www.unece.org/energy-debate-2012.html

Overview

The objective of the policy debate is to provide policymakers in the ECE region with a set of views from a wide group of involved sectors to address the economic, social and environmental aspects of the growing demand for and use of wood for energy.

The views expressed at the meeting are now summarized in the policy brief.

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Summary

"A dialogue on wood energy"

Wood is the leading source of renewable energy in the UNECE region, accounting for almost half of the total renewable energy supply. Strong political support has seen wood energy markets grow rapidly despite the global economic recession.

Yet, what are the impacts of the growing use of wood for energy? Is wood energy good or bad?

A distinguished group of speakers discussed this issue during the "UNECE/FAO Policy Debate on Wood Energy", held on 8 May 2012 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. The discussions, led by Tom Miles, Chief Correspondent for Thomson Reuters News, touched upon the economic, environmental and social aspects of the increasing demand of wood for energy purposes.

The Policy Debate provided an open and comprehensive dialogue among a wide and varied group of stakeholders. Discussions mainly revolved around the sustainability of the increasing use of wood for energy purposes and the resulting competition with material uses of wood, namely for wood products.

The benefits of using wood as a source of energy were highlighted by speakers representing the wood industry, utility companies and forest owners and entrepreneurs. Besides contributing to energy security by diversifying energy resources and reducing dependence on fuel imports, wood energy stimulates social and economic development by increasing the profitability of forestry and creating investment and job opportunities, especially in rural areas. However, these actors are all well aware that economic and ecological responsibilities should not be neglected; the use of wood for energy purposes should not harm the demand and supply for industrial use or damage the vitality of forests. They all agreed that the production and consumption of woody biomass for energy purposes must be accompanied by the development of certification schemes and criteria to meet sustainability requirements while achieving renewable energy and biological diversity targets.

Negative environmental and social aspects of wood mobilisation were on the other hand emphasised by representatives of environmental NGOs. Besides contributing to particulate matter emissions, wood burning and biomass extraction could lead to drastic ecological impacts on forest health and biodiversity. Energy efficiency should have a high-level priority, including the clean and efficient consumption of wood energy, which could mean focusing on local use of industrial leftovers rather than relying directly on forests for energy. Thus, they called for continued investment in research and development of all non-wood renewable energies such as wind and solar power.

A **policy brief** summarizing the views and recommendations of the various stakeholders that participated in the debate is available here.

The UNECE/FAO Forestry and Timber Section promotes dialogue and cooperation between all the stakeholders on the wood energy issue. Forestry and energy statistics are fundamental for policy formulation at both national and international level. In this regard, the Section is organising a capacity building workshop aiming at improving energy statistics in the UNECE region. The workshop will be held in Paris from 11 to 13 June 2012 and is supported by the French Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Sustainable Development.

For any additional comments or questions kindly contact:

