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**JOINT FAO/ECE/ILO COMMITTEE ON FOREST TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING**

Seminar on  
**AFFORESTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT**

in conjunction with the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on  
Forest Technology, Management and Training

Ennis, Co. Clare, Ireland, 15-19 September 2002

**Ireland's Forestry Regulatory Framework: an Environmental NGO Perspective**

Basic paper by Mr. Shirley Clerkin

**Summary**

An Taisce – the National Trust for Ireland – was established over 50 years ago and is the broadest environmental non-governmental organisation in Ireland. An Taisce has been a statutory consultee under the Irish Planning Acts since 1963. Since then, other consultative responsibilities have been added to our remit, including commenting on Integrated Pollution Control Licences, Waste Licences, aquaculture licences and, most recently, forestry consent applications.

This paper will examine the new forestry regulatory regime, as introduced in December 2001 by the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations, 2001.

This legislation removed initial afforestation from the planning acts, and initial afforestation is now 'exempt' from planning permission requirements. A new forestry consent procedure, governed by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, allows for public participation in the consent process through a system of public notification *via* local newspapers, with a period for comment. Provision has also been made for consultation with specific bodies including Dúchas The Heritage Service and An Taisce - the National Trust for Ireland. The new regulations lower the thresholds for

mandatory Environmental Impact Assessment from 70 to 50 hectares. Provision for requiring an EIA below the threshold has also been included where there may be significant environmental impacts.

An Taisce, as a statutory consultee under the new Regulations, will present an overview of this new forestry consent system. The paper will investigate the legislation's effectiveness in implementing elements of the National Forest Standard and Code of Best Forest Practice, both of which have been developed in order to implement Sustainable Forest Management principles in Ireland.

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