

UNECE/FAO Timber Section

United Nations
Economic Commission for Europe



Food and Agriculture
Organization

Issue Number 16

www.unece.org/trade/timber

October-December 2007

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Comments and suggestions from the timber and forestry community are most welcome. Please write to us at: info.timber@unece.org

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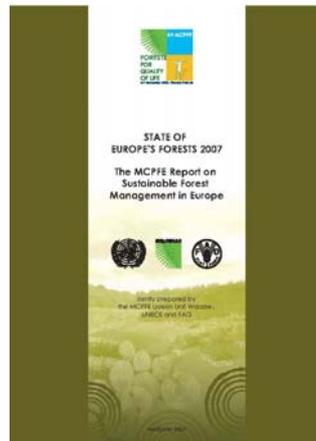
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United Nations

Warsaw ministerial conference

The fifth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE) took place from 5 to 7 November 2007 in Warsaw on the theme of Forests for Quality of Life. UNECE/FAO is a partner of MCPFE and made several major contributions to the Conference, including notably the report on [The State of Europe's Forests 2007](#) prepared jointly by UNECE, FAO and the MCPFE Liaison Unit Warsaw.



The report is the most complete and balanced assessment ever of the state of Europe's forests, and addresses all criteria of sustainable forest management, provides relevant information for policy makers and points to potentially unsustainable situations in some indicators in a few countries. It concludes "Overall, are European forests sustainably managed? The answer is a qualified "yes" with caveats in all three areas of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental".

The Executive Secretary of UNECE, Marek Belka, addressed the Conference. He pointed out the need to balance different positions and interests to find a sustainable solution, rather than imposing a "winner" in a contest of political strength. He continued "This approach is enabling the forest sector to move on from the sterile debates of the past to find practical and consensus based solutions. In this respect, I believe other sectors have much to learn from the forest sector. The next challenge will be to develop a rational and sustainable consensus on the role of wood in renewable energy supply, while respecting the other users of this unique material."

Links:

The summary of the Warsaw report can be downloaded in English, French, Russian and Polish from: <http://www.mcpfe.org/node/135>

More information about the Conference, including texts of the Declaration, resolutions and statements is available at <http://www.mcpfe.org>.

Bioenergy policies and targets: opportunity for, or threat to, the European forests?

UNECE/FAO Policy Forum on "opportunities and impacts of bioenergy policies and targets on the forest and other sectors"

On 10 October 2007, over 160 participants discussed "opportunities and impacts of bioenergy policies and targets on the forest and other sectors" at the UNECE/FAO Policy Forum. As background paper and main focus of the event the study on "wood resources availability and demand - implications of renewable energy policies" was presented and discussed, analyzing national and European policies and targets for renewable energy and assessing the requirements for wood.

Other presentations and discussions focused on developments in different parts of the UNECE region (North America, Europe, Russia), as well as the mobilization of wood resources and the impacts on and from other sectors (agriculture, energy, forest based industries, certification).

Among the main conclusions is that the role of wood in energy supply has to be defined according to potential wood supply, from domestic sources and imports; however, impacts on the environment and other wood users, such as the existing wood-based industries, also have to be considered when setting policy targets. Sound data and information is crucial for decision making, therefore empirical research on various sources and uses of wood (in particular on wood energy), which are currently not covered by statistics, is urgently needed. The [chairman's summary](#) of the Policy Forum can be found online.

In follow-up activities the Timber Section, in cooperation with partners, will work on improving information on wood energy. See workshop on "national wood balances" in March 2008, at www.unece.org/trade/timber/woodenergy.htm

Wood-based energy policies and new products create market opportunities: North American markets hit by United States housing crash

The UNECE Timber Committee (TC) conducted joint market discussions for the first time with the International Softwood Conference (ISC) on 8-9 October 2007. 300 delegates analyzed current markets developments for forest products in 2007 and forecast markets for 2008 in view of current policy issues. Major themes were: 1. softwood market developments, and 2. wood energy and wood mobilization. The full text of the Committee's approved market statement is at http://www.unece.org/press/pr2007/07tim_p06e.htm

The overarching market and policy developments are:

- Increasing wood energy is reshaping the entire UNECE forest sector
- Forest products markets are forecast to decline in North America, dramatically for sawn softwood, due to the crash in the United States housing market
- Positive market developments in Europe and Russia.

The joint TC/ISC market discussions also treated these topical issues:

- Public procurement policies
- Corporate social responsibility
- Russia forest sector developments
- Wood promotion
- Certified forest products
- CE marking and stress grading
- Markets for modified softwoods
- Economic developments
- Market sector developments

The next TC Market Discussions will be held in Rome on 20 October 2008 during the first Pan-European Forest Week, and will be held jointly with the European Forestry Commission and the MCPFE.

