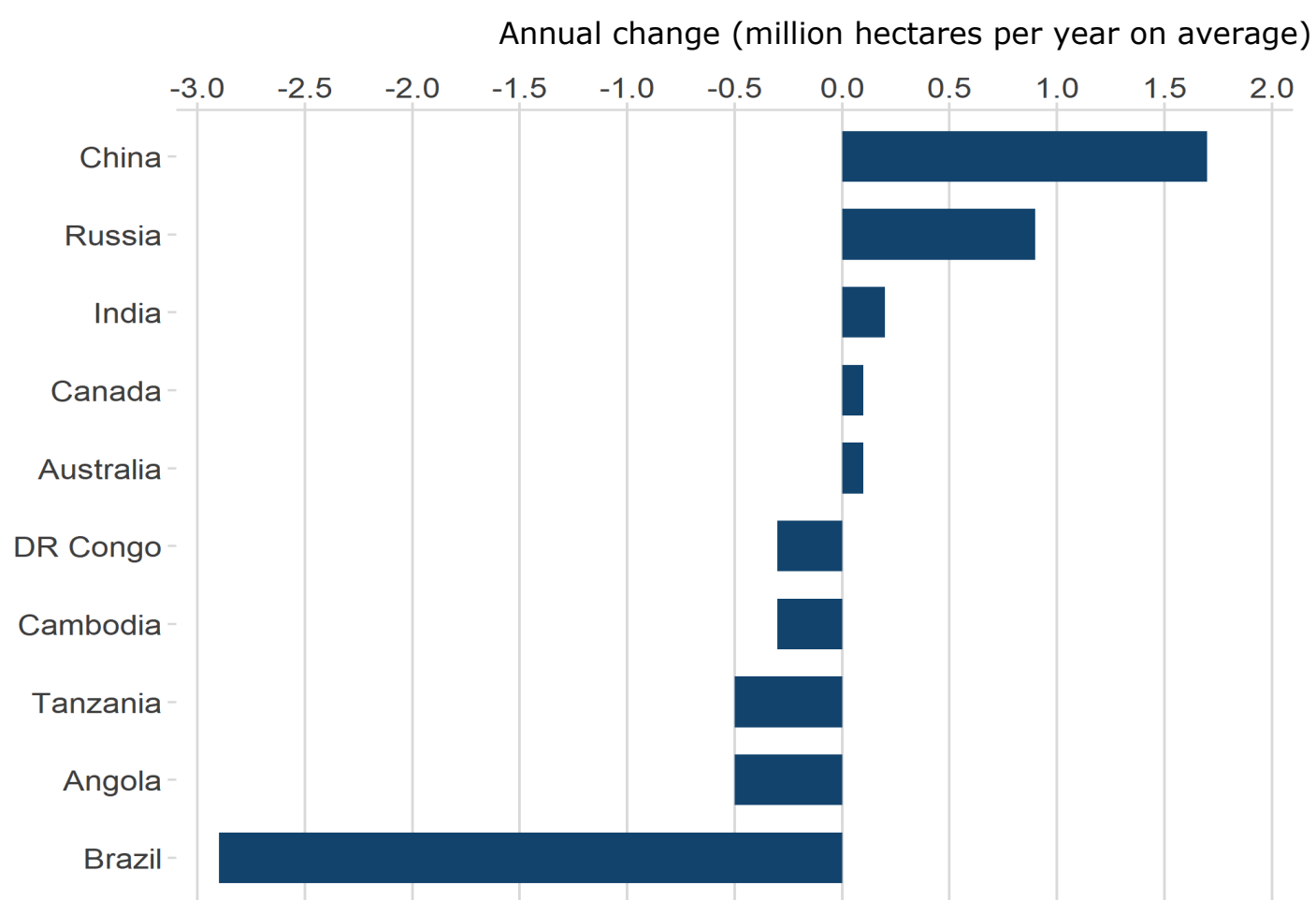
Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia, and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, and Ukraine.
2. The estimates of annual expansion, deforestation, and net change for the period 2020 to 2025 are derived from data covering 2020–2021 to 2022–2023, which represented the most recent data available at the time of estimation (December 2024). Revised estimates (from Chapter 1: Woodland) suggest that Table 9.2 slightly underestimates the change in forest area in the UK in the most recent time period.
3. The EU covers 27 member states as at October 2026. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

Between 2015 and 2025, the largest decrease in forest area was in Brazil (2.9 million hectares per year on average) and the largest increase was in China (1.7 million hectares per year on average) (Figure 9.3).

