



United Nations

UNECE Weekly

Economic Commission for Europe

Issue N° 305 — 2-6 February 2009

Heavy damage to forests from storms and insects, partly attributable to climate change

The storm which hit northern Spain and south-west France last weekend caused significant damage to forest ecosystems. It has been reported that 60% of the Landes forest – the largest man made forest in Europe, and a major source of wood – has been devastated. The Landes were also hit by the major storm in 1999. After the roads have been cleared and electricity restored, the millions of wind blown trees (often broken and thus unusable for the highest value markets) must be harvested (a difficult and dangerous operation), stored and marketed, while “normal” harvesting in other regions is curtailed.

In 1999 the windblown wood was absorbed relatively easily by the market, which was strong at the time, but now it will further depress a market already weakened by the economic crisis. Energy use may be one solution, but heavy losses are likely. The French Government has promised its support. UNECE for its part has offered its help as a clearing house for information, and will monitor the situation. The Timber Section has contributed to a Technical Guide on Harvesting



©Warne Rosenberg

and Conservation of Storm-Damaged Timber available at <http://www.unece.org/timber/storm/Stodafor%20manual/stodafor-manual-2004.pdf> and has a site dedicated to the subject at <http://www.unece.org/timber/storm/storm.htm>.

More frequent and more intense storms have been forecast by climate change scientists, so the storms of last weekend may be attributable partly to climate change. In Canada too, climate change is seen as one cause of severe forest damage, the infestation by the Mountain Pine Beetle of forests in British Columbia, and, now, Alberta and the state of Washington. The beetles are normally kept in check by cold winters, but recent winters have not been cold enough and millions of hectares of forests are dead or dying, causing huge ecological damage and destroying the livelihoods of forest dependent communities.

Both these catastrophes underline the importance for the forest sector of developing strategies of adaptation to climate change and thus reducing the long term risks inherent in forest management.

For more information contact Kit Prins (info.timber@unece.org).



©Ich mag Krabbler

Mountain pine beetle

Usefulness of UNECE internships

Interview with Robert Lalka, Public-Private Partnerships Liaison at the Global Partnership Center, US Department of State

What is your current job?

I now serve as the US Department of State's Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) Liaison as a Presidential Management Fellow, but my initial immersion into learning about PPPs started when I interned at UNECE, where I worked on the Guidebook for Promoting Good Governance in Public-Private Partnerships alongside Geoffrey Hamilton, Polina Tarshis, Andrey Vasilyev and the rest of the members of the Economic Cooperation and Integration Division.

Why did you come to UNECE to do an internship?

My graduate school, Duke University, has a programme based in Geneva that brings graduate students in public policy and business to work for multilateral organizations, NGOs, and other international groups each summer. My interest in the intersection of the public and private sectors meant that the UNECE's work under Mr. Hamilton was a perfect fit.

To what extent did your internship lead to your current position?

There is no doubt that working on this new topic was useful. The UNECE team helped me to understand the importance of good governance in partnerships, and I benefited as well from the passionate “PPP” people who work under the auspices of



Not an official record - For information only

Internships (continued)

the UNECE Team of Specialists on PPPs. They proved to be very helpful in the research and analysis I conducted for my master's thesis on PPPs. UNECE became more than an internship and a learning experience, it provided a springboard for my career.

How would you define PPPs and how might they help the US to contribute more to international development?

We define our partnerships as collaborative working relationships between the US Government and non-government partners, in which the goals, structure, and governance of the partnerships, as well as the roles and responsibilities of each partner, are mutually determined. This conception of partnerships is broader than how UNECE looks at partnerships; but the key premise at the centre of this approach is the same – and it is based on a few simple facts of globalization. Consider this: in the 1960s, the public flow of capital from the US represented 68% of all money leaving the country. In 2005, 83.2% of capital leaving the US was in private flows. In order

to accomplish our aims in development, diplomacy and security we must take facts like these into account. Our office in the Department of State encourages the partnership approach as a mainstream tool in our foreign affairs efforts to meet diplomatic aims in the changing twenty-first century world.

What were your key learnings from your internship with UNECE?

I would say that UNECE taught me three things: (1) globalization is speeding up and impacting us all in ways we cannot even conceptualize, and the private sector is going to play an increasingly important role in how we approach foreign affairs; (2) considering this new paradigm, good governance must be maintained and international leadership from bodies like UNECE should remain a paramount concern in order to ensure that we stay vigilant and maintain our priorities in the face of these changes; and (3) even with all these new dynamics, our keys to success are still those basic core values such as serving people, building honest relationships, and encouraging good ideas – and as long as we maintain the right focus on these objectives, we are well on our way to making sure that people of all nations benefit from the changes wrought by the globalizing trends we are experiencing each day.

