



> EU forestry policy

A NEW FOCUS FOR EU FORESTRY POLICY?

Pekka Pesonen, State Secretary, Finnish Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry and **Hilkka Summa**, European Commission DG Agriculture give their opinion

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> New focus on Bio-Energy

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Inauguration of energy efficient boiler in Stora Enso's mill in Sweden

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EU Forest Action Plan: Highlighting Forestry's Many Uses



- A range of challenges ahead
- Policy at cross-roads of environment, energy and economic pressures
- Greater coordination needed

The last three months have seen heightened EU focus on forestry policy. This is unaccustomed but, from ACE's standpoint, a welcome development. Prospects of improved coordination on forest issues inside the Commission and between European governments, signaled by the EU-25's Council of Agriculture Ministers on 24 October, have strengthened as a result. The Council was responding to the EU 5-year Forest Action Plan (2007-2011) proposed by the Commission on 15 June (see within for details).

Given differences in national traditions and approaches to forestry policy, achieving better coordination is going to be challenging. But in a year when forestry has suddenly found itself as never before in the cross current of environmental, energy and economic pressures, the need for greater coherence seems self-evident.

The call by the October Council for actions to support the forests' multifunctional role, to strengthen sustainable forest management and to



protect eco-systems is therefore timely. Especially important is to get a coherent policy view on the competing demands for wood as energy biomass, on the one hand, and, on the

other, as a renewable and affordable resource for traditionally high value-added product markets.

The main burden of ensuring policy coherence seems certain to fall back on the Commission. Yet, at the Commission – and this was one of the themes highlighted at an ACE-supported seminar in the European Parliament in September - forestry policy has tended to be vertically segmented with responsibilities shared between various departments: agriculture (general coordination), enterprise, environment, research, energy, competition, to name the obvious ones.

The coordination challenge is tough and rendered tougher by the absence of a specific legal base for EU forestry policy. Europe-level stakeholders like ACE are strong supporters of its successful outcome.

A NEW FOCUS FOR EU FORESTRY POLICY?

Launched in June, the Commission's Forest Action Plan (FAP) is set to become the driving force for EU coordinated policy in this area. "Potentially it puts EU forestry policy on a new and more dynamic trajectory", says Erika Mink, President of ACE

The four main objectives of the FAP in the years to 2011 are:

- improving the sector's long-term competitiveness (e.g. getting the right balance between bio-energy and traditional uses)
- improving and protecting the environment (e.g. sustainable forest management, biodiversity)
- contributing to the quality of life (e.g. occupation for local communities, recreation activities)
- fostering coordination and communication (e.g. at and between EU and national levels)

To achieve these four aims, the FAP sets out 18 key action points (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/action_plan/com_en.pdf).



Better coordination between Commission and EU member states will be vital if the FAP is to succeed

Better coordination, not just within the Commission's policy departments, but also between the Commission and EU member state governments, and between the latter themselves, will be vital if the FAP is to succeed.

The fact is that responsibility for many aspects of forest policy remains national.

ACE welcomes EU governments' wish to improve co-ordination of forest-related policies within the Commission's departments by appointing a coordinator for all relevant DGs. "This cross-sectoral approach is vital in establishing coherence and synergies with other relevant Community initiatives", ACE Director General Kevin Bradley says.

HIGH CONSERVATION CHARTER

A KEY ELEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

Developed by the Forest Stewardship Council, the High Conservation Value approach provides a basis for identifying important conservation values in natural areas. For example, a zone which contains a high number of rare or endangered species, or whose ecosystem controls erosion ranks highly in terms of conservation value. The HCV approach also gives guidelines for planning ecosystem management in order to ensure that the conservation values are maintained or enhanced. The best known example of these guidelines is forest certification.

The HCV Network brings together environmental organisations, paper and wood companies and forest owners who promote and implement HCV practices. The Network's members share lessons learned and ensure cooperation with other conservation practices.

As part of the HCV Network, ACE member Tetra Pak launched the HCV Network Charter in October 2006. "Our aim is to ensure a consistent and widely accepted application of the concept of High Conservation Values so that companies and other land users can be confident that their use of natural resources is responsible and seen to be so" explains Mario Abreu, Director Forestry and Recycling, Tetra Pak International.

FORESTRY'S MULTIFUNCTIONAL ROLE

A Decisive Phase in the Debate Highlighted at ACE Roundtable

With all three EU policy institutions now giving the forestry issues time and support, a potentially decisive phase has been reached.

