



Promoting sustainable forest management

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Luxembourg

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## PEFC certified wood recommended by German Timber Procurement Policy

The German Government announced that it will exclusively buy timber and timber products from proven legal and sustainable forest management. PEFC certification will be used as a means of providing such proof. Federal Environment Minister Sigmar Gabriel said: “The Federal Government wants to set a clear example against over-exploitation and illegal logging with its new public procurement regulation. In order to contain the ongoing destruction and degradation of forests globally, sustainable forest management is indispensable.”

Dr Wilhelm Vorher, President of the German Timber Council, welcomed the announcement and said: “The government’s decision sets the right signal for responsible sourcing of wood and will reward voluntary efforts undertaken by environmentally concerned enterprises in the combined German forest, wood and paper sector, which has an annual turnover of about 181 billion Euros and provides employment to over 1.3 million people.”

“Over two thirds of all German forests are certified to PEFC and close to 700 German paper and timber companies have already chosen PEFC certification for their businesses”, Mr Ben Gunneberg, Secretary General of the PEFC Council added. “A fast growing number of countries have issued governmental policies which list and recommend PEFC certified products, among them Belgium, Denmark, France, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and now also Germany. This encouraging trend echoes the resolution of the European Parliament early last year, which recommends PEFC as a means ‘to give consumers assurances concerning sustainable forest management’.”

The environmental NGO, the German Association for the Protection of Forests and Woodlands (*Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald*), welcomed the government’s decision. “We encourage municipalities and city councils to follow the government’s good example for their own procurement policies”, said Mr Christoph Rullmann, the Association’s Secretary General.

The press releases (in German) of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety and the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection can be seen on [www.bmu.de](http://www.bmu.de) and [www.bmelv.de](http://www.bmelv.de).

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press release



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## Editors Notes

### **PEFC (Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification schemes)**

PEFC is a framework for the mutual recognition of national forest certification systems 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 systems from all over the world, delivering hundreds of millions of tonnes of wood to the processing industry and then onto the market place from currently over 193 million hectares of certified forests. This is an area which is larger than the combined forest area of the European Union member states. PEFC has strong grass roots support from many stakeholders including the forestry sector, governments, trade associations, trade unions and non-governmental organisations.

### **Sustainable Forest Management**

Sustainable Forest Management is defined as “the stewardship and use of forests and forest lands in a way and at a rate that maintains their biodiversity, productivity, regeneration capacity, vitality and their potential to fulfil now and in the future, relevant ecological, economic and social functions at local, national and global levels, and that does not cause damage to other eco-systems”. Sustainably managed forests are those whose management implements performance standards based on internationally agreed environmental, social and economic requirements.

### **Forest Certification**

Forest certification is a process which provides an assurance to purchasers of wood and paper products that the wood used in the products comes from sustainably managed forest. It involves the certification of forests (Sustainable Forest Management certification) and the certification of the wood flow via processing, manufacturing and trading enterprises (Chain of Custody certification) to the final consumer.

### **Chain of Custody**

Chain of custody certification is a mechanism for tracing certified wood from the forest to the final product to provide certainty that the paper or timber product, about which a claim is being made, is linked to a certified forest. The Chain of Custody covers all successive stages of the manufacturing, processing, transformation and distribution.

press release