



Promoting sustainable forest management

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PEFC Austria re-endorsed

PEFC Council's benchmark process demonstrates its effectiveness

The Austrian forest certification system has gained re-endorsement by the PEFC Council. An independent assessor has analysed the system and found it to be compliant with PEFC's international benchmark requirements. "We are delighted that our endeavours to further develop the Austrian certification system have now secured us continuing PEFC endorsement for a second 5-year period", said Mr Martin Höbarth, Chairman of PEFC Austria. "The process prior to the endorsement and the changes made to the Austrian system, show that PEFC's rigorous benchmark system is working", said Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council.

Austria submitted its national system for PEFC re-endorsement in June 2005. In an initial evaluation, the independent assessor assessing the scheme identified a number of areas, in which the Austrian system did not comply with PEFC's latest high international requirements. The certification stakeholders in Austria therefore fully revised the system before submitting it for a second assessment and international public consultation in June 2006.

"The periodic revisions and assessments that PEFC endorsed systems must undergo, guarantee that all PEFC requirements are continuously and equally implemented into all national standards" explained Mr Gunneberg. "To date, seven PEFC endorsed systems in Europe have gone through national revision processes, covering an area of more than 50 million hectares of PEFC certified forests."

The assessor's full report on which the PEFC member countries based their decision to re-endorse the Austrian forest certification system is publicly available at the PEFC Council website www.pefc.org.

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press release



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Editors Notes

Forest Certification

Forest certification is a process, which provides an assurance mechanism to purchasers of wood and paper products that the wood used in the products comes from sustainably managed forests. Sustainably managed forests are those whose management implements performance standards based on internationally agreed environmental, social and economical requirements.

PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes)

PEFC is a framework for the mutual recognition of credible national or regional forest certification schemes that have been developed based on internationally recognised requirements for sustainable forest management. Since its launch in 1999, PEFC has become the largest forest certification umbrella organisation covering national schemes from all over the world, delivering hundreds of millions of tonnes of wood to the processing industry and then onto the market place from over 101 million hectares of certified forests. PEFC has strong grass roots support from many stakeholders including the forestry sector, governments, trade associations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

press release