Position paper on Sustainable Forest Management

CEPI and its members are committed to the sustainable management and use of forest resources. In that context CEPI is supporting and actively involved in 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.

CEPI and its members therefore agree with the definition of the 2nd Ministerial Conference that took place in Helsinki in 1993, stating that “sustainable management” means the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way, and at a rate, that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil, now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions, at local, national, and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other ecosystems.” Whilst fulfilling such a wide range of objectives/functions might seem challenging, CEPI believes that active management of forests is by far the best way to secure economic viability, environmental richness and diversity and social welfare.

In undersigning the Helsinki Resolutions and committing to act accordingly, European countries, as well as the European Union have accepted implementing measures that would improve forests sustainability, taking into consideration their economic, environmental and social functions.

By adapting their forestry legislation and by developing National Forest Programs, the European countries are making this a reality. Moreover the widespread requirement to forest owners to develop multi-annual management plans (more than 80% of European forests are under management plan or equivalent regimes), establishing their objectives and plans with respect to economic, environmental and social role of their forests further contributes to improved sustainability.

The European pulp and paper industry, represented by CEPI, commits to promote compliance with the requirements of forestry legislation, as well as with the objectives and provisions of the National Forest Programs. Similarly, the industry contributes to sustainable forestry in its own operations. The industry develops wood and fiber procurement policies and principles promoting the improvement of forest management practices. Amongst others, these include requirements of legality, traceability, transparency and forest protection.

In so doing, the industry contributes to the overall sustainability of forests.

All these measures lead CEPI to consider that most of the European forests are currently managed in compliance with the principles of Sustainable Forest Management. As illustrations of this, the current fellings in Europe only reach 67% of the annual increment; 11.7% of the forest areas are

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1 All data from MCPFE, State of Europe’s Forests 2003 - The MCPFE Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe, 2003
designated as protected areas; another 11.5% of European forests are designated to protect soil, water and ecosystems; most of the forests are open to recreational uses; etc.²

CEPI and its members also recognize that there exist tools established to assure/document the sustainability of forest management. Together with Environment Management Systems, like ISO 14000, independent and credible forest certification and certification of the chain of custody can contribute to further raise awareness about forests sustainability, in particular towards customers and consumers of forest products.

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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)

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² All data from MCPFE, State of Europe’s Forests 2003 - The MCPFE Report on Sustainable Forest Management in Europe, 2003