David Ellul

Documents

Meeting announcement

Meeting Agenda

Presentations

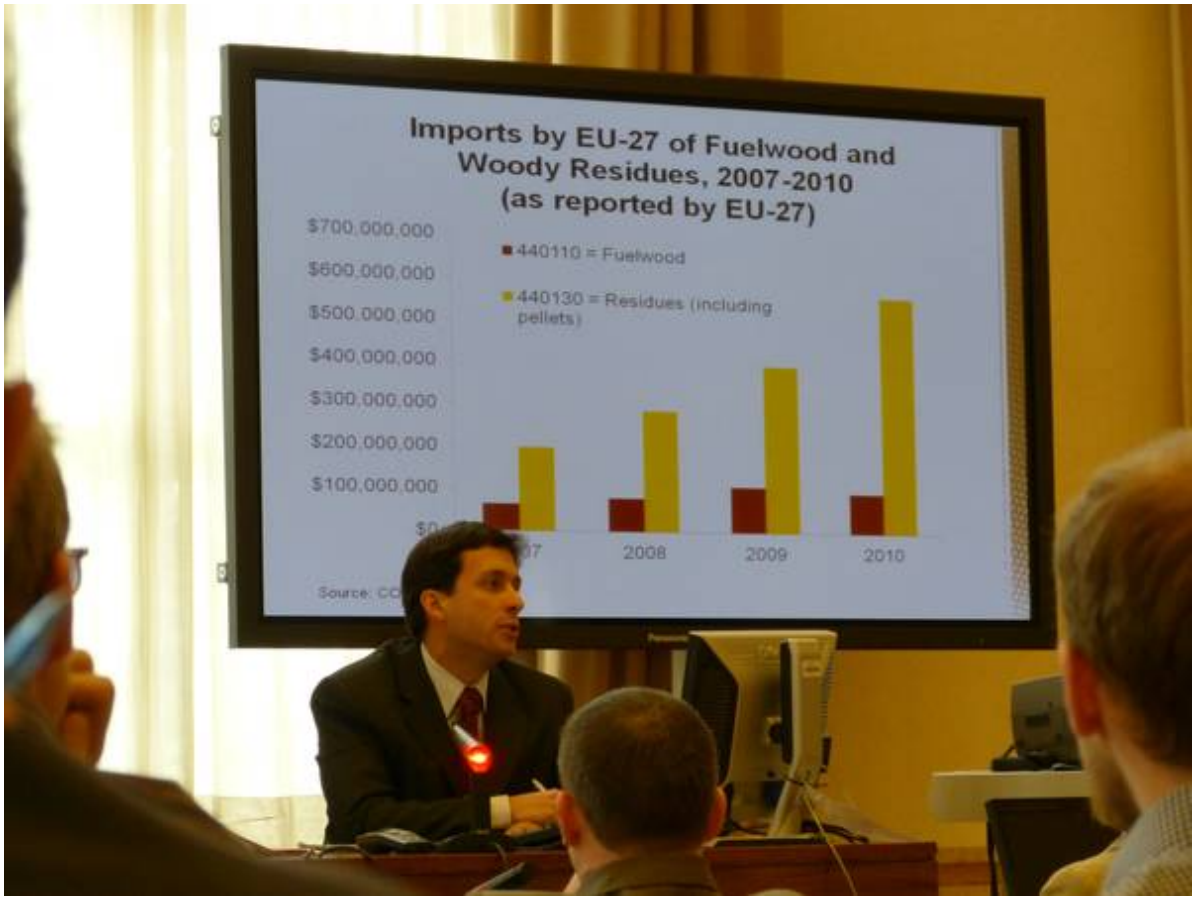
Title	By	PDF
Status and Trends in Wood Energy	Francisco Aguilar, Associate Professor, University of Missouri	PDF
European Forest Sector Outlook Study II-the Wood Energy Scenario	David Ellul, Associate Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE/FAO Forestry & Timber Section	PDF
Pellets Industry	Christian Rakos, Executive Director, proPellets Austria	PDF
Panels Industry	Ladislaus Döry, President, European Panels Federation	PDF
Private Forest Owners	Anssi Kainulainen, Expert, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners (Finland)	PDF
Pulp and Paper Industry	Bernard de Galembert, Director Forest, Research and Social Affairs, Confederation of European Paper Industries	PDF
Utility Companies	Yves Ryckmans, Chief Technology Officer Biomass, GDF-Suez Group	PDF
Environmental NGO	Nicolas Mainville, Forest Campaigner, Greenpeace Canada	PDF
Regional Government	Christiane Egger, Deputy Director, Upper Austrian Renewable Energy Agency	PDF
Energy Traders	Paul Groes, Senior Account Manager Derivatives, APX-ENDEX	
Air Pollution Secretariat	Krzysztof Olendrzynski, Environmental Affairs Officer, UNECE Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution Convention	PDF
Forest Entrepreneurs	Edgar Kastenholz, Secretary General, European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs	PDF
Speaker Biographies	PDF	

