

UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists Reporting 2012

Items for regular reporting to the WPFES (length max two pages)
1. Name
FOREST COMMUNICATORS NETWORK (FCN)
2. Period covered
January 2011 to February 2012
3. Leader/Deputies and Secretary
Leader: Mr. Ingwald Gschwandtl (Austria) Deputy Leaders: Mr. Colin Morton (United Kingdom), Mr. Kai Lintunen (Finland), Mr. Tomass Kotovics (Latvia); (Ms. Marta Gaworska (CEPF) changed job, possible replacement to be clarified at next FCN meeting) Secretary: Ms. Eve Charles
4. Members
General membership policy: <i>'Participation in the FCN is open to all sharing its common objectives and tasks'</i> The FCN is comprised by members officially nominated by countries and additional experts from various organisations and institutions invited to participate in the Team's activities by the Team Leaders. The membership list is published at http://www.unece.org/forests/information/fcn.html
5. Meetings held
Annual meetings: May 2008 – Bilbao/Spain; July 2008 Rambouillet/France; October 2008 – Rome/Italy; September 2009 – Lyss/Switzerland; May 2010 – Hjortviken/Sweden; April 2011 – Budapest/Hungary. Up-coming: 19 to 21 June 2012 – Antalya/Turkey. The FCN also held several meetings of its Strategic Task Force and the Sub-Group on Forest Pedagogics.
6. Outputs during period by mandate item and impact achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European forest communication strategy <p>The <i>Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe</i> was finalised in September 2011 and launched at the Joint TC/EFC Session 'Orhan 2011' in October 2011 in Antalya/Turkey.</p> <p>The Framework is a milestone output of FCN work. It aims to help achieving better informed decision making on matters relevant to forests and forestry by closing the gap between perception and facts on forests and forestry in the wider European region.</p> <p>The framework offers communication objectives, common key messages and approaches, designed to be used by governments, public and private sector institutions and organisations and stakeholders at all levels, when formulating individual forest communication programs and strategies.</p> <p>Geographically the framework addresses the European part of the UNECE region. Out of the 56 Member States of the UNECE, experts from 36 countries and from 21 organisations participate in the Forest Communicators Network and were involved in some form in the elaboration of this framework.</p> <p>The FCN Task Force on Strategic Aspects of Forest Communication in Europe carried out the groundwork, analysing the most substantive topics and generating a comprehensive overview on issues and data relevant for a European forest communication strategy. The FCN utilised several</p>

meetings and workshops to take the issue forward, including a workshop in Pardubice/Czech Republic in 2009, drafting meetings in Vienna and FCN meetings in Gothenburg/Sweden 2010 and in Budapest/Hungary 2011.

- **Gap analyses of existing opinion research and proposal for improving monitoring and regular analyses on public perception concerning forests, their management and related products**

The FCN helped preparing and conducting a survey on '*Shaping forest communication in the European Union: public perceptions of forests and forestry*', commissioned by the European Commission and published in September 2009. Together with previous work carried out by the FCN on perceptions regarding forests and wood in the whole pan-European region this provides highly relevant background for identifying main components of strategic communication on forests and related products. So far further work by the FCN on updating this knowledge base has not been possible due to lack of personal and financial resources.

- **European Forest Pedagogics Concept based on best practice examples, common principles and quality standards for forest related environmental education**

The FCN established a Sub-Group on Forest Pedagogics led by Mr. Thomas Baschny from Austria who, together with Ms Lada Prylova from the Czech Republic, Mr. Dirk Schmechel from Germany and further colleagues, carried out a survey and conducted several meetings in order to improve the common understanding of the concept. Further information is to be gained at www.forestpedagogics.eu

- **Follow up to the European Forest Week 2008 (follow up media work; evaluation of achievements and lessons learned; improved concept for future activities)**

The FCN discussed its involvement in formulating the main messages and disseminating key findings of the European Forest Week 2008 and concluded it had been a major success in terms of a concerted communication effort. It was the first time ever that a multitude of events and activities carried out by different entities throughout the region was promoted through one central message.

Building on this positive and encouraging experience, the *Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe* recommends to '*consider establishing a regular collaborative communication campaign throughout Europe with time wise and message wise concerted actions at all levels*'.

- **Preparations for the International Year of Forests 2011 (raising awareness in the region; developing a strategic outline for concerted activities of local, regional and global relevance)**

Upon request by the UNFF Secretariat the FCN assisted in setting up the UN strategy on the IYF. The FCN also produced a set of proposals for action, in view of helping national and European organisations as well as other institutions capitalise on the International Year of Forests 2011.

The FCN meeting in Hungary in April 2011 gave countries and organisations opportunity to share communication plans and activities as well as information on experiences made and lessons learnt.

- **Contributions to the EU Forest Action Plan, in particular on forest related environmental education and on a European forest communication strategy**

The FCN Sub-Group on Forest Pedagogics linked its work to the principles and objectives of the

EU Forest Action Plan and presented and discussed respective approaches and activities with the EU Standing Forestry Committee.

As regards strategic approaches to forest communication in Europe the FCN worked closely with the Standing Forestry Committee of the European Union as well as with the Liaison Unit Oslo of the FOREST EUROPE Process in order to increase consistency and coherence among different efforts. Therefore the EU Forest Communication Strategy and the FOREST EUROPE Communication Strategy although differing in content and scope are fully coherent and complementary with the FCN produced Strategic Framework on Forest Communication in Europe. While the EU strategy involves the EU Member States and institutions, the Strategic Framework is set up for a much wider region. The FOREST EUROPE strategy is specifically designed to support the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial process, whereas the Strategic Framework has a more comprehensive approach and is set out to facilitate all forest-related stakeholders.

