

The Secretariat for International Forestry Issues

THE EUROPEAN FOREST POLICY PROCESSES

SIFI strengthens Sweden's commitment in international forestry issues

Portugal is the most important cork producer in the world. The country has been engaged in the Process Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe since 1990. Photo: João Pinho.

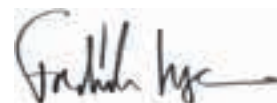
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EDITORIAL

EUROPEAN FOREST POLICY PROCESSES need to be discussed among a wider audience, such as that at the KSLA seminar on 30th March. These ongoing policy processes will influence forestry in Sweden and other countries, regardless of whether we take part or not! No fewer than four forest policy processes that call for our attention have been launched in Europe during the past five years – Forest Europe, the European Commission Green Paper, the revision of the EU Forest Strategy and most recently the International Negotiating Committee (INC) for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe.

The 7th issue of SIFI:s newsletter summarizes the presentations from the seminar on 30th March about the development on the European level. The

interconnection with the global level is added by Senior adviser Astrid Bergqvist and Former Deputy Director-General Ulf Svensson by placing the seminar in a historical context. I am very pleased with the outcome of our 30th March seminar that shed light on the driving forces and caught the essence of the challenges in different parts of Europe. The open minded discussions with some of our neighbouring countries in Europe (Portugal and Russia) were particularly valuable. Finally, I would like to thank the Swedish planning group as well as the Chair of the INC, Jan Heino, for valuable advice along the way.



Fredrik Ingemarson, editor

A summary of the seminar on forest policy processes in Europe

BJÖRN MERKEL, SWEDISH FOREST AGENCY/SIFI

In his introduction on global Mega trends, **Fredrik Ingemarson** (Programme Manager, SIFI) pointed out that the factors driving forest policy processes are interconnected at different levels, e.g. at global, regional and national levels.

Markus Holzer (Head of Unit, Bioenergy, Biomass, Forestry and Climatic Changes, DG AGRI) gave us an overview of the ongoing processes on forests within the EU and explained that the Commission will focus its forest related activities in the next 1½–2 years on:

1. New EU forest strategy
2. CAP and the Rural Development Programme
3. INC – LBA negotiations

A road map for a legally binding agreement

Jan Heino (Chair of Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee) gave a comprehensive presentation of the status of the ongoing Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) process on Forests in Europe, including a road map up to 2013. He pointed out that the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee



Panel, from left to right: Mikael Haglöf, interpreter, Sergey Rodin, Deputy Head, Forest Research Institute Russia (FSU VNIILM), Ingeborg Bromée, Deputy Director, Ministry of Rural Affairs, Sweden, Graça Rato, Adviser, Autoridade Florestal Nacional MAMAOT, Portugal, and Dr. Peter Edwards, Department of Forest Products and Markets, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.



Markus Holtzer of the European Commission discusses with Leif Strömquist, Sweden, and Romualdas Deltuvas, Lithuania.

(INC) for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe is an independent process.

Dr. Peter Edwards (Department of Forest Products and Markets, the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences) gave an overview of the different interests that are involved in European forest policy making of today. He showed that as different factors are driving the process in different countries or organizations these processes should also be covered, but he also showed that there are conflicting areas of interest.

Views from three countries

We also heard some views from Russia (**Sergey Rodin**, Deputy Head, Forest Research Institute FSU VNIILM), Portugal (**Graça Rato**, Adviser, Autoridade Florestal Nacional MAMAOT) and Sweden (**Ingeborg Bromée**, Deputy Director, Ministry of Rural Affairs) on the ongoing forest policy development. We learnt that there are similar points of view but also a number of differences.