Figure 9.3 Countries with largest changes in forest area, World, 2015 to 2025



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

Notes:

1. Top and bottom five countries with the largest annual change shown only.

9.4 Forest carbon stocks

Overall, carbon stocks in forest living biomass have increased globally between 1990 and 2025 (Table 9.3), except for Africa and South America. This increase has been mainly driven by changes in Europe, North & Central America and Asia.

Table 9.3 Carbon stocks in forest living biomass by region, World, 1990 to 2025

giga tonnes of carbon

Region	1990	2000	2010	2020	2025
Europe	43	48	53	57	59
Africa	65	63	60	57	55
Asia	35	34	36	39	41
North & Central America	41	43	45	47	47
Oceania	16	16	16	16	16
South America	107	101	97	95	93
World	308	305	309	312	312

Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

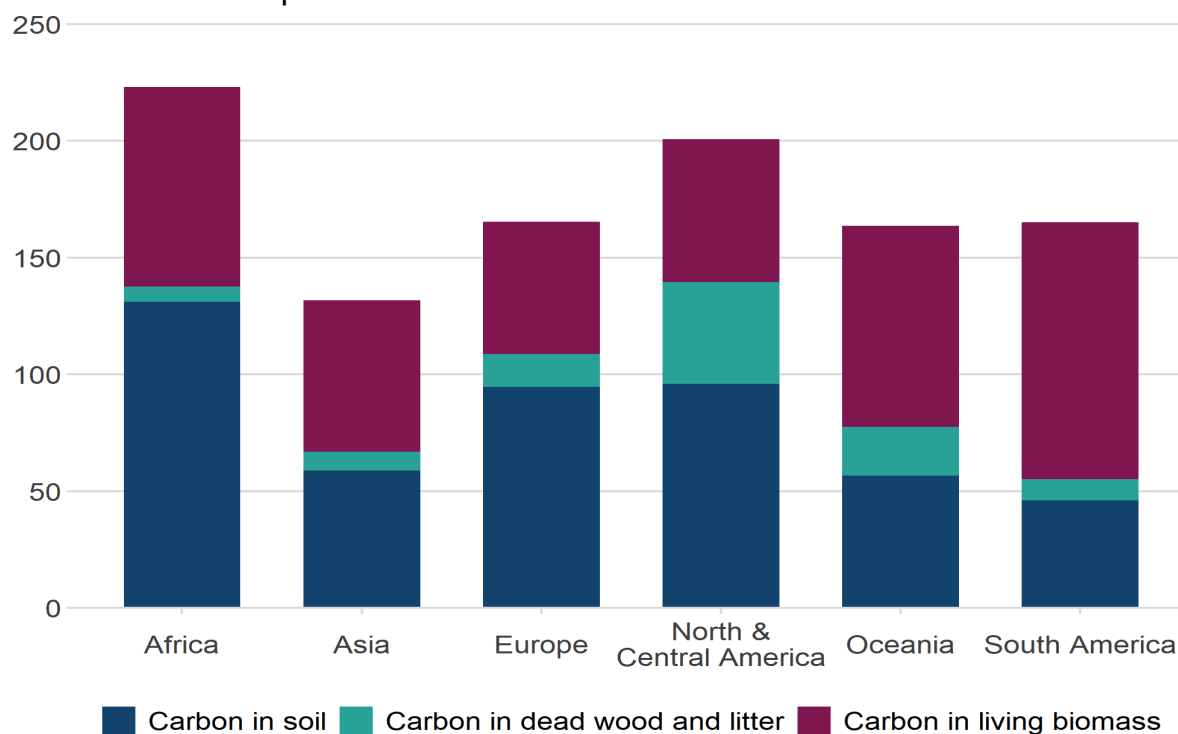
Notes:

1. A giga tonne is a thousand million tonnes (10^9 tonnes).
2. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

In 2025, based on available FRA data reported by countries, Africa records the highest carbon stock globally at 223 tonnes per hectare, followed by North & Central America at 201 tonnes per hectare (Figure 9.4). Africa also has the largest share of carbon stored in soils (59%). The proportion of carbon in deadwood and litter is highest in North & Central America (22%), while South America has the greatest share of carbon stored in living biomass (67%) among the regions.

