



EU

# Forest Watch

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

Informing NGOs, MEPs, member states, the European Commission and the media. Issue 70, January 2003.

## Illegal logging needs new EU legislation

A blueprint to halt the EU's vast imports of illegally-produced timber was launched by FERN and the Royal Institute for International Affairs in December. The report sets out the need for new EU legislation and other measures that will stop Europe's tacit support for an illegal trade that represents 50% of the EU's tropical timber imports.<sup>1</sup>

The report, *Controlling imports of illegal timber: Options for Europe*,<sup>2</sup> was widely reviewed by environmental NGOs and the European Commission before publication. It proposes a raft of measures that span legal and voluntary initiatives, including:

- New EU legislation to halt the entry of illegally-produced timber into the EU;
- Bilateral agreements between producer countries and the EU to encourage trade in legal timber;

- Support for producer countries in developing licensing systems as proof of legality;
- Improved regulation of forestry industry finances to steer investment away from illegal activities;
- Wider application of money-laundering legislation to cover forest crime and alert banks and insurers to suspicious timber companies.

"Illegal logging is happening on a vast scale but everyone has turned a blind eye to how demand is created," says Saskia Ozinga of FERN. "Now the mood is changing. Controlling imports of illegal logs into Europe will stop us colluding in a trade that is decimating the world's forests." The report also warns that a crackdown on illegal logging could backfire and that the underlying causes need to be addressed.

1. Forests Monitor, July 2001.

2. Report and summary available at [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org) or from [info@fern.org](mailto:info@fern.org).

## Cambodia: Global Witness denies expulsion

Reports<sup>1</sup> that Global Witness had been expelled from Cambodia for its work tracking illegal logging activities were described as premature as *EU Forest Watch* went to press.

"Until we receive notification in writing from the government to the contrary, Global Witness considers its position in Cambodia to be unchanged," said Jon Buckrell of Global Witness. "This is clearly a move to stamp out any criticism of the new forest concession management plans and suppress grassroots opposition to commercial logging in Cambodia's forests."

The reports had claimed that the Cambodian government was expelling Global Witness because of its evidence of links between logging companies and high-ranking politicians and officials. Global Witness recently reported government-sponsored violence towards community representatives involved in forestry reform.<sup>2</sup>

1. Financial Times, 7 January 2003.

2. More information at [www.globalwitness.org](http://www.globalwitness.org).

## New publications: 2002

FERN's reports and briefings can be found at [www.fern.org](http://www.fern.org) in PDF format or, if you prefer paper copies, please contact [info@fern.org](mailto:info@fern.org).

### Reports

*Status of implementation of forest-related clauses in the CBD: An independent review and recommendations for action.*

Review of 21 countries' responses to key forest-related CBD decisions. Full report in English, French or Spanish, plus 21 country reports.

*Forests at the edge: A review of EC aid spending*

A detailed investigation of EC aid programme finds that forests and forest peoples are missing out. Reviews 16 Country Strategy Papers in Asia, Africa and South America. Summary or full report available.

*Controlling imports of illegal timber: Options for Europe*

A blueprint for the EU and member states to halt Europe's vast imports of illegally-produced timber. Jointly published by FERN and the Royal Institute of International Affairs. Summary or full report available.

### Briefing Notes

- *The EU's GSP and forests*
- *Export credits: fuelling illegal logging*
- *Transparency in the European Union*



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### Kakamega Forest.

Half of Kenya's only tropical rainforest has already been lost. What is left provides a unique sanctuary for biodiversity and a vital resource for local people, many of whom depend on it for fuel, medicine and food. Photo: A. Arbib.