For instance all three countries would like to strengthen and improve sustainable forest management in Europe. Another example is that Sweden and Portugal share the principle of subsidiarity but seem to have differing opinions on EU incentives for forest fire fighting. Trying to come to an agreement on these processes will be a challenge. Russia made it clear that they will continue to participate in the Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) process on Forests in Europe. Finally, the audience was made aware that climate change is already a reality and that desertification has now reached Europe. ○



The new *EU forest strategy*

Taking into account the far-reaching societal and political changes in the past 15 years, the 1998 EU Forestry Strategy needs to be updated to reflect current challenges and policy objectives.

MARKUS HOLZER, HEAD OF UNIT, BIOENERGY, BIOMASS, FORSTRY AND CLIMATIC CHANGES, DG AGRI

The new strategy should also underline the importance of EU forests as a resource for achieving the EU 2020 targets and for enhancing the viability and quality of life in rural areas. A new common strategy for EU-level cooperation on sustainable forest management will help to strengthen not only our internal co-ordination of forest-related policies but also our voice in the international context.

It is clear from the discussions that there is a broad agreement in favour of a holistic forest strategy covering the value chain and creating synergies with developments in other policy areas. In that sense, the Forest

Strategy could act as an umbrella, a vehicle for coordination and proactive development of new policies in forestry and related fields. Several Commission services are currently discussing the possibility of jointly presenting several different initiatives that could be organised under the aegis of the strategy, as part of a “forest package”.

The Commission’s work on the *New EU Forest Strategy*, addressed to Council and Parliament, is scheduled for the *first quarter of 2013*. Council and Parliament will then decide on how they should follow this up. ○

A new forest information system for the EU?

In 2010 the European Commission presented a ‘green paper’ on forest information and forest protection, arguing inter alia for a common forest information system for the EU.

GÖRAN STÅHL, PROF., SWEDISH UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

The paper was well received by the member states and as a result an ad-hoc workgroup on forest information was established by EU’s Standing Forestry Committee to clarify the information needs and what systems are already available.

The ad-hoc group delivered its report in March 2012. While the focus of EU-level forest information has long been forest health a major conclusion was that the information needs nowadays are much broader, not least due to the requirements stemming from the Climate Convention, the Biodiversity Convention, and EU’s bio-energy targets. The following areas were pointed out as important in the report:

- Forest resources
- Greenhouse gas emissions and removals
- Indicators of biodiversity
- Forest health
- Socio-economic indicators
- The protective function of forests

It is likely that a future system will build to a large degree on information from national forest inventories and it remains to be decided how a new system should be linked to the systems already in use by the FAO, the Forest Europe process, and Eurostat. ○

A roadmap for the Pan-European forest agreement

At the Forest Europe Ministerial Conference, held 14–16 June 2011 and hosted in Oslo by the Government of Norway the ministers decided to take further international action for drawing up an agreement on forests in Europe and established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

JAN HEINO, SENIOR EXECUTIVE SPECIALIST,
INTERNATIONAL FELLOW OF KSLA



Closest to the camera: Jan Heino taking notes at the seminar. To the left: the Academy's Secretary General Åke Barklund. Photo: Fredrik Ingemarson.

The important decision taken in Oslo, called the Oslo Mandate, also established a Bureau, Rules of Procedure, nominated a Chair and provided a budget for a secretariat.

Four meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee are to be organised to enable the work to be completed by the end of June 2013. The resulting agreement is to be submitted to an extraordinary Forest Europe Ministerial Conference for consideration, possible adoption, and opening for signatures.

The First Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee (INC1)

The First Session of the INC (INC1) for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe was held at the United Nations Offices in Vienna, Austria, from 27 February to 2 March 2012. Over 100 participants were present, representing 36 signatory states, one observer country (Japan) and 16 observer organisations. After a short introductory opening the Committee started its work by welcoming the Chair, the Bureau and the Rules of Procedure, thus enabling the session to proceed smoothly. INC1 requested the INC Bureau to elaborate a first draft negotiating text of the agreement, providing specific guidance in an annotated table of contents.

