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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

TIMBER COMMITTEE

Fifty-ninth session

2-5 October 2001

**FAO/ECE FOREST COMMUNICATORS NETWORK MEETING**

**21-23 May 2001 Zvolen, Slovakia**

(Item 8 of the provisional agenda)

**CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY**

1. Thanks to active participation from members and gracious hospitality and inspiring meeting facilities arranged by the hosts, the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network (FCN) successfully covered these key items in support of their mandate at the meeting in Zvolen, Slovakia:

- The FCN Subgroup on Consumer Activities will produce a report on consumer attitudes towards forestry and wood products by the end of 2001 and then establish a market intelligence system on the same subject area
- The FCN Subgroup on Best Public Relations Practices will prepare a compendium by the next FCN meeting.
- The FCN Extranet Subgroup will further develop their FCN intranet by end of summer 2001.
- The FCN Subgroup on Building Capacity in Central and Eastern European Countries will produce a report based on their findings from a survey of the FCN network by end of summer 2001.

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- The FCN Subgroup on European Forums for Forest and Society will conduct the first event in Finland in 2002 or 2003 and identify future hosts for EFFE.
- The FCN will make a presentation to the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee seminar on “Forestry meets the public” seminar in October 2001 in Switzerland.
- A formal liaison between the FCN and the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee was established.
- A link to the new IUFRO task force on public relations was initiated.
- The FCN discussed its extended mandate and the annex to this report to shows the links between FCN activities and mandated tasks.
- The FCN supports continued country profiles by the Timber Committee and European Forestry Commission, including listing on each country profile a statistical contact and a FCN contact.
- A number of other items were discussed as elaborated in the report below.

\* \* \*

## REPORT OF THE MEETING

2. The meeting of the FAO/ECE Forest Communicators Network, formally the FAO/ECE Team of Public Relations Specialists in the Forest and Forest Industries Sector, took place in Zvolen, Slovakia. Representatives from the following countries were present: Austria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The following organizations were represented: MCPFE, ECE and FAO (see annex 1).

3. Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria), Leader of the FCN, opened the meeting. Mr. Laszlo Konozi, State Secretary, Ministry of Forestry, welcomed the FCN and explained the importance of the forest and forest industries sector in Slovakia. He said Slovakia has important international cooperation in the forest and forest industries sector, but needs to increase public relations in the country. Mr. Jozef Mikus, Vice-Mayor of Zvolen, welcomed participants to the historic city. Dr. Jan Ilavsky, Director of the Forest Institute, Zvolen, and Vice-Chairman, European Forestry Commission, welcomed the FCN to Zvolen which is the centre for forest and wood research. He noted that the FCN had been given high priority in the ongoing review of the Timber Committee (TC) and European Forestry Commission (EFC) integrated programme of work and is in the new work area on policy and cross-sectoral issues.

4. The provisional agenda was adopted. Mr. Gschwandtl (Austria) chaired the meeting. Mr. Ed Pepke (UNECE and FAO) was rapporteur.

### **Item 1. Towards a Strategic Action Plan for Forest-related Communications**

5. Mr. Gschwandtl gave an overview on the FCN which was established in 1993 and which has the goal to promote a positive image of the forest sector, including all phases of forest management and the forest-based industries. He explained the team's mandate which was renewed by the TC and EFC at their joint session through 2004. The major accomplishments include building the network, *PR Toolkit*, *Substitution Report*, *Country Fact Sheets*, a poster for the World Food Summit, PR listserver, FCN website and intranet, International Forest Communicators Forum 2000 (IFCF 2000). Work underway is the follow up of the IFCF 2000, building capacity in central and eastern European countries (CEECs), European Forums for Forests and Society (EFFS), Forestry Meets the Public Seminar input, assisting PR for the TC and EFC outputs, expansion of the network, creating a compendium of best PR practices, establishing information on consumer behaviour, etc.

