

Danish report on illegal logging for the UNECE/FAO Workshop on Illegal Logging and Trade of Illegally-derived Forest Products in the UNECE Region

16-17 September 2004

Abstract

At national level forest crime is negligible in Denmark. Enforcement of the Forest Act takes place through a regional extension of the Danish Forest and Nature Agency, but only few violations are reported. Theft is a minor problem, probably without any consequences beyond some fuel wood, Christmas trees and greenery for primarily private use.

Import of illegally produced timber has been reported at different levels in particular from developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

In response Denmark has engaged in guidance of consumers, dialogue/co-operation with key timber producing countries, meetings/conferences on the issue, and a pro-active engagement in international and regional fora, in particular within the European Union, to further clarify the problem and develop/set-up measures.

1. Illegal logging

1.1. *Types of illegal logging*

In general, there are no indications of illegal activities being frequent within the Danish forest sector.

According to official statistics almost no violations of the Forest Act are reported. This may not entirely reflect the real situation. However, it is probably reflecting, that almost all orders from the forest authorities to forest owners and managers to halt violations are being complied with. Consequently, almost no violations are being reported to the police or made subject to further legal action. Furthermore, normally Forest Act violations would not be associated with illegal logging. Lack of replanting following (legal) logging, inappropriate forest management or establishment of buildings etc. would be more frequent violations.

It is not recorded to which extent theft occurs. However, theft aiming at commercial marketing of the stolen timber is not likely. The Danish forest sector is small and well organised. Marketing of stolen timber would be almost impossible and very risky. Some theft for personal, private use may

occur, such as theft of firewood, Christmas trees, greenery etc. Also some poaching, illegal fishing, driving and deposit of waste occur.

There are a few forests in Denmark, which are protected against logging activities. However, compliance is not a problem, and no illegal logging is reported.

It is not recorded whether false declaration of volumes etc. occurs. However, if such irregularities occur, it would not be associated with illegal logging, but rather with tax evasion.

Consequently, illegal logging or trade in illegally derived forest products are not likely events in Denmark.

1.2. What mechanisms are in place to monitor or estimate their importance?

Almost all Danish forest areas are subject to forest management at various levels. Owners and managers would notice irregularities like theft, illegal logging etc. and report this to the police. This information is not systematically recorded, but there have been no indications from owners, managers or their organisations that such events actually occur, except for incidental occurrences of theft for private use, which are occasionally reported in the local press.

Enforcement of the Danish Forest Act is the responsibility of the Danish Forest and Nature Agency, which is undertaking this commitment through its regional structure (State Forest Districts and Regional Centres as indicated below).



Figure 1. Overview of Danish State Forest district.

Only violations involving reporting to the police are recorded, and these are very rare. The latest was reported in 1999 and it is unlikely that it has anything to do with illegal logging. Normally violations are addressed through dialogue – in necessary orders – and subsequent rectification.

A new Danish Forest Act will enter into force on 1. October 2004. However, the enforcement will not be changed.

1.3. Volume of illegally logged wood

In terms of illegally logged wood aiming at the commercial timber market, this would be below 1% of all removals. Probably close to 0.

This is not recorded, but an estimate based on a general experience within the forest sector.

2. Trade in products of illegal logging.

2.1. Smuggling, false declaration or other trade related falsification

There are no indications that smuggling, false declaration or other trade related falsification are taking place in Denmark. There is no restriction to export of timber and illegal export of Danish timber would be insignificant, far below 5% of total exports, probably close to 0.

2.2. Control of import/export of timber

Control of import/export of timber is handled by the Danish customs control and there are generally no links to information on whether a given shipment contains illegal logged timber.

It is possible for the police to seize (in order to confiscate at a later stage) timber obtained through theft, fraud, bribery or similar criminal acts – or the proceeds from the sale of such timber – on the basis of a rogatory letter from the country of origin.

2.3. Volume exported and imported of illegally-sourced timber

Denmark is a net timber importing country and Danish companies are also trading in countries where illegal logging is reported to take place. There are no official overviews of which measures Danish companies are taking when operating on these markets but some are involved in what is called good suppliers projects which is programmes intended to secure that traded wood are both legally and sustainably produced.

There are no official statistics indicating the scale of the import of illegal wood to Denmark and it is not possible to give any figure that indicates the scale of the problem.

However, there are indications that illegally logged timber is imported to Denmark.

A WWF report from 2003, “The Russian-Danish trade in wood products and illegal logging in Russia” suggest that there is a risk that on average about 20% of the Russian wood products exported to Denmark are illegally harvested. This figure is based on WWF’s own investigations and can not be confirmed by the timber trading companies or official statistics.

Another WWF report from 2003, “The Features of illegal logging and related trade in the Baltic Sea region” are dealing with the features of illegal logging and the trade of wood products between the three Baltic countries, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania and the Nordic countries, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. The report suggest that most of the crime related to illegal logging in the Baltic countries

is related to tax evasion etc., which is not included in the definition used for the UNECE/FAO workshop.

3. Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Policies

3.1. Involvement in bilateral and multilateral initiatives on FLEGT

Denmark is active in FLEGT in a number of ways.

Denmark is participating active in the development of the EU FLEGT action plan and participated in the EU Commission missions to Malaysia and Indonesia and participated in the scoping meeting in Moscow this year on a Northern Eurasian FLEG process.

Denmark has furthermore contacted a number of our biggest supplier countries of timber products at ministerial level in order to establish collaboration in how to curb the problem with illegal logging. This has led to a closer collaboration with the Federal Republic of Russia on a Russian-Danish project on how to improve the ability to verify the legal origin of timber. An important idea behind this joint project is the active involvement of authorities, business and ENGOs in collaboration.

3.2. and 3.3. Official policies to eliminate illegal logging and related trade

It is the Danish policy to actively pursue the elimination of illegal logging and the trade of illegal timber. This policy is implemented at both bilateral and multilateral level with the active participation in the international dialog on forest management where illegal logging is high on the agenda, e.g. United Nations Forum on Forests, Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, Convention for Biological Diversity, FAO, Nordic Council, Baltic 21 etc.

This policy is also pursued within the framework of the EU with active support to the EU FLEGT process where Denmark is playing an active role and will continue to do so e.g. through an EU workshop on public procurement of timber with the focus on how to procure only legal timber to be held in collaboration with the Netherlands Presidency in Copenhagen in September 2004.

The Danish minister for Environment has developed guidelines for public procurement of tropical timber in collaboration with the industry and environmental NGOs, which can be found in English at: http://www.skovognatur.dk/udgivelser/2003/tropical/16022004_UK.pdf .

The Danish minister has furthermore taken initiative to contact a number of mayor timber exporting countries to offer assistance in the curbing of the trade in illegal logged timber as mentioned under 3.1.