Figure 9.4 Forest carbon stock per hectare by region, World, 2025

tonnes of carbon per hectare



Source: FAO Global Forest Resources Assessment (2025).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.
2. Countries with missing values were removed from calculating the averages.

9.5 Wood removals

Around 3.9 billion cubic metres underbark of wood was removed from global forests in 2024, of which almost 2.0 billion cubic metres (50%) was for use as industrial roundwood (for use by wood processors) and the remainder was woodfuel (Table 9.4).

Europe accounted for almost one-third (30%) of all industrial roundwood removals in 2024. Globally, removals of industrial roundwood increased by 2% between 2023 and 2024.

Almost three-quarters (73%) of woodfuel removals in 2024 took place in Asia and Africa.

Table 9.4 Wood removals by region, World, 2000 to 2024

million cubic metres of Wood Raw Material Equivalent (WRME) underbark

Region	2000	2010	2020	2023	2024
Industrial roundwood	1,682	1,722	1,983	1,917	1,956
Europe	520	533	627	579	591
UK	8	8	8	7	8
EU	335	331	371	348	350
Africa	71	72	77	79	79
Asia	265	378	445	466	481
North & Central America	631	484	522	456	450
Oceania	47	57	70	65	64
South America	147	198	241	269	290
Woodfuel	1,795	1,864	1,927	1,950	1,949
Europe	109	155	169	176	173
UK	0	1	2	2	2
EU	85	116	120	130	128
Africa	551	644	713	734	742
Asia	808	764	708	689	683
North & Central America	125	124	145	148	149
Oceania	13	11	10	10	10
South America	185	162	178	188	188
Total roundwood	3,478	3,586	3,910	3,866	3,905
Europe	629	688	796	755	764
UK	8	10	10	10	10
EU	420	447	491	478	478
Africa	623	715	790	813	821
Asia	1,073	1,143	1,153	1,155	1,163
North & Central America	756	608	667	605	599
Oceania	60	68	80	75	74
South America	332	359	418	457	478