6. Mr. Bob Burt (Canada) reported on the IFCF 2000. The workshop discussed current issues which led to vision statements in 2002 and 2010. The subgroups set up within the FCN are carrying forward the work. He invited the FCN to the World Forestry Congress to be held in Quebec City, Quebec, Canada on 21-28 September 2003.

### **Item 2. Consumer behaviour with regard to forest and forests based products**

7. Mr. Ewald Rametsteiner (Austria) presented the work of the Sub-group on Consumer Activities of which he is the leader. A needs and user requirements survey was conducted within the FCN. A work plan was elaborated. The group needs information on consumers and customers and they identified the types of information needed. Information should be accessible, updated and on-line. The work plan includes collecting information on consumer attitudes and reporting in 2001. In 2002 a market intelligence system will be set up.

#### **Item 7. Compiling a compendium on best PR practices in forest related communications**

8. Mr. Burt presented the progress of the Subgroup on Best PR Practices which he leads. They are compiling a compendium on best PR practices. A template has been drafted and will be circulated to the FCN network to obtain examples of campaigns and activities to be included in the compendium.

9. The ultimate dissemination of the compendium will be first available to the FCN, but then could be public via the FCN website with less detail. Some of these projects should be highlighted at future FCN meetings.

#### **Item 3. Public participation in forestry**

10. Mr. Miles Wenner (United Kingdom) presented the work Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training (Joint Committee), a forum for best forest management practices. The Joint Committee established a team of specialists on public participation in forestry. They published, via the ILO, a *Public Participation in Forestry in Europe and North America*, following their workshop in March 2000. A second workshop, to which the FCN is invited to participate, is scheduled on 15-18 August 2001. The FCN, specifically Canada and Austria, will identify workshop participants.

11. The FCN and the Joint Committee share common interests in PR activities and will work together on projects of mutual interest. Mr. Joao de Sousa Teixeira (Portugal) was requested to be the official focal point between the two subsidiary bodies.

#### **Item 4. Forest-related communications activities and requirements of CEECs**

12. Mr. Tomass Kotovics (Latvia), leader of the Subgroup on building capacity in CEECs, presented the results of a questionnaire to FCN members on one of the FCN's mandated duties, i.e. is to build PR capacity in CEECs. The survey identified several problems for example, lack of experience, lack of organizational structure, lack of cooperation, etc.

13. He analyzed the results by respondents from CEECs and non-CEECs. Non CEECs identified lack of consistent efforts, lack of long-term vision, no common strategies, insufficient resources, myopia, confusion over PEFC versus FSC. Strategies to build capacity on the

international level are: set up a compendium with CEEC examples, raise awareness of necessity in PR, provide instruction through short courses, exchange of information via networking and mutual recognition of certification schemes. Various tools were identified, e.g. workshops, upgraded *PR Toolkit*, visits of experts and compendium of campaigns and developing a network. Ireland offered to host a workshop.

14. The subgroup considered the following projects: 1. building forest-related PR capacity to change organizational structure, and 2. furthering relationship with EU. The next steps are to prepare project proposals, elaborate the projects and then seek financing.

15. In CEECs the new forest owners, who have recently received back their forestlands through restitution of private property, present a particular challenge for PR.

16. The discussion provided numerous suggestions on how to carry out the projects in this area. First, funding sources must be identified, such as through the European Union. Another successful funding alternative used in Germany is a tax on roundwood production and now expanded to wood processing industries. Other suggestions for building capacity are to train the trainers, the FAO young professionals programme, the MCPFE-ECE Timber Committee policy workshop on CEECs in Poland in September 2001 where donors will be present, the ECE Workshop on Changing Role of State Forests in July 2001 in Austria, the EU COST programme to build capacity in the forest sector includes a communication role. A workshop on national forest programmes will occur in Norway in July and should include capacity building.

17. The FAO has a young professionals programme which could be a vehicle for training future specialists from CEECs. The team deemed this possibility as a lead choice.

