Position paper on Forest Certification

CEPI and its members are committed to the sustainable management and use of forest resources. In that context CEPI is supporting the ongoing process of Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe, known as Helsinki Process, and the Resolutions that were adopted at the Strasbourg, Helsinki, Lisbon and Vienna Conferences.

Considering the legitimate need of customers, consumers and industries for documented sustainability and for transparency, CEPI welcomes the development of certification of sustainable forest management as a mechanism for providing assurance of sustainable forestry practices, which involves independent third party audit against a national/regional standard. Forest industries have been actively contributing to the multi-stakeholders’ development of the different credible forest certification systems and related chain of custody certification, which currently operate around the world. Today, around half of the wood used by the European pulp and paper industry is certified and this percentage is constantly growing. Moreover, European pulp and paper companies are increasingly achieving chain of custody certification.

Acknowledging different historical and contextual conditions as well as values, the industry recognises that the development of different certification schemes in Europe and in the world should respond in the most adequate manner to the specific economic, social and environmental needs and conditions of the relevant country/region.

Today, forest certification covers about 7% of the world forest area, equivalent to approximately one quarter of the forests considered as commercially managed. This expansion of forest certification has mainly taken place in the Northern hemisphere, more particularly in the European Economic Area¹ (where it represents some 45 % of the forest surface), in the US and in Canada. CEPI and its members strongly believe that encouragement is further needed to support the implementation and the expansion of tools dedicated to SFM - such as certification - in regions of the world where forest management practices do not meet basic sustainability principles and where deforestation takes place at an alarming rate.

The coexistence of various certification schemes has led CEPI and its members to consider key credibility criteria which have been identified during the development of the CEPI Forest Certification Matrix (www.forestrycertification.info) that aims at providing a complete, comprehensive and comparable set of information about operational certification systems.

These key credibility criteria cover rules applicable to the development of the standards, reference to internationally accepted forestry principles, legality requirements, commonly accepted rules governing certification and accreditation bodies and procedures and provisions applicable to the use of environmental claims¹.

¹ EU, Norway, Liechtenstein
CEPI and its members consider that any other component of the various certification schemes that goes beyond these key credibility criteria contribute to the comparative difference between one scheme and another, in order to meet better contextual, geographical, economic, social and environmental conditions. However, these differences between certification schemes should not be used to create suppliers’ discrimination and unnecessary barriers or obstacles to trade. It’s CEPI’s opinion that the systems that operate in Europe, FSC and PEFC, do constitute important platforms to ensure society that products from forests certified by them are produced according to widely agreed sustainable management principles.

CEPI acknowledges the need to continuously improve forest management, to significantly expand the availability of certified raw material, and to raise confidence in the market place. Therefore CEPI and its members declare that, for the purpose of their responsible purchasing and manufacturing practices, they:

- support all credible certification systems, notably FSC and PEFC,
- do not promote discrimination and
- do not show any preference between fiber certified through major systems, as they all ensure consumers that responsible forest management practices are taking place on the ground.

Through the International Council of Forest and Paper Association (ICFPA), CEPI intends to participate to any action supporting and promoting the development of SFM tools - including forest certification - all over the world and more particularly in the less developed countries.

CEPI and its members commit to further promote forest certification and Chain of custody certification and to contribute to their expansion. By doing so, CEPI and its members strongly expect that forest certification shall contribute to further promoting the sustainable use of wood and wood-based products.

The European pulp and paper industry in some Figures:

- It is composed of 900 companies and 1300 mills
- It produces some 93 million tonnes of paper and 40 million tonnes of pulp
- It has a turnover of €75 billion and a value added of €25 billion
- It represents 29% of world production
- It exports 12.5 million tonnes of its products
- 73% of paper mills are certified to an environmental management system
- 50% of virgin fibre used is certified to a sustainable forest management system
- It employs some 275,000 people directly and the forest based industries cluster employs some 3.5 million people
- 60% of employment is in rural areas
- 52% of energy used in paper mills is renewable
- 90% of the electricity on site is generated through combined heat & power
- It invests annually €560 million in environmental improvements (7% of capital expenditure)

1 The criteria are:
- Conformance of the standard-setting process with ISO Guide 59
- Reference to international forestry principles, criteria and guidelines
- Legality requirements included in the standard and applicable, as a minimum, to the non certified component of labelled products.
- Conformance of certification bodies to ISO Guides 62, 65 or 66, both in the forest management and in the chain of custody verification processes.
- Conformance of accreditation bodies to ISO Guide 61, both in the forest management and in the chain of custody verification processes.
• Conformance of environmental claims to relevant sections of ISO 14020.