
[Spain: FSC's certificate to NORFOR or the continuation of a fraud](#)

On last April 9, the Galician organization APDR (Asociación pola defensa da Ría) issued an official statement regarding the FSC certification of the NORFOR company, a subsidiary branch of the Spanish pulp and paper company ENCE, which had been certified in April 2005.

In the statement, APDR denounces that "In Galicia, we have been suffering for many years the consequences of the dreadful influence of the company ENCE in our natural environment and in our economy." APDR refers to the monoculture and trading of eucalyptus wood for the manufacturing of pulp which "has caused the impoverishment and abandonment of rural communities, abandonment of forestry lands". The communiqué enumerates other impacts of industrial timber plantations, such as "high risk of fire", "intense erosion of lands", "the loss of biological diversity and the destruction of resources" and the pollution of "streams and underground aquifers" by the use of "large volumes of pesticides", as well as the "loss of quality of the landscape of the areas occupied by their activities".

In spite of all that, the company obtained the certificate of the FSC through the certifier SGS (Société Générale de Surveillance), a Swiss inspection, verification, testing and certification company which in 1997 had been suspended from certification activities by the FSC for six months, due to controversy arising over the certification of a logging operation undertaken by the forestry company Leroy in the forests of Gabon.

From the beginning APDR denounced the problem to the FSC delegation in Spain, elaborating a detailed 85-page report (<http://www.apdr.info/norfor/norbarpr.htm>). Last year, APDR together with organizations from other seven countries requested that, "in accordance with the objective of the FSC to 'promote the environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable of the world's forests' the certification of NORFOR is cancelled forthwith" (see http://www.wrm.org.uy/actors/FSC/Campaign_De_Certification/Spain.html).

Now, APDR statement says that the recent report published on February 5, 2007, by SGS regarding the second assessment audit of the certification under FSC standards of the forest company NORFOR "was full of falsehoods, manipulation of the information, misrepresentation of the facts and concealment of the reality. But now the problem is not the intention of defrauding which the company has held from the beginning of the certification process. The problem is that FSC, fully aware of the fraud, has decided to continue with this certification in spite of the increasingly crushing evidence of nonfulfillment of the standards; thus, FSC takes another backward step by moving further away from the aims with which it was created."

The communiqué regrets that: "In Galicia, the worst management system, which favours erosion, the loss of biodiversity and the disappearance of forest uses and resources, has the FSC certificate. More than two years after the certificate was issued, NORFOR's forest management system has not been modified and the maintenance of the certificate is based on deceit and concealment of reality on the part of the certification body, SGS, and the complicity of FSC, which, almost two years after APDR lodged a formal complaint by bringing forward clear and easily contrastable evidence of

nonfulfillment of the standards, continues to strive to maintain the certificate at any price. FSC is demonstrating, in the certification of NORFOR, that their real primary objective is to protect a flourishing business rather than 'guarantee the authenticity of its certifications' and 'promote a forest management system which is responsible, beneficial to society and financially viable'.

APDR warns that the certificate is "a document which gives enterprises access to important public subsidies granted by states and international organisms", it "allows the enterprise to improve its position in a market where the certification is granted a value and a prestige which, as the falsified certifications proliferate, it is losing. It is only the economic value of the benefits which forestry enterprises obtain from the acquisition of the certificate which makes the companies seek them and FSC maintain them at any price, not taking into account the nonfulfillment of the standards."

It's high time people become aware that "being in possession of the certification does not necessarily mean that the holder's forest management is responsible, beneficial to society and financially viable."

Article based on "Official Statement of APDR (Asociación Pola Defensa Da Ría) Regarding the FSC Certification of NORFOR", <http://www.wrm.org.uy/countries/Spain/APDR.pdf>, April 9, 2007, sent by APDR, e-mail: apdr@apdr.info, www.apdr.info