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JULY - SEPTEMBER 2010



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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In this issue: Editorial Paola Deda - FAO European Forestry Commission and the UNECE Timber Committee - October 2010 Joint UNECE/SWST Timber Committee - Innovations in Wood Products (SWST) - European Forest Types - Outcome of the Workshops – Forthcoming meetings



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Dear reader,

We've finally come up with a new name for our newsletter. You may ask, "Why a new name?" Well, we wanted a name that would reflect the new format, which includes feature articles from many of our partners, all "united" by a common interest. We also wanted to make sure we could reflect in the news we share with our community that we're at a key moment for forests in Europe, and the UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section is ready to respond to the emerging needs and challenges.

The main message that we'd like to send to the forest community in Europe and North America is the need for unity. Many processes, organizations and institutions are working to make forestry and forest products in the region more and more sustainable. But all of these need to work in greater harmony and with more synergy. They need to join forces on an issue that is critical for the environmental, economic and social health of our countries. UNited forests invites all of these to join their voices and contribute to this newsletter.

We also wanted to stress our identity, that of a joint UNECE and FAO Section with a joint programme of work. Over the years, we've learned the **importance of joining forces**, cooperating, avoiding overlap and identifying key issues together. In our Section, we've done this under the banner of the United Nations: thus the capital UN in the new title. Our values and our objectives in servicing member States are fully in line with the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to achieve sustainable development and greener economies.

We look forward to hearing from you if you'd like to share with the **UNited forests** community information about your work or events, campaigns or initiatives you are organizing.

Paola Deda

Chief, UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section



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FAO EUROPEAN FORESTRY COMMISSION AND THE UNECE TIMBER COMMITTEE

During these last weeks many of you have been asking me interesting questions about UNECE and FAO processes and related bodies. As the question on mandates/roles came up a few times, as well as the nature and scope of the bodies and the possibility of civil society participating, I thought to provide you this short message to clarify a number of points.

Role and mandate of the European Forestry Commission and the Timber Committee

The European Forestry Commission (EFC) is one of the FAO's six regional forestry commissions, established "to provide a policy and technical forum for countries to discuss and address forest issues on a regional basis." As with the other forestry commissions established under Committee on Forestry (COFO), the EFC considers "both policy and technical issues".

To give you an example of the issues covered, the EFC at its last session discussed the implications of the Copenhagen outcome for European forestry, adaptation of European forests to climate change, wood energy for Europe, raising the profiles of forests, and forests and water.

The **UNECE Timber Committee** focuses on forest product markets and forest economics. Each of UNECE's "sectoral" committees has the following official functions:

- policy dialogue
- negotiation of international legal instruments
- development of regulations and norms
- exchange and application of best practices as well as economic and technical expertise
- technical cooperation for countries with economies in transition.

Depending on the nature of the work in the Committee, one or more tasks have been developed or are currently the focus of their activities. The above mandates have all been

agreed upon by FAO or UNECE member States. Again, to give you an example of topics covered, this year's Timber Committee session focused on innovative wood products, and covered solid and engineered wood products, and ecological construction. As well as the traditional market sectors, the session also covered new sectors such as wood energy, carbon markets and certified forest products markets.

A frequently asked question is whether this Committee or the EFC are "policy" bodies or not. In general, many of the outcomes or products are of a policy nature, in particular in the EFC. The discussions held at the last session of the EFC were more of a policy nature than a technical one. However, their functions will always depend on the use that member States want to make of those bodies. Indeed, as for any other UN bodies, it is up to the member States to decide mandates, roles, directions and focus.

The other bodies under the Committee and the EFC are not policy but technical ones and "feed" the discussions of policy forums above or elsewhere. The Committee and the EFC have technical bodies or groups such as the Working Party on Forest Economic and Statistics, and Teams of Specialists covering different forest-related issues. You can find more information on them at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=145>. Please note that the EFC at its most recent session also decided to include in the joint UNECE/FAO work programme two further bodies, namely Silva Mediterranea and the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds. How to go about this integration is a topic that will be discussed at the next session of the Timber Committee.

The EFC and the Committee have a joint work programme on "Timber and Forestry", whose main objective is "to strengthen the forest sector and its contribution to sustainable development throughout the UNECE region".