18. Mr. Kotovics will send requests to the team for suggestions on the next steps. He will synthesize suggestions, possibly for presentation in CIT workshop in Poland in September 2001.

#### **Item 5. Developing an extranet for the FCN and listserver**

19. Mr. Dembner announced that a commercial extranet had been established for the FCN. He mentioned that the FCN has had a listserver in existence for a number of years, although it is infrequently used. Participants at this meeting will be added to the listserver. Although he will continue on the subgroup, he will step down from being its leader, and will help find a new leader.

#### **Item 6. European Forums for Forest and Society**

20. Mr. Kai Lintunen (Finland) reviewed the concept which is being worked on by the EFFS Subgroup. The EFFS should be worked on by a consortium of 3 countries: the present host, past host and future host. The series of EFFS would be composed of 2/3 opinion leaders from outside the forest and forest industries sector, plus 1/3 representatives of the FFI to discuss sectoral issues. The concept has success in Finland and the team requested that Finland host the first one, perhaps

in the second half of 2002 or early 2003. Finland needs confirmation of the next host before taking the next steps. The success of the series will depend upon identifying the right participants and the FCN will be solicited for nominations of participants when the concept is launched.

#### **Item 7. Forests in international processes**

21. Mr. Gschwandtl outlined the various international processes underway which are related to forests. European Union has no common forest policy, while there are many relevant policy areas such as environment, agriculture, trade, development, cooperation, etc.

22. The Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe MCPFE is the cooperation of 40 European countries addressing forest issues on the ministerial level. It started in 1990 in Strasbourg, France, had additional conferences in Helsinki, 1993, Lisbon 1998 and will have the next conference in Vienna in April 2003. The major achievements so far are resolutions and work programmes with regard to SFM, biodiversity and socio-economic aspects. The Lisbon conference had specific public relations aspects. Vienna will further develop the pan-European forest policy framework and focus on aspects of the European integration. The TC and EFC influence the European forest policies through their work.

23. Globally there are more than 40 different institutions, organizations and initiatives and over 20 international agreements dealing with forest aspects.

24. The newly established UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) will meet for the first time in June 2001. Its functions will be to facilitate the implementation of the IPF and IFF recommendations for action (some 300), provide a forum for policy dialogue and development, coordinate programmes, build partnerships for international cooperation, monitor and report on the IPF/IFF actions and programmes and strengthen political commitment. The components are the UNFF (all countries, ministers, NGOs) and the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (FAO, UNEP, UNDP, CIFOR, conventions, etc.). The UNFF has a 5-year horizon—a relatively short period for its aspirations.

25. The roles of the FCN in relation to the UNFF could be to raise public awareness, facilitate policy dialogue and formulation and facilitate implementation. The FCN should also inform national delegations of the importance, means and strategies of public relations and the need for capacity building. The proposals for action coming from the IPF and IFF processes and the programmes of the UNFF will provide references and opportunities for public relations activities in individual FCN member's work.

26. The resolution L1 from the Lisbon MCPFE has public relations agreements which request communications activities. The resolution should be circulated via the FCN extranet and the site of the UNFF added to the website.

**Item 8. Activities of countries and organizations**

27. Mr. Mike Hogan (Canada) spoke on British Columbia's communications in the marketplace which promote wood products over substitute products. The Wood Promotions Network measured consumer perceptions of wood. Forest use campaigns aimed at corporate buyers urge support through procurement covenants for certified forest products. Serious consumer misperceptions were noted regarding the sustainability of the North American forests, thus complicating public relations messages. The new Wood Promotion Network in Canada has a goal of reducing the market risk from substitution efforts and forest use campaigns by growing the market in the long term, showcase wood's attributes, forest are abundant and growing.

28. Ms. Esther Szykarsky (Canada) explained the new Forest Products Association of Canada's goals which are to promote market acceptance, strengthen industry reputation via core messages of forests are abundant and growing and that stewardship is exceptional. The FPAC is pro certification.

