



EU

# Forest Watch

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[www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org)

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## Concerns on mutual recognition

In a joint statement issued on 12 February, a coalition of environmental NGOs voices its concerns over the threat of weakened certification standards caused by 'mutual recognition' between certification organisations.<sup>1</sup>

The statement comes just a week before a seminar on building confidence is held by GTZ, ITTO and the FAO in Rome. Of particular concern to NGOs is a

'framework for mutual recognition' developed by a forest industry working group, to be presented in Rome. The framework is seen as biased towards weaker schemes and has omitted high performance based standards as a fundamental criterium.

The NGO statement expresses concerns over mutual recognition attempts between schemes with wide

disparities.

In a new report, *Anything Goes?*, Greenpeace Nordic and Finnish Nature League strongly criticise the Finnish Pan European Forest Certification (PEFC) scheme. The report documents numerous cases of logging old-growth forests and unsustainable practices.<sup>2</sup>

1. Available on Fern website [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org).

2. Available on [www.pefcwatch.org](http://www.pefcwatch.org).

## Sixth EAP plan positions forests low on the agenda

The recently released draft plan for the sixth Environmental Action Programme (EAP) is disappointing. The targets, time-frames and ambitious goals demanded by the Parliament mid-way through the *fifth* EAP have apparently been forgotten, and several important forest-related items have been dropped.

The four target areas for the sixth EAP are climate change mitigation, protecting nature and biodiversity, health and environment, and ensuring sustainable management of natural resources and waste. Strategies employed to achieve these targets will be improving implementation of existing legislation, integrating environmental concerns in other policy areas, working with businesses, and empowering consumers. Almost all of these were featured in the fifth EAP, making the sixth EAP appear to bring little progress.

The new draft omits any new action points in relation to forests and drops virtually all forest-related action points of the fifth EAP. The forest requirements of the EC's Biodiversity Strategy are also absent despite the Commission's acknowledgement of the importance of forests for biodiversity and climate in its draft Biodiversity Action Programme.

Particularly disappointing is the dropping of references to reduced consumption of pulp and paper products. The EU is the second greatest consumer of timber products in the world, and the EU institutions in Brussels help make Belgium the second biggest per capita consumer of paper in Europe.

However, there are some good points worth mentioning. These are mainly linked to the continued emphasis in the document on developing environmental integration mechanisms for other EC

policy areas, including aid, trade, transport and agriculture. If DG Environment can stand up to other more powerful interests in the Commission, big steps forward can be made. Demands must be made for implementing proper sustainability impact assessments for aid and trade agreements and proper environment and development guidelines for EU-based export credit agencies.

If the refreshing Commission strategy to 'name, shame and fame' those who fail to implement environmental legislation is extended to include players other than member states, an important first step will have been taken. Whether DG Environment wants to take up this role is not yet known. Judging by its recent restructuring (see *EU Forest Watch* 49), it seems more willing to bend to industry and powerful member states than to listen to citizens' concerns.



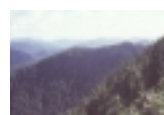
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Carmanah Valley, Canada.

Like many tropical forests, this temperate rainforest is the focus of a land rights

dispute and an environmental campaign. NGOs and forest peoples have joined forces to protect the valley from clear cutting.

## Update: UNFF work plan

One day of formal talks followed by three days of informal consultations on 13-16 February in New York will attempt to come up with a design for the United Nations Forum on Forests' (UNFF) multi-year programme of work.

Governments will need to create a work programme that promotes action and implementation of existing commitments, if the credibility of the process is to be retained amongst NGOs. Fern believes that this can only be achieved through participatory reporting and monitoring of implementation and the restriction of dialogue to overcoming impediments to implementation.

After New York it will be clearer as to what the UNFF will be able to achieve in terms of implementation. If governments do not come up with an innovative work programme many NGOs will turn away from the IPF/IFF/UNFF process and focus their energies on more progressive fora where approaches are forward looking, participatory and action orientated.

## Action on Indigenous Peoples long overdue

Concerns over the Commission's commitment to implementing the Council's Resolution on Indigenous Peoples in Development Co-operation<sup>1</sup> were raised at a meeting of NGOs on 1 February.

The meeting reported that so far no response had been received from Commissioner Patten (External Affairs) or Commissioner Nielsen (Development Co-operation) to a letter sent on 22 November 2000 reminding the Commissioners that a progress report on the Resolution's implementation was due at the end of 2000.

Aside from the fact that the two month silence breaks the Commission's new Code of Good Behaviour (which requires officials to respond to letters within 15 days)<sup>2</sup>, a bigger concern is that Indigenous Peoples are losing out while the Resolution gathers dust.

Fern and the Forest Peoples Programme believe a comprehensive strategy is needed to ensure that issues such as land rights, meaningful

participation, participatory monitoring and local management of natural resources are mainstreamed throughout EC aid. This should include training for EC staff on Indigenous Peoples issues, a human rights/Indigenous Peoples 'expert' in every delegation and EuropeAid directorate, guidelines for best practice and mandatory impact assessment, full participation of Indigenous Peoples throughout the project cycle as well as small-scale innovative projects or project components designed and implemented directly by local communities.

The signs are that proper integration of the Resolution will be a challenge for the Commission as recent organisational reforms have created a rupture between the departments responsible for policy and project management<sup>3</sup>. However, an urgent response from the Commission is needed.

<sup>1</sup>Resolution 13461/98.

<sup>2</sup> See *EU Forest Watch* 46.

<sup>3</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/general/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/europeaid/general/index_en.htm).

## Convention discrepancies

With the 1 March deadline approaching, the EU is preparing to submit its views on co-operation with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat.

It is hoped that this submission will clarify the discussion provoked by the Executive Secretary to the CBD, who at the sixth Conference of the Parties (CoP6) at The Hague formally presented a note on co-operation between the UNFCCC and the CBD<sup>1</sup>.

The CBD and the UNFCCC are both legally binding multilateral environment agreements. Their signatories are largely identical, the US being the only major Party to have not ratified the biodiversity

convention. It is therefore imperative that any activity undertaken under the UNFCCC is consistent with the provisions of the CBD. However, this had apparently slipped from the minds of climate negotiators during COP6 (see *EU Forest Watch* 49), leading to the current state of confusion.

Fern believes that the CBD secretariat's note did not go far enough in ensuring that activities under the UNFCCC will promote the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and its sustainable use.

A joint NGO statement, including recommendations, has been sent to the CBD's Executive Secretariat and will be available on Fern's website.

<sup>1</sup>UNFCCC/SBSTA/6/11.



### Forest Agenda

**13 Feb:** UNFF organisational meeting and informal consultation on forthcoming workplan, New York.

**28 Feb:** EC Civil Society meeting on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), Brussels.

**24-26 Feb:** Carbon sinks experts group meeting, Brussels.