Staff Changes

Alex Korotkov retires on 31 December 2007. We have all benefited from his long and devoted service to the European and global forest resources community.



Richard Slaby returned to the Czech Republic. We are grateful to the Czech government for making his stay possible

Cynthia de Castro left the Timber Section in October, having been promoted to a position in the United Nations Center for Human Rights.



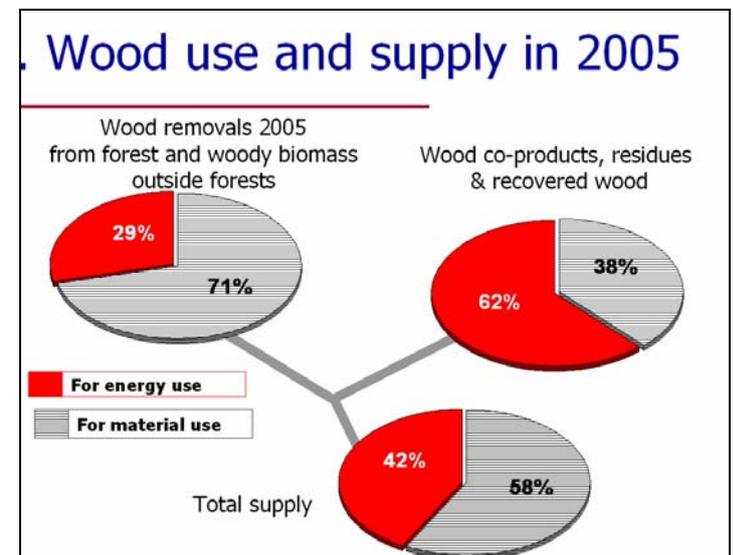
Friderike Beyer arrived in October for a five-month stay as our new Carlo Schmid programme fellow. She is working on wood availability along with a project on recreational use of forests.

Wood Energy Workshop, Belgrade, Serbia 26 & 27 November 2007

Organized jointly by UNECE/FAO Timber Section, UNDP (Belgrade) and the Faculty of Forestry of the State University of Belgrade, with generous financial support from the government of Austria, FAO and the Serbian Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, this key event attracted participants from government, municipalities, the state-owned forestry companies and the wood processing sector. Such was the level of interest, that the conference room, provided by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, was full to capacity, with almost 90 registered participants.

The meeting aimed to raise awareness of the potential of modern wood energy systems and how wood could offer Serbia a secure source of clean renewable energy, providing a boost to sustainable rural economic development in the process. Serbia already uses significant volumes of wood for energy though the actual volumes are not known. The lack of good quality data about wood energy was recognized as a major weakness that needed to be addressed. By adopting modern efficient heating systems, Serbia could produce between two and three times the amount of usable heat energy with the same volume of wood, together with a marked reduction in emissions.

In presenting his vision for wood energy in Serbia, Mr Aleksandar Vasiljevic, the Director of Forestry in the ministry, stressed that Serbia urgently needs to prepare a biomass action plan to examine current and future wood supply and demand as well as options for wood energy and mechanisms to support a major expansion of heat (and perhaps in time, electricity) from wood.



Source: Joint Wood Energy Enquiry, UNECE 2007

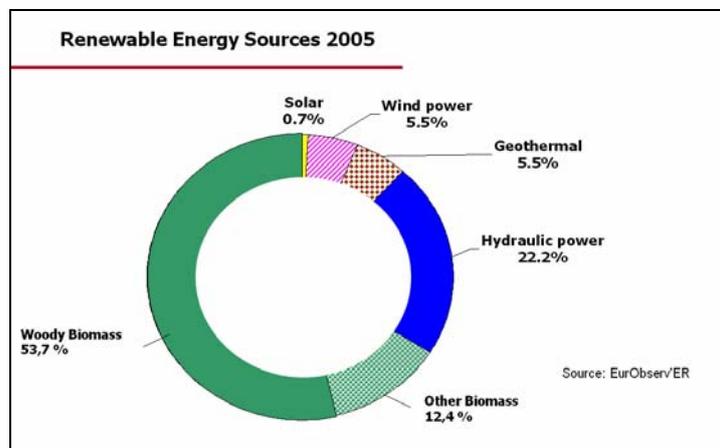
Regional Workshop on Promoting Sustainable Biofuels Production and Use in Central and Eastern Europe (<http://www.biofuels-dubrovnik.org/>)

This workshop, organized by UNIDO in association with partners in Croatia and Slovenia brought together representatives of the majority of countries from eastern Europe and the Caucasus to encourage a multi-stakeholder discussion. Focused primarily on liquid biofuels for transport, the meeting offered technical updates as well as looking at

possible regional strategies. UNECE/FAO Timber Section and FAO (SEUR) Budapest gave a presentation and invited those present to consider a broader perspective.