29. Mr. Lintunen announced a new trade flows database developed by the European Forest Institute in Joensuu, Finland. Further information is available from Mr. Stephen Kin at [stephen.sobu.kin@metla.fi](mailto:stephen.sobu.kin@metla.fi).

30. Ms. Daniela Krumland (Germany) announced a new IUFRO Task Force on Public Relations in Forest Science. She coordinates the task force with its goal to establish a network between scientists and others interested in PR. They will hold workshops to build PR tools for presentation at the next IURFO World Forest Congress in Brisbane, Australia in 2005. The FCN currently has representatives from a number of forest research institutions and organizations and recognizes the importance of this PR link. The FCN invited the task force leader to come to the next FCN meeting.

31. Mr. Marcel Guetensperger announced "Forestry Meets the Public," an international seminar on 8-11 October 2001 in Rütthubelbad, Switzerland under the auspices of the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training, with the participation of IUFRO and the PR Team. Mr. Guetensperger is the liaison between the FCN and the seminar. On behalf of the FCN, Mr. Gschwandtl will contribute a paper to the seminar—he requested suggestions from the FCN for the presentation. The seminar is running parallel to the work of the above mentioned Joint Commission team of specialists on public participation and Mr. Wenner will be presenting a paper from that team.

32. Mr. Pepke announced the recent production of a CD-ROM of the ECE/FAO *Forest Resources of Europe, CIS, North America, Australia, Japan and New Zealand* (TBFRA) and encouraged the Team to seriously consider its value in individual countries PR efforts. He reminded the Team of their mandate to promote the Timber Committee and European Forestry

Commission through their current products, for example their published information sources, for example the new *TBFRA* and the *Timber Bulletin*, with its market information.

33. The FCN discussed the country profiles by created on the TC website that are now outdated.

34. The FCN needs to know the products and publications available from the TC and EFC and Mr. Pepke will send out information via the listserver. Participants stated that TC/EFC products are frequently used in their work as highly comprehensive and reliable source of forest related information.

35. Mr. Pepke distributed a questionnaire on the FAO/ECE European Forest Sector Outlook Studies' new Meta-study on scenarios with major impacts on the European forest sector. The participants were requested to consider a new title for the study, for example Environmental, social and economic benefits from forestry and the use of forest products.

36. Mr. Joao de Sousa Teixeira (Portugal) showed a video titled "Forests, woods and thickets: Forests of Portugal", a summary of a TV series, as an example of PR in Portugal for forest values, forest fires, eucalyptus, cork oak, etc..

37. Mr. Gschwandtl summarized the results of the meeting:

- Report on consumer behaviour by end of 2001 (Rametsteiner),
- compendium on best practices in preparation for the next FCN meeting (Burt),
- follow-up on the FCN intranet by end of summer 2001 (Dembner),
- report on capacity building in CEECs by July, 2001 (Kotovics),
- chapeau for the report by June, 2001 (Pepke),
- EFSOS initiation of planning for first event in Finland in 2002/2003, including identification of next hosts (Karvonen),
- contributions from FCN network for a presentation to "Forestry meets the public" seminar (Gschwandtl),
- link between Joint Committee's Team of Specialists on Public Participation workshop in August 2001 (Teixeira),
- link to IUFRO task force on public relations through continued cooperation,
- annex to this report to show link between FCN activities and mandated tasks,
- country profile contact to be statistical contact and FCN contact for each country on TC website with links to FAO and ECE profile websites,
- EFSOS and TBFRA questionnaires to be returned to secretariat, following resending via the listserver in June 2001 (Pepke),
- Listserver to be updated with the participants from the meeting in Zvolen (Pepke).



38. Mr. Gschwandtl reviewed the IFCF 2000 visions and recommendations in terms of the items addressed at the Zvolen meeting. The Zvolen meeting dealt with all the recommendations and an additional deliverable could include producing some PR item for the 2002 Rio+10 summit as well as other international events.

