



EU

Forest Watch

www.fern.org

Informing NGOs, MEPs, governments, the European Commission and the media. Issue 69 December 2002.

EC aid misses link between forests and poverty

Research published by FERN last month reveals that EC aid programming is failing to help people in developing countries who depend on forests for their survival. The findings undermine the claim that the EC Development Policy, revised in 2000, integrates the environment into all focal areas as promised by the Commission.

The research, published in *Forests at the Edge: A review of EC aid spending*, is based on investigations into 16 Country Strategy Papers and two Regional Strategy Papers – the official documents that say how EC aid will be spent. The report is the first result of the EC Forest Platform, a FERN initiative that links peoples in the South and the EU on aid and forest issues.

All of the 16 countries investigated include large areas of forest, yet none of

the Country Strategy Papers offers a thorough analysis of how poor people depend on forests for food, fuel, materials and medicines. Almost no money is allocated to forests or forest peoples. FERN also found that:

- out of €1.66 billion allocated to 16 countries, only €63.6 million (3.8%) is for forests or forest-dependent peoples;
- the connection between poverty and natural-resource management is often completely overlooked or given only superficial attention;
- in Africa nearly 50% of aid will be spent on roads that in many cases will facilitate forest degradation and aggravate conditions for forest-dependent people;
- participation with civil society and indigenous peoples is non-existent or

inadequate.

“If what is happening in these countries is typical of the wider picture then EC aid is probably making conditions worse for people who depend on forests,” said Bérénice Muraille, FERN’s aid programme campaigner. “We were told that the environment was going to be prioritised across the whole of the aid programme. It’s now clear that it has fallen off the agenda almost completely. The European Commission needs to make urgent changes to the way that aid is allocated and needs to grasp the idea that millions of people rely on forests for their most basic needs.”

Forests at the Edge includes a series of detailed recommendations for the European Commission. The main report and a summary are available at www.fern.org.

Dirty projects must stop, says ECA coalition

A coalition of 51 NGOs from social, environmental, debt and human rights platforms has issued demands for key reforms of European Export Credit Agencies (ECAs) and challenged EU governments to a major overhaul.

ECAs are publicly-backed agencies that offer financial backing to companies that want to invest in projects that are too risky – politically or financially – for conventional funding. But most European ECAs have no binding rules that ensure the projects they support do not cause damage in the host countries.

NGOs called on European ECAs to:

- adopt binding, environmental, social, human rights and economic development rules and standards;
- publish an analysis of the impacts of projects on debt and debt-repayment;
- only support projects where affected communities are properly consulted and consent to the proposed project;
- reform transparency practices and publish all documentation on environmental and social impacts;
- support sustainable energy instead of fossil fuels and nuclear energy.

ECAs have become notorious for backing environmentally-destructive projects such as the APP and APRIL pulp and paper mills in Indonesia, that contribute to massive forest loss, illegal logging and the near extinction of orang-utans. “The EU Member States, the European Commission and our Parliamentarians need to become more active and stop these kinds of dirty projects,” said Emilie Thenard of FERN, which is co-ordinating the European ECA Reform Campaign. For the complete demands see www.fern.org.



EU Forest Watch is published by Fern, the international forest campaign group focusing on EU policy. For subscription details, please contact us below.

Fern Brussels, 20 Avenue des Celtes, 1040 Brussels, Belgium.

Tel: +32 2 742 2436. Fax: +32 2 736 8054. Email: fern.belgium@wanadoo.be

Fern UK, 1c Fosseyway Business Park, Stratford Road, Moreton in Marsh, GL56 9NQ, UK.

Tel: +44 1608 652 895. Fax: +44 1608 652 878. Email: saskia@gn.apc.org



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.

NEWS IN BRIEF**More money needed for Asia**

Tackling poverty in Asia, a new report¹ from BOND, presents a comprehensive analysis of EU-Asia development politics, dialogue under the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) and trade flows from a development perspective. The report stresses the influence of the Bretton Woods institutions on aid programming and the EC's missed opportunity to promote an alternative model of development. The report concludes that EC aid to Asia should be increased to reflect the high levels of poverty in the region and should focus on the poorest countries and on sectors contributing to poverty reduction – the main objective of EC development policy.

1. www.bond.org.uk/eu/tackling-asia.pdf

Victory for mahogany

The COP12 of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) has agreed to list big-leaf mahogany on Appendix II of CITES. This is the most commercially-important timber species to be listed on CITES to date. "This decision will also benefit local and indigenous communities who have lost out to the illegal traders," said CITES Secretary-General William Wijnstekers. The EU strongly supported the proposal and lobbied hard for its acceptance by the conference. The mahogany listing includes logs, sawn wood and veneer.

CEPI reaction to incineration rules

NGOs and the Confederation of European Paper Industries (CEPI) have separately voiced fears about the threat to the supply of paper for recycling from the mandate on solid recovered fuels from the European Committee for Standardisation. The concern rests on whether paper intended for recycling should be defined as waste or as a secondary raw material. If it is defined as waste, the mandate could encourage burning of paper rather than recycling it.

Estonian illegal timber laundered in the EU

Estonian environmental NGOs estimate that up to 40% of timber produced in Estonia is illegally sourced. Much of this timber is then laundered and exported to northern and western Europe. The most recent scandal centres on Lahemaa National Park, the oldest park in Estonia and a proposed Natura 2000 site.¹ On three occasions this year the Park was logged. In all cases the police and environmental inspectorate were alerted

but no significant action was taken. NGOs believe that if logging in the National Park goes virtually unpunished, other forest owners will believe they can flout environmental rules. Following calls for the environment minister to resign, Prime Minister Siim Kallas has promised to discuss an NGO proposal to form a special commission to oversee forestry issues in Estonia.

1. See www.ring.ee/arhiiv/sygismatk2002.

No sign of sustainable development in draft Convention

The Convention on the future of Europe ignores the Laeken Declaration that Europe "is to play a stabilizing role worldwide and ... to seek to set globalisation within a moral framework, in other words, to anchor it in solidarity and sustainable development." The European Convention has presented a preliminary draft for a Constitution for Europe. The draft omits sustainable development as an objective of the EU. In addition, the various Convention draft proposals accentuate the subordination of development co-operation to an overarching structure of foreign policy. While the Convention uses the term 'solidarity' within the context of Member States, the concept of solidarity beyond the EU and with the international community as a whole is totally absent.

On a more positive note, Working Group VII of the Convention will finalise a report next week that is expected to integrate additional language on development co-operation and sustainable development. Some working group members have called for establishing poverty reduction as the central goal of development co-operation and for an emphasis on low-income countries.

Poland: Bialowieza

Bialowieza forest – the last primeval forest in Europe – is the focus of an intense campaign in Poland. The campaign aims to ban logging in the most important areas of the forest and to extend the boundaries of the Bialowieza National Park to include the whole of the forest, rather than the 17% it now covers. Twelve years of campaigning has won the support of all the major conservation organisations of Poland and the environment committees of the Polish parliament, but this has not been enough to stop the logging, which continues to receive government approval. FERN calls on the EC to act to protect this World Heritage Site, as part of Natura 2000 and the enlargement agreements with Poland, before it is degraded beyond recognition.

Further information tomwes@biol.uni.wroc.pl.

Forest Agenda

9 December: Environment Council, Brussels.

12-13 December: European Council, Copenhagen.

13 December: DG Enterprise meeting on illegal logging, Brussels.

16 December: FERN/RIIA launch of *Controlling imports of illegal timber*, London.

1 January: Start of Greek Presidency.

Season's greetings
to readers of
EU Forest Watch
from all at FERN