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The programme covers five work areas:

1. **Markets and Statistics**
2. **Forest Resources Assessment**
3. **Forest Sector Outlook**
4. **Social and Cultural Issues**
5. **Policy and Cross-sectoral Issues**

The issues addressed and areas of focus are decided by countries in the EFC or TC sessions or by the joint bureaux, who meet frequently. The bureaux comprise the EFC Bureau (currently chaired by Sweden and also including Portugal, Russia and Turkey) and the Timber Committee bureau (currently chaired by Serbia and also including Germany, United States, Italy –as chair of the Working Part on Forest Economics and Statistics). They met after the Timber Committee session on 15 October.

UNECE/FAO section: composition, budget and government secondments

The section is a joint office of UNECE and FAO, with staff members from both organizations. It hosts professionals with a variety of international backgrounds, including foresters, economists, political and environmental scientists. The core group is composed of regular UN (ECE and FAO) staff, but secondments to work at the Section are possible, either via the Junior Professional

Programme or through secondments of government officials. The staff also includes consultants and interns. Consultants are usually selected to carry out specific projects/assignments. Persons interested in internships with us can apply via the UNECE website.

Secondments of government officials are arranged by FAO. The joint UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section has had several government officials from different countries who were seconded to us for a number of years. If you are interested in learning more about these programmes, I would be delighted to give you the information you need.

The UNECE regular staff are paid through the United Nations Secretariat general budget (regional commissions are part of the Secretariat). FAO staff are paid out of the FAO's regular budget.

Consultants, as well as extrabudgetary professional staff, are paid from extrabudgetary funds, usually from donor countries. The United Nations can also receive contributions from the private sector, provided this is done within the rules, to avoid conflict of interest.

There are no vacancies for regular staff right now, but we would be happy to accept seconded staff. We hire extrabudgetary staff when the need arises, provided funds are available.

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Photo: The bureaux after the Timber Committee session on 15 October.

The bureaux comprise the European Forestry Commission Bureau (currently chaired by Sweden and also including Portugal, Russia and Turkey) and the Timber Committee Bureau (currently chaired by Serbia and also including Germany, United States, Italy –as chair of the Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics).

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Participation of civil society
Some of you were asking me how the private sector and NGOs could take a greater part in our work. Well, under its various committees UNECE has several so-called “advisory groups”.

These aren't formal structures, and don't have to follow the strict rules that apply to formal bodies. They consist of civil-society representatives, who organize themselves by electing a chair and vice-chairs, and identify issues that need to be brought to the attention of the respective Committee. The chair addresses the Committee by reporting about the group's activities, recommendations and requests, as well as by participating actively in the meeting of the Committee or Working Party. The chair attends the bureau meetings.

Let's take a practical example. The UNECE Housing and Land Management Committee and the Working Party on Land Administration has two advisory groups, one called HUMAN (the Housing and Urban Management Advisory Network) and the other one REM, Real Estate Market Advisory Group. Following the crisis in 2008, REM was very prompt to discuss the risks and effects of the housing bubble, and within the Committee the main challenges to be addressed. The group developed guidelines for a sound real estate market, which are now used by member States.

A similar arrangement should certainly be possible within the Timber Committee as well, or for joint UNECE/FAO bodies.

I hope you have found the information helpful. Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions: paola.deda@unece.org

Thanks to all for the support you are giving us!

Innovative Wood Products are the Future



**TIMBER COMMITTEE (TC) MEETS WITH SOCIETY OF WOOD SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SWST)
GENEVA, 11-14 OCTOBER 2010**

For the first time the TC met with the SWST and conducted joint Market Discussions and a Policy Forum. The partnership brought a new aspect to the traditional TC by adding speakers and presenters of posters from the research community. 300 delegates, many from outside the UNECE region, contributed to the Market Discussions, which had a theme “Forest products markets rebound in the UNECE region: Innovative wood products lead the way.” The spirit was optimistic as the forecasts for 2010 and 2011 are positive. The outcomes were the annual TC Market Statement and its press release, country market statements and forecasts.

<http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=302>

Every year the Timber Committee collects forecasts for the current and next year. These are unofficial estimates put forward by government officials cooperating with industry sources in their countries. They cover production and trade for more than 30 products in m³ or metric tonnes.

This year's forecasts (for 2010 and 2011) have been collected and were presented at the Timber Committee during the Market Discussions.