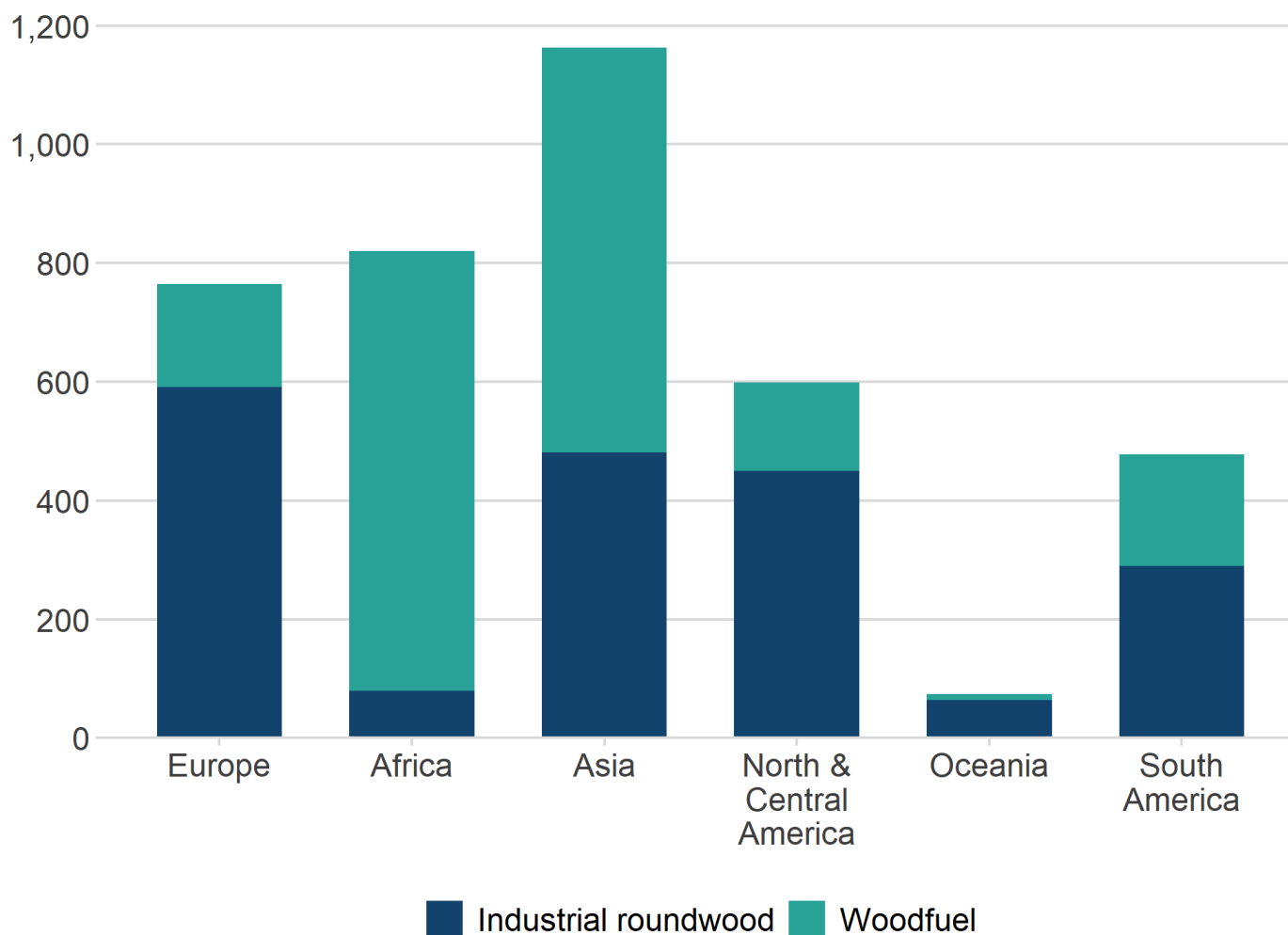
Source: FAO (2026).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, and Ukraine.
2. The EU covers 27 member states as at October 2026. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

Figure 9.5 Wood removals by region, World, 2024

million cubic metres WRME underbark



Source: FAO (2026).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia and Ukraine.

9.6 Production of wood products

Global production of wood products in 2024 totalled 445 million cubic metres of sawnwood, 393 million cubic metres of wood-based panels and 423 million tonnes of paper and paperboard (Table 9.5).

Europe produced just over one-third (35%) of all sawnwood in 2024 (mainly in EU countries), with 28% each in Asia and in North & Central America. Overall, sawnwood production did not change between 2023 and 2024.

Wood-based panels were more commonly produced in Asia, accounting for three-fifths (61%) of global production in 2024. Just over one-fifth (21%) was produced in Europe (mainly in EU countries) and 12% in North & Central America. At a global level, wood-based panel production increased by 5% between 2023 and 2024.

Asia also accounted for over one-half (54%) of paper and paperboard production in 2024, with almost one-quarter (22%) in Europe, and a further 18% in North & Central America. At a global level, paper and paperboard production increased by 4% between 2023 and 2024.

Table 9.5 Production of wood products by region, World, 2000 to 2024

Region	2000	2010	2020	2023	2024
Sawnwood (million cubic metres)	392	393	482	446	445
Europe	130	139	168	156	156
UK	3	3	3	3	3
EU	98	98	109	101	101
Africa	8	9	12	12	12
Asia	68	103	141	125	125
North & Central America	146	102	126	121	119
Oceania	8	9	9	8	8
South America	32	30	25	24	24
Wood-based panels (million cubic metres)	177	284	363	376	393
Europe	58	71	84	81	83
UK	3	3	3	3	3
EU	47	53	57	54	56
Africa	1	2	3	3	3
Asia	46	151	209	227	238
North & Central America	61	42	45	44	45
Oceania	3	3	3	3	3
South America	8	15	19	18	20
Paper and paperboard (million tonnes)	325	392	402	408	423
Europe	100	106	100	89	94
UK	7	4	4	3	3
EU	83	91	82	72	76
Africa	3	4	3	3	3
Asia	95	170	198	220	228
North & Central America	111	93	81	75	78
Oceania	4	4	4	3	3
South America	11	15	15	16	17

Source: FAO (2026).