In the INC1 deliberations it became rather clear, that the *Non-paper on a possible legally binding agreement on forests in Europe* is considered a solid point of departure for a first draft negotiating text of the LBA. There was a common understanding in INC1 that the agreement will be a framework agreement with firm commitments that clearly add value and address all types of forests, with the option to subsequently elaborate thematically/geographically specific Protocols. A first draft negotiating text will be circulated in English by 1 June 2012.

A roadmap for the negotiations

INC1 also agreed on a roadmap for the subsequent negotiations. The next session, INC2, will be held in Bonn from 3–7 September 2012 and INC3 in Turkey later in 2012 or at the beginning of 2013, followed by the final session, INC4, in May–June 2013. INC2 will concentrate on the first reading and a detailed consideration of the draft negotiating text. It will also consider the possibility of the agreement being brought under the UN umbrella; it will consider organisational arrangements and also examine how to streamline secretariat services. ○



The Ministerial Conference in Oslo, June 2011. Photo from the conference Proceedings/Kilian Munch.

Policy development in its historical context

The Decision of the Oslo Ministerial Conference on European Forests in 2011 to start discussions on a legally binding agreement on forests must be seen in its historical context.

ASTRID BERGQVIST, SENIOR ADVISER, FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SWEDISH ACADEMY OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Since the first UN Environmental Conference in Stockholm in 1972 the protection, development and sustainable use of the forests at all levels have been on the international agenda. Damage to forests became an increasingly high priority issue for policy makers and general public through-out the world.

Forests on global level

During the 1980s many environmental initiatives including forests were taken within the UN system. The Brundtland Commission and the preparatory work before the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992 are cases in point. The issue of a global agreement on forests was launched. The G7 meeting in Houston in 1990 promoted the idea. Initially, Sweden supported it, but later became hesitant. At the Rio conference, no global forest convention was adopted. A decision, however, was taken on the “Forest Principles”, which together with forest aspects in Agenda 21 have inspired forest discussions globally.

Decision to organise a Ministerial Conference in Europe

In the autumn of 1990 at the European level France and Finland were instrumental in organising a Ministerial

Conference in Strasbourg to discuss the protection of forests in Europe. As a follow up to Rio, a second ministerial forest conference was held in Helsinki in 1993. This resulted in a Ministerial declaration and four resolutions on the continuation of the ministerial process on the protection of forests in Europe. The Conference also decided on an organisational structure for such a process with rotating lead countries and regular Ministerial Conferences. The resolutions adopted were primarily to be managed by organisations such as the FAO and UN/ECE. The process was to be member driven and open to observer countries and NGO:s.

Spain is now lead country

This structure and methodology has been followed after Helsinki. Four ministerial conferences have since been held; Lisbon 1998, Vienna 2003, Warsaw 2007 and Oslo 2011. Spain is now lead country. Many resolutions have been adopted. European forest status reports have also been prepared together with FAO and UN/ECE. Much work has also been devoted to developing criteria and indicators for SFM. EU representatives have actively participated and signed decisions of relevance to the EU.



Russia takes an active part in policy development

Russia will take the LBA negotiations seriously, implementing what was stated at the beginning of the process and keeping a close watch over Russian national interests.

SERGEY RODIN, DEPUTY HEAD, FOREST RESEARCH INSTITUTE, THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Russia is shaping its national forest policy at the same time as a very important European forest policy development process is going on. During the 40 years since the UN Conference on the environment in Stockholm in 1972 none of the targets set by global forest summits have been reached. Finally a legally non-binding document was adopted in 2008 under the auspices of the UN Forum on Forests; however it is just a declaration. This issue is really complicated but in our opinion can be handled. Gradually by means of regional cooperation we may arrive at a solution to the issue of global forest management.

Russia supports the idea of developing a legally binding document

The first Intergovernmental negotiation committee (INC) meeting was held in Vienna in the end of February. Russia took an active part in the discussion of practically all issues, mainly the development of guidelines for the first draft. Active participation of international organi-

sations in this process is helpful. It will give the negotiation process transparency, involve other states from other continents and give consideration of all stakeholder wishes. Russia is still concerned that pending problems may affect the implementation of one of the basic principles of any convention – consideration of all stakeholder interests – and finally its adoption and ultimately ratification by member states.

Right to make necessary amendments

In our opinion a legally binding document should not have economic constraints that restrict the sustainable development of the forest sector. Russia was uncertain about the success of this undertaking owing to the issue of the legitimacy of the main negotiation body – the Intergovernmental negotiation committee (INC) – which remained unresolved. It should be pointed out that it is impossible to draw a demarcation line between Europe and Asia in Russian boreal forests. So Russia addresses forest problems on a global scale. We believe that the UN provides an optimal forum for reaching a comprehensive solution to numerous issues in related areas.

Some member states (including the Russian Federation, Norway and others) and the European Union reserved the right to make necessary amendments in document structure until INC2 session. A cross-sectoral working group of experts from all interested ministries, authorities and organisations has been set up in Russia to develop Russian national positions. These positions and issues will depend on decisions agreed on the basis of the road map for the INC.



Prof. Sergey Rodin makes his presentation at the seminar. Photo: Fredrik Ingemarson.

Desertification is a major concern for Portugal

Owing to its geographical location, climatic conditions and soil characteristics, Portugal faces particular threats, namely, forest fires and desertification. These threats do not recognise boundaries.

GRAÇA RATO, ADVISER, AUTORIDADE FLORESTAL NACIONAL MAMAOT, PORTUGAL

Situated in the Iberian Peninsula the country's borders are only with Spain. Portugal is a partner in several and diverse political processes that reflect various geographical and political frames, namely, the European Union, Pan-Europe, the Mediterranean Basin and the United Nations.

The European Union calls for our attention

Forests cover around 5.5 million hectares (38% of the country), most which are privately owned (86%). Socially speaking, the forest sector is of utmost importance – 260 000 people are employed in the industry. These conditions require a strong involvement in the discussions within the European Union. Three major forest-related dossiers call for our attention: the Green Paper on Forest Protection and Information in the EU, the Due Diligence Regulation and the EU Forest Strategy.

The third Ministerial Conference took place in Portugal

At a Pan-European level, Portugal has been deeply engaged in the Process Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe since its very beginning in 1990. The third Ministerial Conference took place in Portugal in 1998. For Portugal, a process that addresses common threats and opportunities for such a broad region is of the utmost importance. And there is one common goal: sustainable development of European forests.

On the other hand, it has always encouraged participation of different stakeholders. Since the Oslo Ministerial Conference a new path approach has been launched – the negotiation of a legally binding agreement on Forests in Europe, a process in which Portugal is still engaged.

Mediterranean ecosystems and cork

The Mediterranean Basin is another arena dealing with issues of relevance to Portugal: Mediterranean ecosystems and cork (Portugal is the most important cork producer in the world) undoubtedly justify our involvement in this Committee.

At global level, forest policy is mostly debated under the aegis of the United Nations Forum on Forests. This debate started effectively in 1995 with the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. Some relevant outputs have been produced – for instance the four global objectives on forests and the Non-Legally Binding Agreement on Forests. But there is still a long way to go until the main objectives of this debate – a global Legally Binding Agreement on Forests – is achieved. If it ever is!

Finally, desertification is a major concern for Portugal. This phenomenon is becoming ever more serious and the susceptibility index makes it challenging to tackle this problem. Forests, as we know, can and do have a role in taking up this challenge. ○



Mediterranean ecosystems and cork justify Portugal's involvement in the Mediterranean Basin. Photo: João Pinho.



Swedish perspective on

Forest policy in Europe

Recent decades have brought into focus the importance of forest and forestry processes in tackling societal challenges. They have also added impetus to discussions on the demarcation lines between various levels of governance – basically who is to decide what and for whom?