Now published and available at: <http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=42>

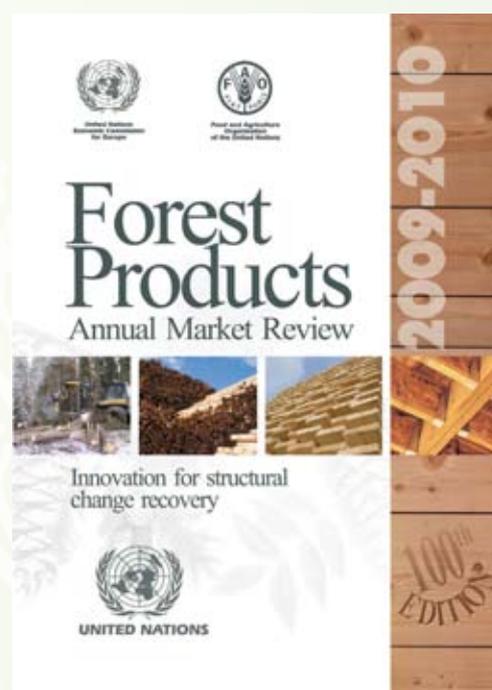
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Forest Products Annual Market Review

Innovation is the headline for the Forest Products Annual Market Review, 2010-2011. The review was one of the basis for the TC Market Discussions. Consumption of wood and paper products fell sharply in 2009 by 12%, the greatest percentage recorded as the global economic and financial crisis continued; production of industrial roundwood for manufacturing those products hit a record low. Wood energy markets did not succumb to the downturn, as government and industry policies drove demand throughout the UNECE region for renewable energy. Competition exists for wood raw materials across all sectors, with increased costs for manufacturers that benefit forest owners.

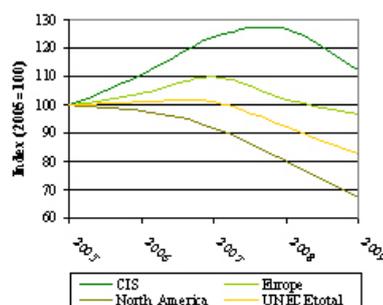
The UNECE region forest sector is experiencing a structural change, for which the wood-based industries are innovating and adapting for short-term survival and long-term growth. Four reasons behind the structural change include:

- The downturn** in demand that is forcing rationalization of production capacity;
- Climate change** related policies and the rapid increase in production, consumption and trade of wood energy;
- Globalization** of forest products markets including China's rise as a major provider of forest products in the global markets;
- International control** of origins of wood to ensure sustainable and legal production.



GRAPH 12.1

Consumption of forest products in the UNECE region, 2005-2009



Note: Based on roundwood equivalent for sawwood, panels and paper and paperboard.

Source: UNECE/FAO TIMBER database, 2010.

The Review is available on the TC website, or can be ordered in print via info.timber@unece.org

Innovations in Wood Products

Susan Anagnost

President

Society of Wood Science and Technology



Today it appears that the uses of wood have expanded in every direction imaginable. The premier renewable resource, trees sequester carbon, and when harvested and fashioned into structures and furnishings, wood stores that carbon in products whose service lives can extend hundreds of years. Life cycle analysis has shown that constructing buildings with wood expends less energy than similar steel and concrete constructions. Harvesting trees also contributes to a healthier climate by minimizing CO₂ emissions from wood decomposition on forest floors or wildfire.

From the engineering of wood into large beams of laminated veneer lumber (LVL), to nano-size crystals of cellulose, and every size and shape in between, the uses of wood and wood-based materials are extending into new applications and expanding current markets. Beams fashioned from laminated veneer lumber provide designers with materials at sizes and with properties that exceed those of solid lumber. An example is the Richmond Olympic Oval with its curved glued laminated beams, and innovative structural panels. At the opposite end of the spectrum, cellulose nanocrystals are studied for use in a myriad of applications, from composite materials, reinforced plastics to pharmaceuticals.

The material properties of wood allow primary manufacturing (machining) of wood into shapes and sizes for a variety of applications; solid lumber (wood frame buildings, utility structures, furniture), veneer (plywood, LVL, furniture, glulam), chips or strands (oriented strand board), flakes (flakeboard), particles (particleboard), particles or sawdust (pellets, wood-plastic composites).