Notes:

1. The Europe region covers 26 EU countries (excluding Cyprus), the UK, Russia, and other countries, including Norway, Switzerland, Serbia, and Ukraine.
2. The EU covers 27 member states as at September 2026. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

9.7 Apparent consumption of wood products

Apparent consumption (defined as production plus imports minus exports) of wood products around the world totalled 441 million cubic metres sawnwood, 393 million cubic metres wood-based panels, and 423 million tonnes of paper and paperboard in 2024 (Table 9.6).

Around 39% of all sawnwood in 2024 was consumed in Asia and around one-quarter in North & Central America (27%) and in Europe (25%). Apparent consumption of sawnwood did not change overall between 2023 and 2024.

Asia consumed 59% of the world's wood-based panels in 2024, around one-fifth (20%) was consumed in Europe, and 14% in North & Central America. Apparent consumption of wood-based panels worldwide increased by 5% between 2023 and 2024.

Over one-half (55%) of all paper and paperboard in 2024 was consumed in Asia, 20% in Europe, and a further 18% in North & Central America. At a global level, apparent consumption of paper and paperboard increased by 4% between 2023 and 2024.

Table 9.6 Apparent consumption of wood products by region, World, 2000 to 2024

Region	2000	2010	2020	2023	2024
Sawnwood (million cubic metres)	393	390	474	441	441
Europe	121	110	111	109	111
UK	10	9	10	9	9
EU	98	98	109	101	101
Africa	10	17	17	15	15
Asia	84	134	196	169	170
North & Central America	142	94	124	122	119
Oceania	8	8	8	7	7
South America	27	26	19	17	18
Wood-based panels (million cubic metres)	180	282	365	373	393
Europe	56	67	78	78	79
UK	6	6	6	6	6
EU	47	53	57	54	56
Africa	2	3	6	6	7
Asia	50	148	207	218	231
North & Central America	64	48	56	53	55
Oceania	2	3	3	3	3
South America	5	12	14	14	16
Paper and paperboard (million tonnes)	325	391	402	408	423
Europe	90	95	86	80	84
UK	12	11	7	7	7
EU	83	91	82	72	76
Africa	5	7	9	8	9
Asia	103	178	208	225	232
North & Central America	109	90	79	75	77
Oceania	5	5	4	3	3
South America	12	16	16	16	17

Source: FAO (2026).

Notes:

