



UN-ECE/FAO

**Forest Communicators Network**

# **REPORT**

**of the 16th Meeting of the  
Forest Communicators Network  
May 13 – 15, 2008, Bilbao/Spain**

The 16<sup>th</sup> meeting of the UNECE-FAO Forest Communicators Network was hosted by the Basque Government, the Forest Service of Bizkaia and the Union of Southern European Foresters USSE. 43 people from 16 countries and 7 international organisations participated. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl from Austria, Leader of the FCN.

This report is meant to document the main outcomes of the meeting, the decisions taken, which guide the activities of the network and determine the priorities to focus on in the near future. This report does not attempt to reflect the wealth of information and experiences shared and the rich discussions led. However, the documents attached (agenda, list of participants and draft new FCN mandate) as well as the presentations illustrate the amplitude of issues addressed.

The meeting documents and further information on the FCN are available at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/pr/pr.htm>. The presentations are posted at <http://www.usse.es/en/index.html>.

## **MAIN OUTCOMES**

### **European Forest Week 2008**

The FCN welcomed the work carried out by the FCN Sub Group on the European Forest Week 2008, in particular the recommendations submitted to the Forest Week's Organising Committee on communication objectives and messages, logo and graphic design, internet performance, a communication tool kit, event design and national/sub-national activities.

The FCN decided to focus now on activities by national organisations. The FCN will provide and encourage inputs to the survey carried out by Katia Meunier-Caille and Gerda Wolfrum on national forest communication activities. The French government will host a FCN meeting from 10 to 11 July 2008 in Rambouillet/France that will specifically focus on national and sub-national activities in the context of the European Forest Week. The invitation and background information on this meeting will be sent out in the next following time.

Questions were raised on what the preconditions for national organisations would be for participating in the European Forest Week. The FCN recommended that the criteria should be clear and the procedures be simple. Those willing to contribute with activities should have the opportunity to sign up to the European Forest Week's general objectives in order to obtain the right to use the title and logo of the week for their activities. The question on how to operate this practically and other questions with regard to what the recently established web site for the week would provide for users could not be clarified due to the absence of an FAO representative at the FCN meeting.

### **European public opinion survey on forest and wood related issues with special focus on climate change and bio-energy aspects**

A sub-group was established, to be co-chaired by Ewald Rametsteiner and Colin Morton, with the task to elaborate an outline for a Europe wide public opinion survey, combining a quantitative survey with qualitative in-depth focus groups, with a special focus on climate change and bio-energy issues. The group should produce a proposal for submission to potential partners.

The group would also gather existing data from as many as possible relevant surveys carried out by different organisations in the region in order to update studies produced in the past and to complement the European survey to a comprehensive picture on public opinions on forests, wood, climate change and bio-energy.

### **Forest Pedagogics**

In response to Key Action 10 of the EU-Forest Action Plan a Sub Group on Forest Pedagogics was established with the task

- to compile best practice examples on forest related environmental education,
- to elaborate common principles and quality standards, and to
- to develop a European Forest Pedagogics concept.

The sub group will be led by Thomas Baschny (Austria) and include Katia Meunier Caille (France), Lada Prylova (Czech Republic), Pavlina Vasickova (Czech Republic), Ludmilla Marusakova (Slovak Republic) and Joana Bateira (Portugal). Other FCN members interested in the subject were invited to also join the group. The group will report to the FCN. The FCN will prepare a report with conclusions and recommendations that could upon request be provided to the European Commission for consideration by the Standing Forestry Committee.

### **European Forest Communication Strategy**

In response to the Warsaw Ministerial Declaration 'Forests for Quality of Life' (paragraphs 16, 25 and 39), the Warsaw Resolution 1 'Forests, Wood and Energy' (paragraph 16) and Warsaw Resolution 2 (paragraph 21) as well as Key Action 18 of the EU Forest Action Plan and Action 19 of the Communication from the European Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Innovative and Sustainable Forest-Based Industries in the EU, the FCN established a Task Force on Strategic Aspects of Forest Communication in Europe.

The Task Force will be led by Ingwald Gschwandtl and include Kristin Dawes, Tamass Kotovics, Gerben Janse, Ewald Rametsteiner, Colin Morton, Kai Lintunen, Marta Gaworska, Oscar Barreiro. Other FCN members interested in the subject were

invited to also join the group. The Task Force should analyse the most substantive topics and generate a comprehensive overview on issues and data relevant for a European forest communication strategy. The Task Force will build as much as possible on work already carried out or being in progress, such as 'European cooperation and Coordination' by Gerben Janse, 'Europeans and their Forests' and 'Europeans and Wood' by Ewald Rametsteiner e. a., 'Communication aspects of the European Forest Week' by Ingwald Gschwandtl e. a..

The outcome should serve as information source and stimulus for various relevant European entities, in particular the European Community, the MCPFE, the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission. It should also provide a reference point for institutions and organisations at country and local level to help putting their activities into a European context.

### **Planning big events and visitors tours**

As follow up to the Training Session on organising visitors tours and planning big events Marta Gaworska and Kai Lintunen will put together check lists as useful tools for communication officers.

### **New FCN mandate and new officers**

The current mandate of the FCN will expire in October 2008. However, there are new issues of public concern, in particular the role of forests in climate change, bio-energy production and water cycles, that create new communication challenges and opportunities for the forest based sectors. And there is a need to respond to fresh demands for strengthened regional cooperation in forest related communication from the MCPFE, the UNECE TC/FAO EFC and the European Community.

The FCN produced a draft new mandate to be submitted for approval by the joint meeting of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission in October 2008 in Rome.

Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) was confirmed in the role of Team Leader. Mr. Tomass Kotovics (Latvia) was confirmed as Deputy Leader, and Ms. Marta Gaworska (Poland), Mr. Colin Morton (United Kingdom) and Mr. Kai Lintunen (Finland) were elected new Deputy Leaders.

### **Next meeting**

On behalf of the Department of the Environment, Transport, Energy and Communications of the Swiss Confederation, Mr. Alan Kocher extended the invitation to hold the next FCN meeting from 28 September to 2 October 2009 in Lyss/Switzerland.

It was suggested that this meeting should have a special focus on internet media and would discuss and evaluate substance elaborated in the meantime by the established FCN Sub Groups and the FCN Task Force.

---

**ANNEXES:**

- **Agenda of the FCN meeting in Bilbao/Spain, May 13 – 15, 2008**
- **List of participants of the FCN meeting in Bilbao/Spain, May 13 – 15, 2008**
- **FCN mandate 2008 to 2013 - Proposal for approval by the ECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission**