



NEWSLETTER

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PEFC™

Austria

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PEFC Austria – Pan-European Forest Certification Austria – is a cooperative initiative of family-owned forestry enterprises, wood processors, environmental groups and trade unions for the certification of timber from sustainably and carefully managed forests. The PEFC certification system had its origin at the Environmental Conference in Rio de Janeiro, and is based upon the resolutions passed at the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe (Helsinki 1993; Lisbon 1998), which were adopted by 37 nations in the course of the Pan-European Process. Independent and well-established certification organizations ensure that forests are managed in an ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable manner in accordance with high PEFC standards. To date around 42 million hectares of forests have been certified according to PEFC, 3.9 million of which are located in Austria. PEFC is therefore the largest forest certification system worldwide operating transparently and credibly upon the basis of democratic principles.

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Forest Certification Complete in Austria

On the 7th February 2002 regional representative Gernot Arnold received PEFC certificates for Region 2 „Noerdliches Alpenvorland“ and Region 7 „Noerdliche Randalpen-Ost.“ „Austria's forest owners have the right to be proud of their achievements. Sustainability and due consideration and protection of flora and fauna were already given high priority before now,“ said Arnold. The certification of the last two forest regions by the independent and internationally active SGS certification organization serves as an impressive confirmation of this. Now we have proof that all the forested regions of Austria are ecologically and sustainably managed. *Further information on Regions 2 and 7: Regional representative Gernot Arnold, E-mail: arnoger@lk-ooe.at*

Austria's Forest Owners Practice Ecological Management

„The successful completion of this certification proves that ecological forest management practiced by forest owners over generations does not pay lip service to the public but has actually been practiced for a long time,“ declared President Fritz Grillitsch, Chairman of the Forestry and Timber Trade Committee of the Austrian Chambers of Agriculture, pleased with the positive monitoring results. International tendencies show that the demand for timber proven to have originated in sustainably managed forests, as well as for certified wood products, will further increase in the future. „With the help of the PEFC label it will be possible for European and Austrian family-owned forest enterprises to keep their products competitive,“ declared Grillitsch. *Further information: Martin Hoebarth, Austrian Chambers of Agriculture, E-mail: m.hoebarth@pklwk.at*

Fair-Priced Certification of Domestic Forests

With PEFC the cost of less than 10 cents per hectare can be maintained clearly below that of competing certification systems. All Austrian forest owners now have the opportunity to sell timber from their forests as PEFC-certified without additional cost. The precondition for this is to voluntarily recognize the PEFC criteria by signing the declaration of obligation. In contrast to other certification systems, which are based upon the monitoring of individual enterprises and where the costs are directly carried by the enterprise, regional certification according to PEFC does not incur any costs for the individual forest owner.

The PEFC label enables European and Austrian family-owned forest enterprises to keep their products competitive. Chairman Stemberger is convinced that within the year, PEFC will be fully recognized by consumers in Austria and Europe: „PEFC presents us with a fully tanked fire truck ready for deployment, continually serviced and technically maintained at the state of the art.“

Environmental Umbrella Organization: A Common Effort for Austria's Forests

Successful protection of nature and environment is a service to man and nature. Sustainability must become the steadfast goal of projects promoting the protection of nature. „It is of particular importance that the population can see their worries and wishes reflected,“ according to Franz Maier, business manager of the Environmental Umbrella Organization. Maier mentions PEFC certification as an example of success in this connection. In a common effort the Environmental Umbrella Organization as well as the forestry and timber trade have undertaken the risk of developing a system of admittance criteria for PEFC timber certification. Maier is satisfied with the results: „Protection of nature and economic interests can work together, if they only want to.“
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Chain of Custody (CoC): Group Certification for Wood Processors and Timber Trade

In the scope of chain-of-custody certification, PEFC offers small and medium scale enterprises an opportunity to apply for group certification. Precondition is that a minimum number of applications are grouped together by a coordinator (i.e., interest groups, such as trade organizations or representatives) and filed collectively. Group certification can be conducted at a much lower cost than individual certification. Interested enterprises can attend informative gatherings organized by the Association of the Austrian Wood Processing Industries on the 6th and 7th of March 2002 in Styria and Salzburg.

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PEFC: A Story of Success

The Pan-European Forest Certification initiative (PEFC) is becoming a story of success in cooperation with family-owned forestry enterprises in practically all the countries of Europe. The discussion on how to save the tropical forests made it crucial to be able to prove the practice of sustainable forestry years ago. This made labeling timber from sustainable forest management relevant for the competitiveness of products on the market. Intensive effort made PEFC the leading certification system world-wide over a short time. In total, 42 million hectares of forests in Europe have already been proven to fulfill the strict criteria of careful management – this corresponds to five times the total territory of the state of Austria.

According to the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) guidelines, approx. 16.7 million hectares have been certified in Europe, of which 10 million hectares are in Sweden and approx. 3.8 million hectares in Poland. At a ratio of 1:20, the difference between PEFC and FSC is particularly clear in Germany. 5.35 million hectares of forests with a PEFC certificate are compared to 267,000 hectares with an FSC label.