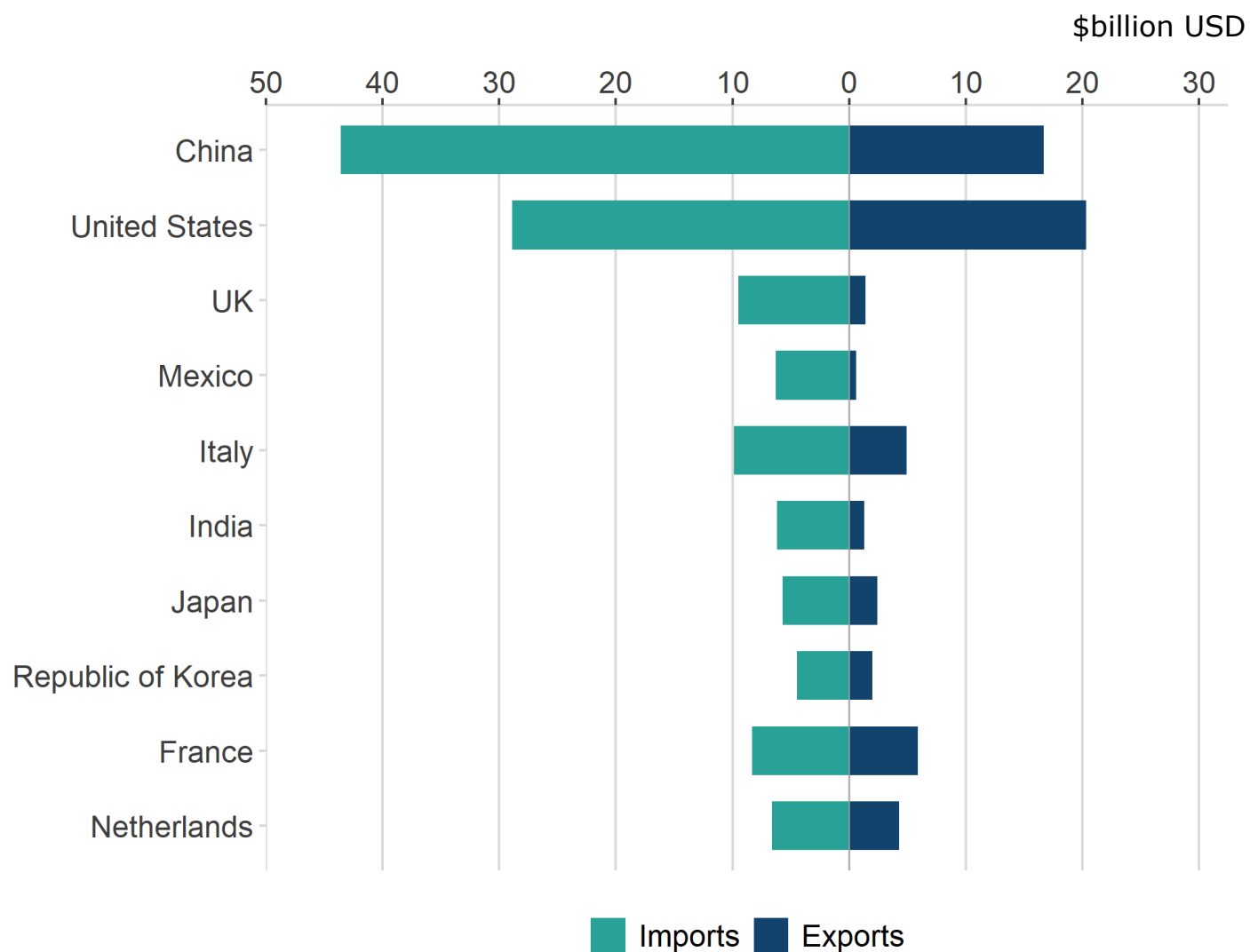
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2. The EU covers 27 member states as at October 2026. Cyprus is included in EU total but is part of FAO's Asia region.

9.8 World trade in forest products

Figures 9.6 and 9.7 show the largest ten net importers and exporters (ranked by value) of forest products in 2024. This covers trade in roundwood, sawnwood, wood-based panels, wood pulp and paper, and paperboard, but excludes trade in secondary processed wood (e.g. furniture made from wood). Values are expressed in US dollars (USD; the units reported in the data published by FAO).

The UK was the third largest net importer (imports less exports) of forest products in 2024, with net imports of US \$8.1 billion (Figure 9.6). The largest net importer in 2024 was China (US \$26.9 billion). The United States (US \$8.6 billion) and Mexico (US \$5.7 billion) were the second and fourth largest net importers respectively.