Engineering design research on wood welding, and structural designs based on origami are changing the way we think about wood construction. High temperature treatments of wood, known commercially as thermal wood, is a chemical free process that increases dimensional stability, darkens color, and may increase wood durability.

The “green revolution” has resulted in new products and research areas, such as formaldehyde-free adhesives, and research on adhesives from lignin, the use of pellets for wood stoves and use of non-traditional sources such as low density tropical timbers for laminates. The use of reclaimed lumber from deconstruction has the potential to provide an alternative to landfill deposition and earn points on building rating systems. The explosion of the



use of bamboo for furniture and flooring is part of this green revolution. Although not a “wood” in the botanical sense, it is the xylem (wood tissue) in bamboo which gives us its useful properties. Bamboo is a grass and its short rotation (harvest every 3-6 years) provides value as a rapidly renewable resource. Sustainable biofuels, including wood pellets, also maximize and extend the use of wood and provide solutions to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

Innovative Wood Products are the Future was the theme of the 2010 Annual Convention of the Society of Wood Science and Technology, Oct 11-15 in Geneva, Switzerland, co-hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Timber Committee. The titles of the presentations and posters reflect current innovative research in wood products that support the green building movement: light weight panels for green buildings, formaldehyde-free composite products, wood adhesives made from tannins, soy adhesives for plywood and particleboard, wood extractives as a natural product for protection against microbial decay, cellulose nanofiber-filled thermoplastic composites, the bamboo industry in Ghana, the use of sugar cane and eucalyptus for MDF panels. Health concerns and indoor environmental quality are addressed with studies of formaldehyde-free composite products, VOC analysis of wood composites, and health benefits of wood interiors. Recent changes in building codes have allowed multistory timber-frame construction which has produced such innovative structures as Stadthaus, which at nine stories high is the tallest timber residential building in the world. In 2009 a global collaboration tested a seven-story wood frame building for earthquake resistance with phenomenal success.

This sustainable and renewable resource continues to be redesigned and reengineered into materials that support our newly emerging green world.

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The new European forest types are organised according to a hierarchical classification system structured into 14 first level classes (categories) and 75 second level classes (types). Past newsletters presented the first eleven categories (1. Boreal forests, 2. Hemiboreal forest and nemoral coniferous and mixed broadleaved-coniferous forest, 3. Alpine coniferous forest, 4. Acidophilous oak and oak birch forest, 5. Mesophytic deciduous forest, 6. Beech forest, 7. Mountainous beech forest and 8. Thermophilous deciduous forest, 9. Broadleaved evergreen forest, 10. Coniferous forest of the Mediterranean, Anatolian and Macaronesian regions, 11. Mire and swamp forests). Below is a description of the last three categories:

12. Floodplain forest

The riparian or alluvial hydrological regime (high water table subject to occasional flooding) determines the appearance of forests under this category, generally close to main European river channels. Floodplain forest species include *Alnus*, *Betula*, *Populus*, *Salix*, *Fraxinus*, *Ulmus*. In the Mediterranean and Macaronesian regions local species are also found (e.g. *Fraxinus angustifolia*, *Nerium Oleander*, *Platanus orientalis*, *Tamarix*). Forest composition and structure largely depends on the frequency of flooding. Anthropogenic activities like the river damming and canalisation, drainage of riparian areas to provide agricultural land have brought significant changes in the area of floodplain forest during the last century. The conservation and restoration of these riparian forests is the main focus of forest management today. The following types are identified under this category: Riparian forest, Fluvial forest, Mediterranean and Macaronesian riparian forest.



13. Non-riverine alder, birch, or aspen forest

The category includes a number of non-riparian, non-marshy often pioneer forest formations dominated by *Alnus*, *Betula* or *Populus*. These communities are related to specific ecological conditions (mountain birch formations) or occur as pioneer stages of the forest succession and/or are related to traditional land use, e.g. grazing. The following types are identified under this category: Alder forest, Italian alder forest, Birch forest, and Aspen forest.



14. Introduced tree species forest

Forest dominated by introduced tree species that occur on a wide range of site conditions which otherwise would develop forests of other categories. A tree species can be regarded as introduced if it does not occur naturally within its borders, i.e. its natural range falls outside the area of native occurrence of the species in Europe, for instance, *Eucalyptus* spp., *Robinia pseudoacacia*, *Acacia dealbata*, *Ailanthus altissima*, *Prunus serotina*, *Quercus rubra*, *Fraxinus alba*, *Picea sitkensis*, *Pinus contorta*, *Pinus banksiana*, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*, *Tsuga heterophylla*). It also includes tree species native to Europe, but not naturally occurring within the borders of individual Forest Europe member states. Finally, it includes tree species native only in some regions of an individual Forest Europe country, occurring outside of their region of natural occurrence.