INGEBORG BROMÉE, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, SWEDISH MINISTRY OF RURAL AFFAIRS

The policymaking environment is highly complex and the different decision-making and discussion sites influence each other like communicating vessels.

Sweden has some underlying principles

A whole plethora of policy processes are running in parallel. Those we are looking at this seminar are either EU internal in nature or part of the wider Pan-European forest policy process. When it comes to the EU dossiers – the review of the EU Forestry Strategy and the follow up of the European Commission Green Paper – Sweden has some underlying principles that we insist on: the right to self-determination in formulation and implementation of our national forest policy; no legal basis for a common EU forest policy has been transferred. However, where joint European action is of value and a legal platform has been established by the legislators, the Treaties' principles of subsidiarity and proportionality shall be considered to their full extent.

Sweden had its doubts

Moving our focus to the development of FOREST EUROPE we stand firmly behind the objective, namely to strengthen sustainable forest management. Following the decisions in Oslo the signatories will now pursue



Ingeborg Bromée explains the forest policy complexity at the 30 March conference. Photo: Fredrik Ingemarson.

this objective along two tracks – the classic cooperation of Forest Europe, through the implementation of a joint work programme, and the launch of negotiations for a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. As a member of the EU Sweden had its doubts about giving the supranational body too open a negotiating mandate on a topic that includes subjects not covered by the Treaties. After the introduction of safeguards that clarify the demarcation lines we are ready to partake in the negotiations for a framework agreement that would include all the major forest nations in our region.

Sweden is an active partner in various preparatory groups related to these forest policy processes.* Our positions have been consolidated through extensive coordination within the Government's Offices, consultation with the national Parliament, and in a referral process involving representatives of the Swedish forest community and its stakeholders. ○

*) More on the expertise we are providing for the Working Groups of the Commission's Standing Forestry Committee in subsequent parts of the SIFI Newsletter.



Photo: Reuters/Morteza Nikoubazl.

ULF SVENSSON, FORMER DEPUTY
DIRECTOR-GENERAL

A focus on environmental aspects on forest policies

The management of forests is covered by a number of intergovernmental agreements and institutions, in Europe in particular in the European Union. Most of these processes now include a focus on environmental aspects of forest policies. These aspects, in particular forests and climate change and forests and biological diversity, are very important.

This focus has, however, tended to weaken the important aspects of forestry and the production of sawn timber, pulp and paper in the present European and global intergovernmental processes. This will lead to a major global problem in a world where the demand for forest products is constantly increasing.

Climate change is currently at the very top of the global political and economic agenda. The conservation of biological diversity is emerging into such a genuinely top priority position after the introduction of

the concept of ecosystem services which provide the very basis for life on Earth.

The newly created Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has politically reinforced biodiversity in world politics and in a longer-term perspective it will result in biodiversity overtaking climate change as the most significant global environmental challenge.

UNFF has led to fragmentation

Almost all intergovernmental environmental processes on forests nowadays focus on the conservation of forests, not on their sustainable management. And there are two different aspects to a holistic approach to sustainable forest management: one with a focus on conservation and the other focused on forestry and forest production.

Globally the activities of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

are an example of the first approach, as are the goals of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The forest activities of the European Union also have a focus on forest conservation mainly because most EU countries, unlike Sweden and Finland, do not have a major economic forest sector.

The work of FAO, the UN's forest organisation proper, is an example of the second approach with a major focus on forest production. The creation of UNFF has led to unnecessary fragmentation of the forest work of the UN. It has also weakened the position of FAO in this regard and consequently reduced the significance of forestry and forest production in the forest work of the United Nations. Against that background the UNFF should be abolished when its mandate expires in 2015. The FAO, not the UNFF, should provide the major UN forest input to UNFCCC and CBD. ○



The interests behind the European policy game

DR. PETER EDWARDS,
DEPARTMENT OF FOREST PRODUCTS AND MARKETS, THE SWEDISH UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

Behind each of the forest policy processes introduced in Europe in the past five years, stakeholders from the whole spectrum of the forest sector have put forward their interests. There are those interests that can be considered overall drivers of the processes where the majority of stakeholders agree. These include improving the visibility of forestry, putting forestry on a level playing field and improving coordination and cooperation.

