



PRESS RELEASE

FEBO welcomes the European Commission's proposal for measures to stop trading in illegally-felled timber

On 10th November 2008 the European Timber Trade Association (FEBO) held a Parliamentary Evening in Brussels in co-operation with the Representation of the State of Hessen to the EU. The European Parliament, the European Commission, sectoral federations as well as business were well-represented on the evening to discuss current issues of importance to the branch.

FEBO represents the interests of the timber and panel product traders to European and international bodies with a membership made up of 14 associations from 13 European states. The association represents 3,130 companies active in the wholesale, retail, import and export of timber and also timber brokers and agents. FEBO President, Géraud Spire, reported that these companies from FEBO's member states accumulate a volume of trade worth 2.82 billion euros and provide jobs for 145,000 employees.

One of the issues currently being dealt with by FEBO is the timber trade's responsibility to the forest and to the environment. FEBO supports sustainable forest management and condemns illegal felling of timber as well as the trade in illegal wood. In 2005 FEBO passed an Environmental Code of Conduct which obliges its members to source legal timber products from sustainably managed forests and which condemns the practice of illegal-felling and related trade unreservedly.

On behalf of FEBO Dr. Rudolf Luers, CEO of the German Timber Trade Federation (GD Holz), welcomed the EU Commission's proposal of a regulation published in October to fight illegal logging. The European timber trade will face its responsibility. There are, however, a number of important unanswered questions:

- The harmonisation of the system of due diligence is unclear
- Which costs will businesses face?
- Which role can timber trade federations play as monitoring organisations?
- Will different timber products be treated differently?
- What role will sustainability certificates play in risk evaluation?

Maria Pachta, representing the European Commission, underlined the reasons for the additional measures proposed by the EU. The Voluntary Partnership Agreements with major timber supplying countries as set out in the FLEGT Action Plan are moving slowly, some have not been verified. Up to now, only Ghana has signed a VPA with the EU. Further important countries are missing on the list. The aim of the new measures is to avoid the risk of "placing illegally harvested timber on the European market". Criteria for risk management have not yet been defined.

In his evaluation of the overall political question, Dr. Luers pointed out that whilst focussing on the fight against illegal felling, the most important target – namely the sustainability of our forests – must not be forgotten. 90% of forests across the globe remain uncertified. Here Dr. Luers sees urgent need for action.



-2-

Another area on which FEBO is currently working is the European timber trade's committal to correct and clear marking and labelling of wood, wood products and surfaces. The European timber trade, as direct contact, feels a special obligation to the end-user. The consumer is confronted nowadays with an increased variety of wood products and for this reason needs clear and precise information on these products. To add to the problem, articles are labelled as wood when this is not the case. FEBO wants to clarify the situation and offer assistance to the consumer. To this end FEBO is co-operating with the European Confederation of Woodworking Industries (CEI Bois) to create a federation agreement on the issue of marking and labelling of wood, wood products and surfaces.

Wiesbaden, 17th November 2008

European Timber Trade Association - FEBO

Secretary General

Lutgart Behets-Oschmann

Rostocker Strasse 16

65191 Wiesbaden

Germany

Tel. +49 611 50 69 19

Fax +49 611 50 69 69

Mail febo@gdholz.de

www.febo.org