Figure 9.6 Largest net importers of forest products, World, 2024



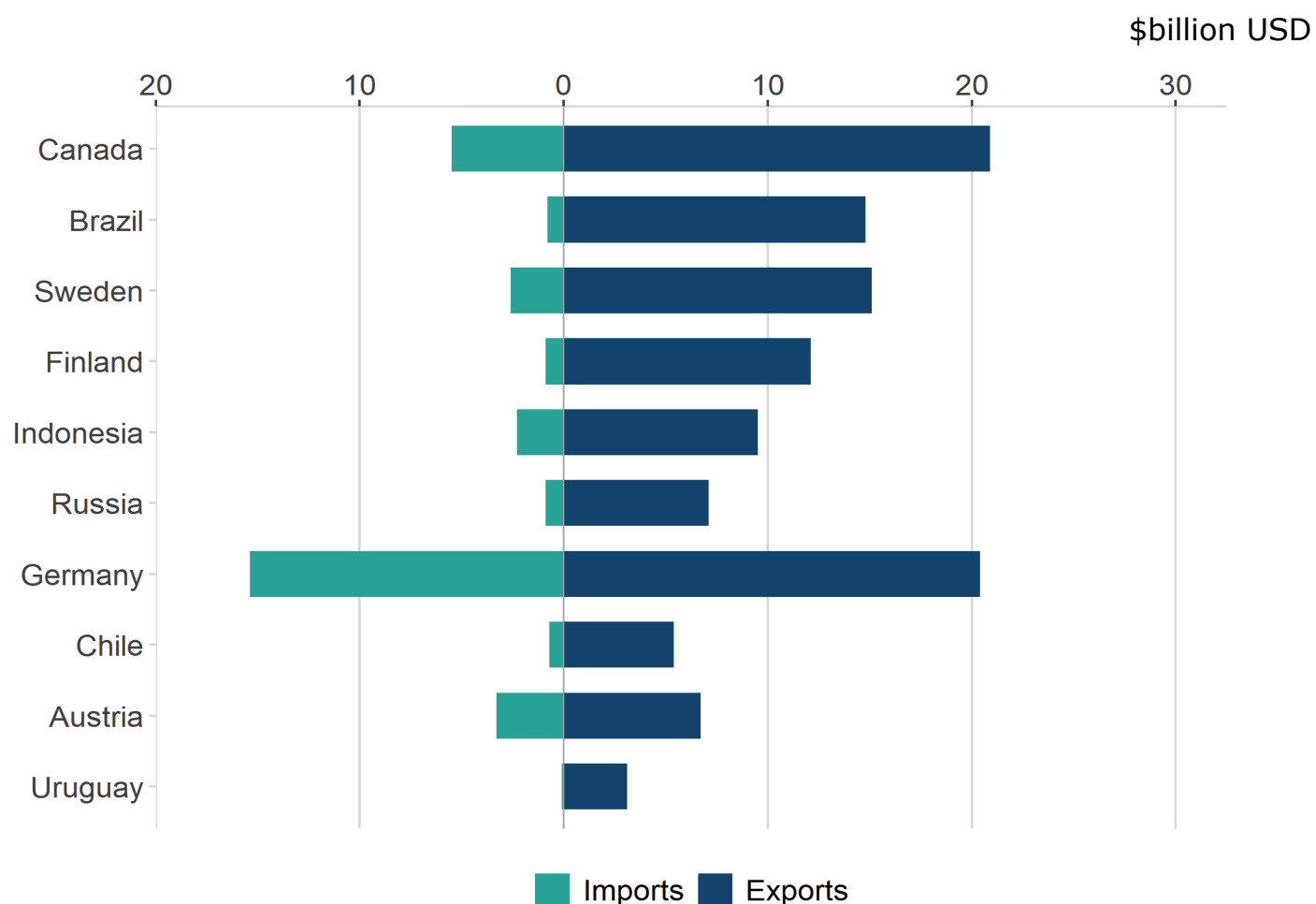
Source: FAO (2026).

Notes:

1. Excludes trade in secondary wood products.

The largest net exporters (exports less imports) of forest products in 2024 were Canada (with net exports valued at US \$15.4 billion), Brazil (US \$14.0 billion) and Sweden (US \$12.5 billion) (Figure 9.7).

Figure 9.7 Largest net exporters of forest products, World, 2024



Source: FAO (2026).

Notes:

1. Excludes trade in secondary wood products

Forestry Statistics 2026: Chapter 9 – International Forestry

Alice Holt Lodge

Farnham

Surrey, GU10 4LH, UK

Tel: 0300 067 5600

Northern Research Station

Roslin

Midlothian, EH25 9SY, UK

Tel: 0300 067 5600

Forest Research in Wales

Talybont Research Office

Cefn Gethiniog

Talybont-on-Usk

Brecon

Powys, LD3 7YN, UK

Tel: 0300 067 5709

info@forestresearch.gov.uk

www.forestresearch.gov.uk

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