Next, there are interests that have arisen multiple times and caused some level of conflict, including the protection/production nexus, sovereignty and subsidiarity and the rules of the process. Finally, there are narrow interests – these may not necessarily be interests that cause discord amongst the parties, but could be akin to initial, 'radical' positions adopted in negotiations. Examples include differing national priorities or interests within the countries, the (non)meeting of obligations under other conventions and concern over directions the European Parliament might take.

Further research is needed

Some stakeholders may find weak components advantageous, while others sought stronger language in the agreement. From this brief analysis of interests and their intersection, we can take away a few lessons and thoughts for how to move forward in European forest policy.

These thoughts include the notion that interests do not always align, there is a need for better coordination within countries and stakeholder groups and further research is needed, particularly due to forests and private ownership not fitting into the mould of common goods. As stakeholders, we can move forward through better communication between researchers, policy-makers and sector stakeholders, while having better governance rules. Two initiatives, while with some drawbacks, attempt to move in the right direction – ThinkForest and the INTEGRAL project. ○



An overview of international forest policy

More information about international agreements and other political processes that in various ways are linked to forestry can be found in a report published as a KSLA journal, KSLAT 6-2010 (in Swedish KSLAT 5-2010), which can be ordered through SIFI's website. The purpose of this report is to contribute to the understanding of international forest policy and how this affects Swedish forestry. It mainly focuses on intergovernmental cooperation and has a Swedish perspective as its point of departure.



Calendar 2012



April

16–19 April	The Forests Dialogue	Södra Växjö, Sweden
15–27 April	International Training Program for Indian IFS Officers	SLU Skinnskatteberg, Sweden

May

4 May	Committee of International Forestry Issues (KIS)	KSLA Stockholm, Sweden
24–25 May	International Council of Forest and Paper Associations	ICFPA, FAO Montréal, Canada
28 May	The transformation of the Canadian forest sector	KSLA Stockholm, Sweden

June

14–17 June	Tällberg Forum 2012	Tällberg Foundation Tällberg, Sweden
20–22 June	Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development	UN Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

More activities at www.sifi.se/kalendarium.

Spring activities at SIFI

SIFI's steering group, the Committee for International Forestry Issues, will have its second meeting of the year in early May. The topics they will discuss will include international aspects of the Forest Kingdom (Skogsriket) and the application for the IUFRO Wood Congress 2019.

"The transformation of the Canadian forest sector and the Swedish experience" is the title of our next seminar. The forest sectors in both countries are and going through an intense process of transformation and will continue to do so, and this process involves different players in the two countries. The aim of the seminar is to identify and highlight important issues to manage

in the transformation processes in the forest sectors in Canada and Sweden. The morning session will focus on the overall transformation process and will also examine the innovation and investment processes involved. The afternoon session focuses on developments within forestry.

Please *visit our website* for more information about the seminars or to subscribe to the newsletter. Our goal is that the newsletter, along with the website, should be a forum for discussing developments in the Swedish forest sector, in the spirit of the academy.



Our financiers:

Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademien
Sveriges Lantbruksuniversitet
WWF Sweden
Swedish Ministry of Rural Affairs

KORT OM SIFI

Tankesmedjan för Internationella Skogsfrågor (SIFI) består av kommittén (KIS) och ett stödjande sekretariat. Vård för SIFI är Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademien (KSLA). Styrrupp för arbetet är KIS och i tankesmedjan finns även en funktion för resursutveckling med representanter från olika delar av den svenska skogssektorn.

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