Regional Certification

An important factor contributing towards PEFC's wide margin is the custom-made model of regional certification which is oriented specifically towards the European situation. It involves the registration and certification of large-scale, naturally-based forest regions. This offers a decided advantage to small and medium scale enterprises, since forest ownership is oriented to a small scale in Central Europe, in particular. The certification of individual enterprises would amount to an inappropriate financial and organizational expenditure here. From an expert's point of view, statements regarding the sustainability of small units can also be put in question.

Building Bridges Between Certification Systems in Sweden

In the forested country of Sweden, representatives of forestry, the wood processing industry and the environment have combined both certification systems of PEFC and FSC in order to work out their common approaches. On the whole, the new platform – involving WWF, the Association for Nature Protection, the wood processing industry, and the association of forest owners – has already been able to achieve consensus. This should result in the offensive against the PEFC system becoming a thing of the past at last.
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European Efforts towards Mutual Recognition

The Swedish example is considered a model for Europe. It has shown that a practical dialogue is possible as soon as monopoly aspirations and self-interests have been replaced by common interests: proof for promotion of sustainable forest management. PEFC invites the WWF and other envi-

ronmental groups in other European countries to participate in the forest dialogue and to give up any counterproductive or fundamental opposition to PEFC. Chairman Stemberger: „PEFC Austria hopes that the present competitive thinking will be replaced by mutual acceptance. PEFC is ready for this!“

PEFC Germany: Recognized by the „Nordic Swan“

The Scandinavian environmental label „Nordic Swan“ declared on the 16th January 2002 that the German PEFC system complies with all its demands. Timber or wood fiber from PEFC-certified forests can now be marked with the above environmental label. Above all, this is of great significance for hygienic paper on the Scandinavian market. Following the Swedish PEFC and FSC, as well as the Finish, Norwegian and Swiss PEFC systems, the German system is the sixth which has been accepted by this noted, independent institution. This instance of recognition is further proof of PEFC's high quality.

Number of CoC Certificates Also Growing Fast in Germany

The number of chain-of-custody certificates is growing quickly in Germany. 19 enterprises with a certified chain of custody have already been granted a license to use the PEFC logo in Germany. The focus continues to be on sawmills, particularly in southern Germany, but the number of PEFC-certified timber traders is also increasing consistently. The greatest demand for timber from certified forests is made by the pulp and paper industry – according to PEFC Germany. The most prominent new accessor: the SCA paper company which has been given PEFC certificates for all three of its sites in Germany and Austria.

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PEFC Italy is Founded

The constituent assembly of PEFC Italy took place in December 2001. Lots of zest is being invested into setting up a certification system together with experts. This year PEFC Italy intends to send in its documents for evaluation by independent, internationally active experts. In the following, PEFC Italy will then set about being recognized by PEFC International.

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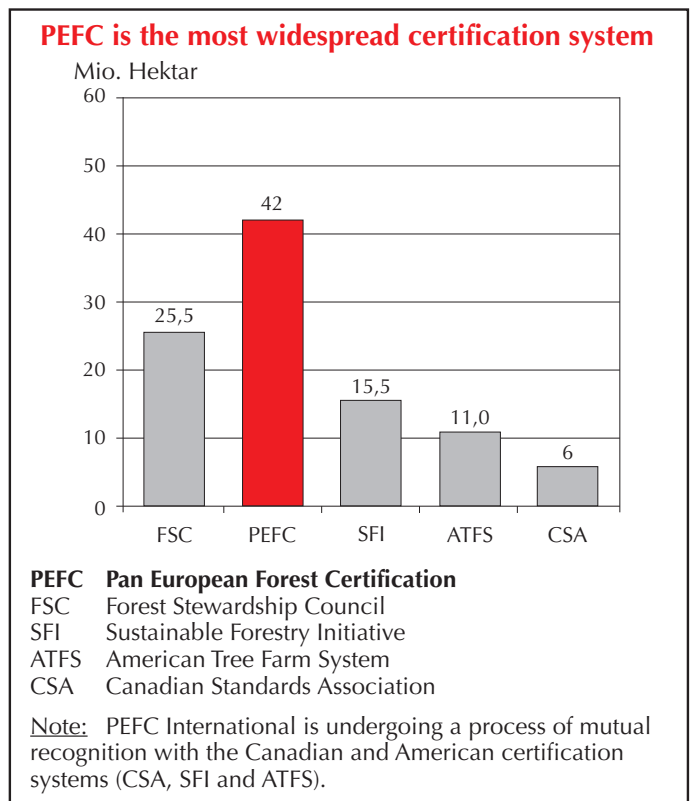
The Forest Products Association of Canada Calls for Certification

In January 2002 the Forest Products Association of Canada (FPAC) declared that in five years all its member companies will have to prove they are practicing sustainable forestry according to independent certification. The Association members will have to comply with stricter standards for the forests they manage than those required by law. This applies, in particular, to logging, forest rejuvenation, nature, soil and

water protection, as well as training and continuing education of their employees. FPAC represents 30 of the largest companies in the branch, responsible for forestry operations in 75% of Canadian forests which are currently being logged. The certification systems recognized by the Association are Canada's National Sustainable Forest Management Standard (CSA at approximately 6 million hectares of forest presently), the Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI at around 4.9 million hectares in Canada), and certification according to the guidelines of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC at around 123,000 hectares in Canada). PEFC is undergoing a process of mutual recognition with the leading certification systems in Canada, CSA and SFI.

Source: Holz-Zentralblatt, 4-2-2002

Certified Forest Areas in the World



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