Douglas Clark and Volker Sasse suggested that, while liquid fuels for transport are a major consideration and may represent an opportunity for countries of central and eastern Europe, there needs to be a holistic view of overall energy needs and how best these may be met. UNECE/FAO believes that wood has a significant part to play as part of an overall strategy to promote and develop renewable sources of energy and welcomes any opportunity to play a part in helping to develop such national and regional strategies, in cooperation with other international organizations.

Wood is a readily available source of clean, renewable energy and can be converted very efficiently to heat, offering the opportunity to improve energy security and to increase rural economic development in most regions. Heat (and cooling) is a major use of energy throughout Europe, accounting for up to 50% of total primary energy use. Several countries already produce a significant share of heat energy from wood. The countries of central and eastern Europe have a natural advantage, being generally rich in wood resources and with a strong wood burning culture. In spite of this, wood is losing ground in many countries in the region - the opposite of the situation in western Europe where wood energy is strongly supported by policy and financial measures, in the drive to boost renewable energy and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.



Third Regional Wood Products Marketing Seminar, Sarajevo, 6 December 2007

Thanks to extra-budgetary funding, UNECE was able to organize a regional wood products marketing seminar in Sarajevo, the third such event that UNECE/FAO Timber Section has arranged in south east Europe. It follows successful events in Novi Sad, Serbia in April 2006 and Dubrovnik, Croatia in December 2006. The meeting attracted about 50 participants from throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Serbia and the Czech Republic. [Draft conclusions](#) and recommendations have been posted on the Timber Section web pages and will be finalized once comments have been received from the seminar participants.

[Upcoming Events](#)

Wood Balance Workshop, 31 March – 1 April 2008, Geneva

A workshop on “national wood balances - empirical data gathering on current wood supply and demand” will be organized by UNECE/FAO Timber Section, the University of Hamburg and others to:

- Help improve information on current wood supply and demand in UNECE member countries, in particular focusing on wood energy,
- Disseminate best practices in establishing national wood balances, a tool to assess and validate actual sources and uses of wood,
- Outline a framework for empirical research in countries in the UNECE region to improve data on wood sources and uses (focusing on wood energy)
- Present updated study “wood availability and demand - implications of renewable energy policies”.

Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, 2 – 3 April 2008, Geneva

The Working Party guides the activities of work areas on Marketing and Statistics, Forest Resources Assessment and Forest Sector Outlook Studies, and, will also cover:

- In-session seminar on potential wood supply
- Role of the Working Party for the Strategic Review
- Follow-up to Wood Balance Workshop
- Lessons learned from “State of Europe’s Forests”

Wood Energy

The work on wood energy and implications of the increased demand proceeds intensively. A special site has full information

(<http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/woodenergy.htm>).

Recent highlights are:

- Policy forum on “Bioenergy Policies and Targets: Impacts on the Forest and Other Sectors”, as well as the energy dimension of the TC Market Discussions
- Wood energy workshops for Balkan region
- Ongoing work on
 - wood balance and renewable energy targets
 - potential wood supply in Europe
- Planning for a workshop on creating national wood balances to be held in March 2008
- Kit Prins participated in a [panel](#) of the Committee on Sustainable Energy on “Biofuels - a reality check”
- Formation of an informal Interdivisional Group on Biomass Energy. The goal is to find synergies and share experience and knowledge with participants from Energy, Transport, and Environment Divisions of UNECE and the project on “Capacity Building to Improve Trade Finance and Investment Prospects for the Russian Timber Sector” which aims to improve sustainable use of biomass.

Strategic Review and Plan; TC/EFC Special Session 28-30 April 2008, Geneva

The Strategic Review has been launched: an assessment of the UNECE/FAO integrated programme of work on timber and forestry, covering all aspects: broad direction and objectives, mandates of the UNECE Timber Committee and the FAO European Forestry Commission and subsidiary bodies, structure and content of programme, resources, methods, partnerships, and outputs. The TC and the EFC have agreed to hold the third Strategic Review in 2007-2008. Previous reviews were held in 2001 and 2004.