To mark this important development, ACE sponsored a working seminar on 20 September hosted at the European Parliament (EP)'s Brussels headquarters. This provided a platform for the Commission, the Council of



"The common themes that bind the various policies influencing forestry together are sustainable forest management and the multifunctional role of forests"

Hilikka Summa, working in the DG Agriculture, European Commission, heads the biomass, biofuels, forestry and climate change unit responsible for coordinating the preparation and follow-up of the EU Forest Action Plan.

Ministers and the Parliament to exchange views on the challenges ahead with some key stakeholders,

such as forest owners, the paper industry and environmental NGOs.

AVOIDING THE CAP TRAP PARLIAMENT WARNS AGAINST BUREAUCRACY

Whatever the framework, "we do not need a common forestry policy: we have a common agricultural policy (CAP) with huge bureaucracy", commented Finnish MEP Kyösti Virrankoski. Avoidance of CAP-like

bureaucracy for the FAP was a widely shared view among policy stakeholders, e.g. German MEP Heinz Kindermann, EP rapporteur on EU forestry strategy. At the same time, the call for a more coherent structure within the

Commission for dealing with forest policy was made by Austrian MEP Agnes Schierhuber.

SUSTAINABILITY IS KEY

Given recent pressures for biomass energy, and to safeguard sustainable forestry practices, the need for balance between the forest's different uses was emphasised by Pekka Pesonen - a point also for Uno Brinnen, Forest Director at Korsnäs AB in Sweden. "We use wood to produce paperboard for beverage cartons", he said, "but we also provide energy to local townships".

MEP Kindermann believes the threat to the multifunctional role of the forests is probably overstated. But, warned Bernard de Galembert of the Confederation of European Paper Industries, the pursuit of energy production has already caused pulp prices to rise. Says ACE's Erika Mink "our members support and use bio-



"No individual forestry use should override others"

Pekka Pesonen, State Secretary, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The Finnish Presidency of the European Union has a major interest in discussions related to agriculture and forestry.

mass without compromising traditional uses, policies should encourage this on a sustainable basis". Sustainability's environmental dimension should not be ignored either, said Anke Schulmeister, WWF European Forests Officer, highlighting the risks for biodiversity from intensive energy use of forests. For Pesonen, "I would like to promote sustainability as a target for all uses of forest land", a view echoed by Mario Abreu of Tetra Pak and Felix

Montecuccoli of the Austrian Land and Forest Owners' Association.

The Finnish Forest Industry Federation, in conjunction with the Finnish Presidency, organises a high-level conference on the competitiveness of the forest-based sector on 28 November 2006.

For more information:

<http://english.forestindustries.fi/federation/presidency/events/20060627103836.html>

Our Working Environment



Working with Nature



Nordic paper mills that supply paperboard for beverage cartons contribute to the livelihoods of local communities in some of the EU's most outlying regions.

The surrounding forests, sustainably managed, are also an important Resource for tourism - a natural environment for

leisure activities like camping, fishing, berry-picking or bird watching.

These communities live off the forest but also live with it. Sustainable forestry promotes a balance between economic use, biodiversity and recreation.

NEWS IN BRIEF

22 SEPTEMBER 2006: Inauguration of Stora Enso's new plant "Energy 2005" in Skoghall, Sweden. "Energy 2005" enables the mill to use more biofuels while also lowering emission levels into the environment and particularly reducing the CO₂ emissions by up to 75%. In addition to this, new energy recovery measures are expected to lead to an increase in the mill's self-sufficiency for power from a current 15% to almost 40%. Joining all Stora Enso staff and representatives of ACE members, European Commission's Vice President Margot Wallström and Värmland Governor Eva Eriksson took part in the opening event.

20 September 2006: MEPs Kyösti Virrankoski, Heinz Kindermann and Agnes Schierhuber, respectively from Finland, Germany and Austria, organised jointly with ACE a roundtable debate on the European Union Forest Action Plan at the European Parliament in Brussels. The event brought together Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), representatives from the European Commission, the European Council, NGOs and forestry and paper industry. For more information see: <http://www.ace.be/index.jsp?nodeId=14499&isoCode=de>

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

> 14 December 2006

CHRISTMAS 2006

Look out for your European Voice on 14 December for special Christmas wishes from the Nordic forests.

> November 2006

ACE HAS A NEW WEBSITE DOMAIN

ACE website is now accessible at:

www.beveragecarton.eu



www.beveragecarton.eu

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ACE represents leading beverage carton packaging producers and their main European paperboard suppliers in EU environmental policy developments

ACE MEMBERS