**NEWS IN BRIEF****Road threat to Leuser NP**

A local government road plan is seriously threatening forests in northern Sumatra, which protect the livelihoods of four million people and are home to the last populations of Sumatran tigers, Sumatran elephants and orangutans. The 2.7 million hectare Gunung Leuser National Park project is one of the largest EC' tropical forest projects.<sup>1</sup> The EC renewed its funding commitment to Leuser in November 2002. The Indonesian Environment Minister Nabel Makarim says that "If this [road] project continues, I fear that Leuser will be completely destroyed". This sentiment is echoed by all the local NGOs who are campaigning against the road.

1. See [www.dte.gn.apc.org](http://www.dte.gn.apc.org) or [www.skephi.com](http://www.skephi.com).

**Climate change impacts on species**

The results of two major studies recently published in *Nature* substantiate evidence that global warming is already affecting wild animals and plants.<sup>1</sup> The studies show that recent biological trends match climate change predictions: species show significant range changes averaging shifts towards the poles of 6km per decade and spring events such as frog breeding, bird nesting, first flowering, tree budburst and the arrival of migrant birds and butterflies, are happening earlier.

1. *Nature* 421, 37-42;

**FSC guide for indigenous peoples**

A new guidebook<sup>1</sup> aimed at indigenous peoples involved in forest certification in Canada could also be useful for other local communities – both indigenous and non-indigenous – who work with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). A *Voice on the Land* is a useful, well-structured guide for communities that cites positive examples of small scale and indigenous-owned forests as well as recognising the limitations of certification.

1. Available from [www.ecotrustcan.org](http://www.ecotrustcan.org) or [www.nafaforestry.org](http://www.nafaforestry.org)

**Warm words for indigenous peoples**

Indigenous peoples may feel encouraged by the November 2002 General Affairs Council which continued the positive tone set in 1998 – even if action is still lacking. The Council made several firm suggestions to the Commission and to member states, including:

- focal points for indigenous peoples' issues in Commission services and member states.
- training Commission staff in human rights, democratisation, indigenous peoples and participatory processes.
- analysis of the political, economic,

social and cultural situation of indigenous peoples in EC aid Country Strategy Papers. This analysis should also incorporate an assessment of the impact of EC and member states' aid on indigenous peoples.

These are welcome suggestions, but it remains to be seen if and how they will be implemented. FERN's recent report *Forests at the Edge* shows that indigenous peoples' concerns are *not* currently being integrated into EC aid Country Strategy Papers. The Council's conclusion that progress has been made seems optimistic.

**FSC faces accusations from rainforest group**

A critical report on the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) was launched by the Rainforest Foundation in December. Unlike other forest certification schemes, the FSC's value lies in its claim to be rigorous, its multi-stakeholder structure with equal voting rights, and its performance-based assessments.

The report states that the FSC can never compete with other schemes in terms of quantity, and that its advantage must be in quality, but that the quality is not good enough and urgent reform is needed. The report claims that some companies under FSC have even been implicated in human rights abuses. Other problems include the vested corporate interests of certifiers, FSC's fast-growth strategy and the fact that there is no clear definition of major failings for certifications to be halted.

In response, the FSC welcomed the report but said that many of the problems had been solved and, in some cases, major rules had been changed. Although the Rainforest Foundation and the FSC have discussed the issues raised, more debate is needed to ensure the FSC remains a truly credible multi-stakeholder forest certification scheme – which still cannot be said of any of the other schemes in operation.

**Conflict timber in DRC**

People in the Ituri forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) have become victims of human rights abuses as the conflict in the country spreads to battles over forest resources, minerals and diamonds. In December the EU expressed its grave concern at the serious violations of human rights in the Ituri region, condemning military activity which is exploiting local conflict for political and economic reasons. The Ituri forest, possibly the largest moist forest remaining in Africa, is home to four populations of Bambuti forest peoples.

**Forest Agenda**

**13-16 January:** Plenary session in European Parliament, Strasbourg.

**23-28 January:** World Social Forum. Porto Alegre, Brazil.

**27 January:** Asean ministerial meeting, Brussels.

**19 February:** European Parliament hearing on the revision of the financial regulation for Asia and Latin America.