Within the framework of the MCPFE Work Programme the UNECE/FAO is leading the work on refinement of European forest types, with a view of their future application in the pan-European reporting on forests.

More information can be found in the EEA Technical report No 9/2006 at: http://reports.eea.europa.eu/technical_report_2006_9/en

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FOREST PRODUCTS MARKETING TEAM MEETS IN JAPAN, REPUBLIC OF KOREA AND GENEVA

The UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Forest Products Marketing met twice in August in conjunction with The Global Network for Forest Science Cooperation (IUFRO) in Hokkaido, Japan and Seoul, Republic of Korea. These meetings enabled strengthened collaboration with the IUFRO Forest Products Marketing and Business Management Group. The two groups established a joint website, expanding on the Team's "Current Issues Website" (www.UneceFaolufro.lsu.edu). Dr. Richard Vlosky, Director and Professor of Forest Products Marketing at the Louisiana Forest Products Development Center, part of the Louisiana State University Agricultural Center in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Team Leader of the ToSFPM stressed how this collaborative effort will provide timely information on major issues that impact global forest sectors. Vlosky noted that the formalized collaboration of the two most recognized and important forest products marketing groups in the world will provide value to a multitude of stakeholders. The two groups have interacted informally over the past five years including developing a global list of forest products marketing experts which is posted on both ToSFPM and IUFRO websites. Dr. Eric Hansen, Professor at Oregon State University, newly elected Leader of the IUFRO (FPMBD) Research Group also noted that this collaboration has the potential provide unique and innovative content and services for forest products marketing and business development stakeholders. The Team met as usual in conjunction with the TC Market Discussions in Geneva in October. It was an expanded meeting with participants from the SWST too. The team updated the mandate which is renewed until 2013.



UNECE/FAO TEAM OF SPECIALISTS ON FOREST POLICY IN EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

ISTANBUL, 20 – 22 SEPTEMBER 2010

Forest policy experts from national institutions, including 13 from Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as from international organizations and universities, met in Istanbul on 20-22 September 2010. Representatives from the region exchanged their experience on challenges and "success stories" for forest policy formulation and implementation. Participants identified crucial topics to be addressed, such as land ownership and tenure, institutional reform, illegal activities and law enforcement, and climate change mitigation and adaptation. They discussed the possibility of matching experience between countries facing similar situations, with the aim of developing regional or bilateral cooperation on these specific issues. Participants were also informed of policy developments and tools relevant to Eastern European and Central Asian countries, such as the Forest Law Enforcement and Governance initiative led by the World Bank and funding options for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

More information are available at:

<http://timber.unece.org/index.php?id=182>

<http://web.ogm.gov.tr/diger/teamofspecialistsmeeting>

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UNECE/FAO TIMBER STAFF

Elisa Asmelash obtained her B.A. in Economics at the Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca with a thesis on "Political and Economic Strategies of the European Union on Renewable and Sustainable Energy". She did a further two years of M.A. in Economics and from February to June 2010 attended the Université de Genève as an Erasmus student. In September 2010 she has joined the **Forestry and Timber Section** as an intern and helped organize the annual session of the Timber Committee as well as the Exhibition of Innovative Wood Products. In the coming months Elisa will also be involved in work on wood energy.*****



FORTHCOMING MEETINGS 2010-2011

14-15 December 2010, Geneva, Forest Europe – Expert Level Meeting

16-17 December 2010, Geneva, Team of Specialists on Monitoring SFM – SeEF2011

4-20 January 2011, Geneva, Palais des Nations, Exhibition - 2011

International Year of the Forests

21-25 March 2011, Rome/Geneva, Working Party on Forest Economics and Statistics, including Work shop and Zero Meeting for proposed Working Party, 25 March, Rome/Geneva, Bureaux meeting

4-6 July 2011, Geneva, Workshop on Payments of Ecosystem Services (PES)

17-21 October 2011, Antalya, Turkey, Joint FAO European Forestry Commission and UN ECE Timber Committee.



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