Registration and Information for delegates

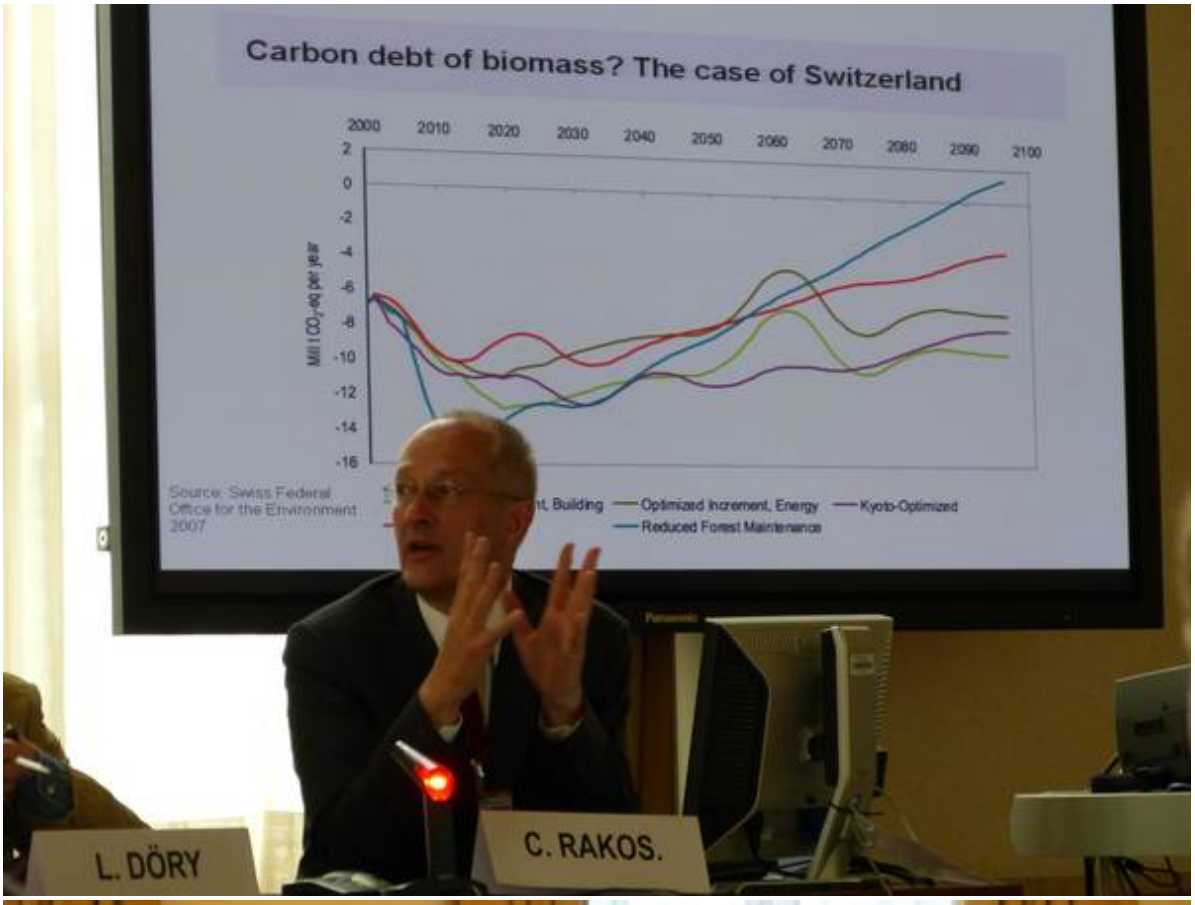
Click here to access delegate registration page

For information on getting to the Palais please click here

Photos


Imports by EU-27 of Fuelwood and Woody Residues, 2007-2010 (as reported by EU-27)
$700,000,000
$600,000,000
$500,000,000
$400,000,000
$300,000,000
$200,000,000
$100,000,000
440110 = Fuelwood
440130 = Residues (including pellets)
2008
2009
2010

Wood use for energy – a
benefit for the forest sector
society and the environmen
RYCKMANS
B. DE GALEMBERT
A. KAINULAINEN
L. DÖRY
C. RAKOS


Carbon debt of biomass? The case of Switzerland
2000
2010
2020
2030
2040
2050
2060
2070
2080
2090
2100
2
0
-2
-4
-6
-8
-10
-12
-14
-16
Mill t CO2-eq per year
Source: Swiss Federal Office for the Environment 2007
Optimized Increment, Energy
Kyoto-Optimized
Reduced Forest Maintenance
L. DÖRY
C. RAKOS.

I. HIGUERO
F. AGUILAR

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