Questionnaires have been sent to governments, the leaders of the Teams of Specialists and the Joint UNECE/FAO/ILO Expert Network on Implementing SFM and to stakeholders, inviting them to assess and evaluate the different programme elements and to express ideas for possible future direction and cooperation. Through the input received from these stakeholders, along with the assessment of selected data and self-evaluations, the achievements of the UNECE/FAO programme of the past four years are being reviewed and a programme and strategic plan up to 2013 proposed. The main occasion to agree on the Strategic Plan for the period 2008-2013 will be the Special Session of the Timber Committee and FAO European Forestry Commission, 28-30 April 2008 in Geneva. The Strategic Plan will then be formally launched during the Pan-European Forest Week in Rome (20 - 24 October 2008).

On the [Strategic Review webpage](#), all inputs into the Strategic Review are made available:

Pan-European Forest Week, 20-24 October 2008

Working together for sustainable forest management in Europe

The Pan European Forest Week is being organised in October 2008, under the joint auspices of UNECE, FAO, MCPFE and the European Commission, in close collaboration with the European Union Presidency at the time of the event, France.

The objectives are to:

- increase the visibility of the forest-based sector and raise awareness about its important contribution to the protection of the environment and the development of economy and society in Europe;
- engage other sectors in a participatory dialogue on forest-related issues of cross-sectoral nature;
- provide an umbrella and framework for a series of events and for different European actors, including the public and private sector as well as civil society.

The week will include the following:

- A high profile event to influence policy makers outside the sector, probably in Brussels
- A policy forum focusing on forests and climate change and forests and water
- "Working together for European forests": a joint presentation of priorities, actions and cooperation by the main partners and others, including preparation of consistent regional contribution to global processes.
- Business meetings of interested partners, such as the UNECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Water Courses and International Lakes.
- Multi stakeholder dialogues
- Parallel events on nationally relevant forestry issues in various European countries, including the Russian Federation
 - TC and EFC Market Discussions
 - Meetings and events by specialised or regional groups or on specific topics.

The regional events will take place at FAO HQ in Rome, with the exception of the high level event which may have more impact on policy makers from other sectors if held in Brussels. Countries will be invited to prepare national

events, in parallel to the regional event in Brussels and Rome

UNECE/FAO is participating in the Organising Committee, alongside FAO Rome, MCPFE (Liaison Unit Oslo), the European Commission, France, which will hold the EU presidency at the time and the UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network.

Recently Released Publications and Data

Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2006-2007 (English)

Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2005-2006 (French)

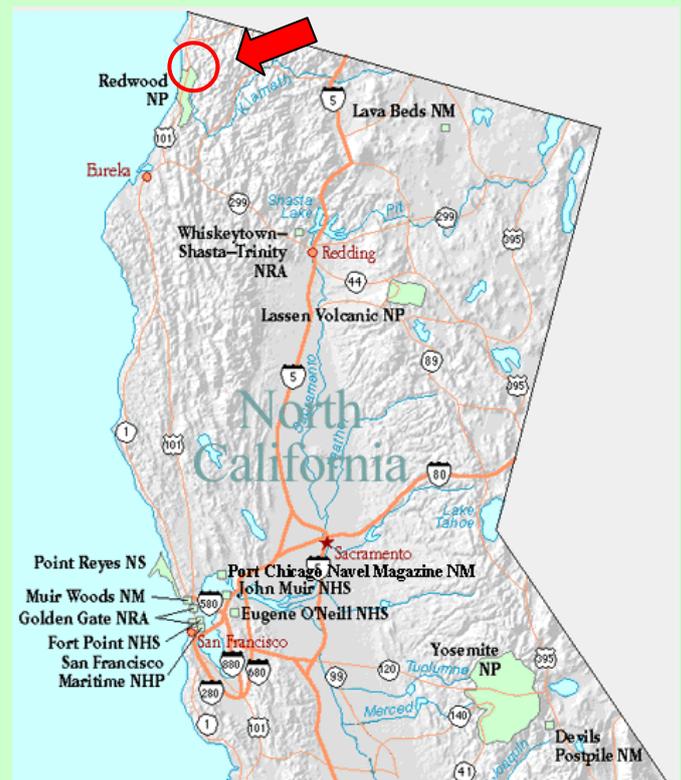
International Forest Fire News, No. 32

Forest products statistical data for the year 2006 are at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/mis/fps.htm>

Please note these are available via our website at <http://www.unece.org/trade/timber/tc-publ.htm>. If you wish to have a printed copy please contact info.timber@unece.org

Did You Know...

- that the most diverse coniferous forests in the world are located in a small, remote and rugged region in Northwestern California, where more than 35 species of native coniferous trees are found! These include the coastal redwood and Douglas fir, for which the region is famous, but also seven species of true firs, three species of spruce, eight species of pine, two species of hemlocks, and a wide variety of pacific "cedars", "cypresses", "junipers" and yew.



Source: USDA Forest Service