- **PR advice to TC/EFC bureaux and joint secretariat and to other UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists, including the Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing**

Members of the joint Secretariat discussed communication issues frequently with FCN Leaders and members and participated in FCN and FCN Task Force Meetings.

The ToS on Forest Products Markets and Marketing was invited to participate in FCN meetings in order to seek synergies and ways for co-operation. However, due to time and resource constraints this has not materialised so far.

Upon request FCN experts advised FAO on how to set up networks for promoting forest communication in other world regions. A first workshop was held in Peru for Latin America in fall 2011 to this end.

- **PR advice to the Forest Europe Liaison Unit Oslo upon request**

The Forest Europe Liaison Unit Oslo consulted the FCN when setting up its communication strategy and participated regularly in FCN meetings. Upon request the FCN gave advice on how to present and disseminate the main results of the ‘State of Europe’s Forests Report 2011’, and helped developing the core communication messages for the Oslo FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference held in June 2011.

- **Building PR capacity in TC/EFC member countries through conducting workshops, sharing examples of best practice and holding topical meetings**

The annual FCN meeting 2011 was set up for broad participation and vivid information exchange and had a topical in-session workshop on Green Economy. A collection on Best Practices in Forest Communication is posted on the FCN web site.

7. Expected outputs over next period by mandate item

- **European forest communication strategy**

The Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe, launched at the Joint TC/EFC Session in October 2011, is meant to serve as information source and stimulus for various relevant European entities, in particular the European Union, the FOREST EUROPE Ministerial Conference, the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission. It also provides a reference point for institutions and organisations at country and local level to help putting their forest related communication activities into a European context.

The challenge is now how to encourage its implementation. The FCN meeting in June 2012 in Antalya will address this issue.

- **Gap analyses of existing opinion research and proposal for improving monitoring and regular analyses on public perception concerning forests, their management and related products**

At present the FCN as such lacks the resources for carrying out substantive work in this regard. However, the survey *'Shaping forest communication in the European Union: public perceptions of forests and forestry'* stimulated by the FCN and commissioned by the European Commission provides an excellent baseline on public perception as of 2009, at least for the EU region. It would be extremely useful, to update this rich source of information. Upon recommendation by the FCN the *EU Forest Communication Strategy* suggests undertaking a regular analyses of perceptions on forests, their management and related products, e. g. by integrating a set of respective questions into regular polls, such as the 'Eurobarometer'. FCN members will continue to recommend the respective follow up.

- **European Forest Pedagogics Concept based on best practice examples, common principles and quality standards for forest related environmental education**

The Sub-Group on Forest Pedagogics will present an up-date report on its activities and achievements at the next FN meeting in Antalya. Part of it will be an outline for a *Common European strategy on Forestpedagogics*.

- **Follow up to the European Forest Week 2008 (follow up media work; evaluation of achievements and lessons learned; improved concept for future activities)**

Building on the positive and encouraging experience with the European Forest Week 2008 the *Strategic Framework for Forest Communication in Europe* recommends to *'consider establishing a regular collaborative communication campaign throughout Europe with time wise and message wise concerted actions at all levels'*. The next joint meeting of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission, to be held in Finland in 2013, could provide the pivotal driver for such an undertaking.

- **Preparations for the International Year of Forests 2011 (raising awareness in the region; developing a strategic outline for concerted activities of local, regional and global relevance)**

The next FCN meeting in Antalya will review the International Year of Forests 2011, assess results achieved, experiences made and lessons learned and develop follow-up plans.

- **Contributions to the EU Forest Action Plan, in particular on forest related environmental education and on a European forest communication strategy**

The report of the FCN Sub Group on Forest Pedagogics, after finalised, will also be communicated to the EU Standing Forestry Committee.

In the context of the revision of the EU Forestry Strategy the FCN Leader was asked to provide input regarding the issue of forest communication and will together with other FCN members further promote this issue in the process.

- **PR advice to TC/EFC bureaux and joint secretariat and to other UNECE/FAO Teams of Specialists, including the Team of Specialists on Forest Products Markets and Marketing**

The FCN stays ready to further assist the joint secretariat and other ToS in this regard, within

ressources available.

As regards work with FAO on setting up networks for promoting forest communication in other world regions a next workshop is envisaged for the region of Africa in 2012.

- **PR advice to the Forest Europe Liaison Unit Oslo upon request**

The FOREST EUROPE Liaison Unit, now established in Madrid, will present and discuss its communication strategy at the FCN meeting in June 2011 in Antalya.

- **Building PR capacity in TC/EFC member countries through conducting workshops, sharing examples of best practice and holding topical meetings**

The annual FCN meetings will continue to be designed for broad participation and vivid information exchange, topical workshops should provide additional opportunities for deepening understanding on crucial issues and for sharing experiences and examples of best practice. All activities depend on the possibilities for holding meetings. Offers for future meetings have been extended already by Estonia and Germany.

8. Issues for the attention of the Secretariat and the Working Party

Continued support by the UNECE/FAO secretariat is crucial. Reporting and other administrative requirements for the FCN leaders and members must be kept to a minimum, so that the limited capacities available could focus on the substance matter.

9. Comments, lessons learned

Existence and activities of the network depend entirely on the willingness of organisations to allow the participation of their experts, to host meetings and to provide resources for supporting publishing of results and other expenses. Therefore FCN activities and results need to be highly relevant for these organisations. In addition TC and EFC members should be encouraged to support the work of the FCN.