For more information about PPPs contact Geoffrey Hamilton (ceci@unece.org). For UNECE internships visit http://www.unece.org/oes/internships/internship_prog.htm.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Forest area in Europe

With a total forest area of just over 1 billion ha (25% of the world's forests), forest and other wooded land covers half of all land of the countries participating in the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE). There is a wide variation between countries, with the Russian Federation and the Nordic countries having the largest share of land covered by forest.

The share of forest area in total area does not appear to depend on the level of economic development. 80% of MCPFE countries' forest area is in the Russian Federation. Most countries in the region have less than 0.5 ha/capita of forest with the highest level attained by the Russian Federation (5.7 ha/capita).

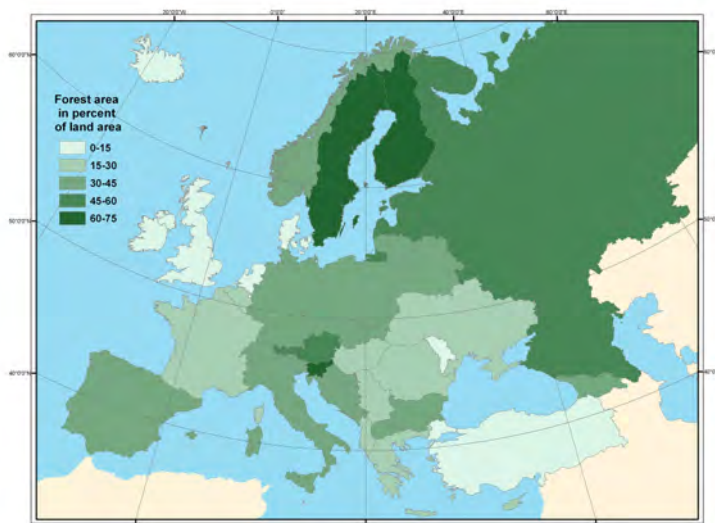
The total area of forested land increased by 3.6 million ha between 2000 and 2005 — an area larger than the Netherlands. More than half of this increase took place in Spain and Italy, while there was a very slight decline in the Russian Federation.

This information is drawn from the most complete and balanced assessment ever of the state of Europe's forests, prepared by the MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw with UNECE and FAO. The report addresses all criteria of sustainable forest management, provides relevant information for policymakers and points to potentially unsustainable situations in some indicators in a few countries.

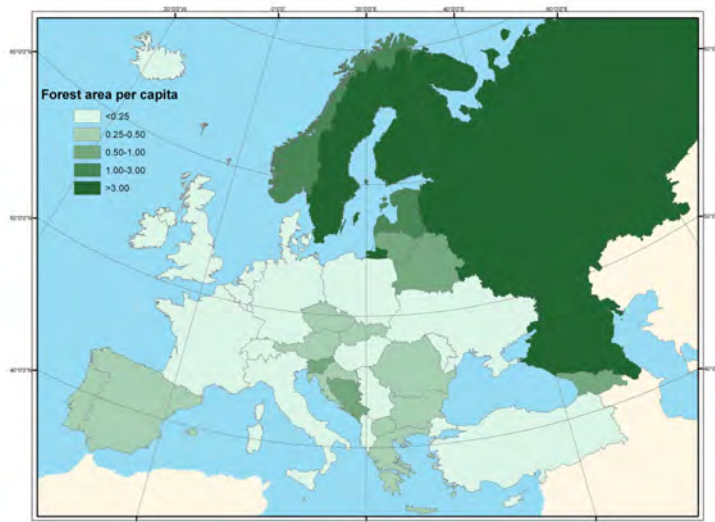
More information on the report is available at <http://www.mcpfe.org/node/135>.

100 hectares (ha) = 1 km²

Forest area in percent of land area by country, 2005



Area of forest per capita by country (ha), 2005



Source: MCPFE/UNECE/FAO "State of Europe's Forests 2007", based on data collected by UNECE/FAO and available at <http://www.unece.org/pxweb/DATABASE/STAT/Timber.stat.asp>.

Information Service
UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
CH - 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Tel: +41 (0) 22 917 44 44
Fax: +41 (0) 22 917 05 05

E-mail: info.ece@unece.org
Website: <http://www.unece.org>

Not an official record - For information only