



8 May 2001

PEFC Council Position Statement on recent WWF Press Release on Austrian Forest Certification Scheme.

1. Constructive criticism aimed at improving a scheme is always welcome. Although the legal opinion sought may, possibly, fall into this category, the inaccurate, sensationalist press release and associated discredited secondary report do not.
2. PEFC requires adherence to national law and therefore regards WWF's attempts to dress up legal "opinion" as "confirmation" of violation of Austrian law, as irresponsible, misleading and not becoming to the organisation's reputation.
3. PEFC finds curious and questions the true objectives behind WWF's need to combine a legal opinion with recycled, untrue and misleading statements, supposedly based on an already discredited report, to try and make its press release "newsworthy".
4. PEFC notes that yet again, reports have been commissioned and views sought by WWF without any reference to the organisation in question. PEFC questions the value and motives behind such negative "campaigns" normally associated with the more radical end of the conservation organisations spectrum.
5. PEFC Austria will consider the legal "opinion" sought by WWF, on points of Austrian law and act accordingly, as any responsible organisation would.
6. PEFC regrets the fact that after WWF's own experiences (for example the dubious accusations of "illegal projects" as published in the Sydney Morning Herald, 2nd March 2001 "No Way to Save Trees" by Andy Rowell) WWF resorts to similar unhelpful tactics.
7. PEFC continues to invite and calls on WWF to participate actively in the PEFC process and to play a constructive role in the forest certification debate and to participate in PEFC's ongoing development in a manner befitting its reputation.

Notes on PEFC

The PEFC Council, a not for profit organisation, is improving the image of forestry and wood as a renewable raw material. It does so through the promotion of independent certification, of environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable management of forests.

This is achieved through nationally or regionally developed, independent third party forest certification schemes, based on the criteria, indicators and operational level guidelines developed by the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), an ongoing process.

In addition PEFC provides a framework and umbrella for the mutual recognition of forest certification schemes so developed. It provides access to a logo for timber products from such schemes, allowing customers and the general public to make a positive choice for sustainable forest management.

Five forest certification schemes have already been independently assessed and endorsed by the PEFC Council and account for over 34 million hectares of independently certified forests. Five more national schemes are currently in the process of assessment and all schemes can be viewed on our website: <http://www.pefc.org>

For more information on PEFC visit our webpage: <http://www.pefc.org> which will also give access to member sites in numerous countries.

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