#### **Item 10. Other business**

39. None

#### **Item 11. Date and place of next meeting**

40. Latvia offered to host the next meeting of the FCN in the spring of 2002.

#### **Item 12. Election of officers**

41. Portugal nominated a new slate of officers, Mr. Gschwandtl as leader, and 3 deputy leaders, Mr. Karvonen from Finland, Mr. Kotovics from Latvia and Mr. Burt from Canada. The participants unanimously agreed. The FCN thanked the former deputy-leader, Ms. Berit Sanness, former deputy-leader, for her valuable contribution and dedication to the FCN and their hope that she will continue to be active. The lack of representation of some countries, especially Mediterranean countries, was noted and it was agreed to announce the date of the next meeting as early as possible and to attract these countries to the FCN.

#### **Preparation of the report**

42. Mr. Pepke will submit the draft meeting report to Mr. Gschwandtl for his additions, including a chairman's introduction which will draw the links between the FCN activities, its mandate and the various international processes. The report will then be circulated via the listserver and placed on the FCN website and extranet. Mr. Dembner will incorporate the PowerPoint presentations into an electronic annex to be distributed separately.

#### **Closing of the meeting**

43. Mr. Gschwandtl closed the meeting by thanking the participants and the hosts from the Forest Research Institute in Zvolen, and especially Dr. Miroslav Gecovic. He thanked the European Forestry Commission and the Timber Committee for providing the framework for the Team. He encouraged the meeting participants to be active in the Team's activities and he welcomed them to the upcoming subgroup and Team meetings.

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**Annex I**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS <sup>1/</sup>**

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## ANNEX II

### ACTIVITIES OF THE FCN TO MEET THEIR MANDATE

44. Some examples of FCN activities which support the tasks mandated by the parent bodies are shown below.

**a) Promote networking among member states for capacity building and exchange of information in public relations and communication.**

\$ The original 25 experts has been expanded to over 100 in the ECE region and includes PR specialists from government, industry and international organizations.

\$ The network was boosted by the International Forest Communicators Forum 2000.

\$ Emphasis continues to increase representation from central and eastern European countries (CEECs).

**b) Identify key common concepts and promote their incorporation in forest sector communications and public relations activities in the member countries;**

\$ Special studies have led to clear messages about substitution, women as key consumers, consumer behavior,

\$ The International Forest Communicators Forum 2000 concluded with common themes for PR messages.

**c) Identify key needs for improvement of forest sector public relations and communication and communicate them to the TC and the EFC;**

\$ The FCN reports at each session of the TC and EFC and identifies needs of the sector for PR.

\$ In concordance with the needs expressed, the parent bodies have extended the FCN mandate, both in length as well as in the number of duties.

**d) Assist the TC and the EFC to improve public relations and information related to their work;**

\$ The FCN has provided publicity for the TC and EFC through publication and citation of its work.

\$ Special meetings were arranged in several countries upon the culmination of the European Timber Trends 2000 work.

**e) Promote the development of national capacity in forest sector public relations and communication, particularly in countries in transition;**

- \$ A FCN subgroup on capacity building in CEECs directs this programme element.
- \$ The team held a workshop on building capacity for PR in CEECs was held in Austria.
- \$ Two FCN meetings have been held in CEECs (Estonia and Slovakia) and the 2002 meeting is planned in Latvia. The focus of these meetings has been on capacity building in CEECs.

**f) Stimulate and promote the sound use of wood and other forest products as environmentally friendly and renewable resources.**

- \$ The International Forest Communicators Forum 2000 focused on this theme.
  - \$ The FCN has pledged its support for the TC seminar planned in Romania in 2002.
  - \$ The renewable and environmentally-friendly attributes of wood were central to the FCN study on “The competitive climate for wood products and paper packaging: the factors causing substitution with emphasis on environmental promotions.”
-