
Spain: Spanish groups withdraw from FSC

For over a year now, Spanish organizations have been demanding the annulment of the certification of “sustainable forestry management” granted by FSC to a branch of the ENCE (Norfor) pulp/plantation company, but so far with no results. In June 2005, the “Asociación pola defensa da Ria”(Association for the defence of the Ria), a member of the Galician Ecologist Federation (FEG) submitted an urgent request for the annulment of such certification (<http://www.wrm.org.uy/actores/FSC/cancelacionNORFOR.pdf>) to FSC’s delegation in Spain, accompanied by a critical report on Norfor’s certification. (<http://www.wrm.org.uy/actores/FSC/informeNORFOR.pdf>). They also requested that this report be sent to the central body of FSC for it to proceed with the review of all other certification processes in the world and the possibility of excluding the certifier SGS from the certification process.

Due to the lack of reply from FSC and to the fact that they consider that legitimization of FSC certification is basically due to the presence of environmental groups among its members, the Galician Ecologist Federation resolved by a decision taken at an Assembly held on 20 May to withdraw from the FSC National Support Group in Spain and also to ask other Spanish environmental groups to adopt the same measure (see http://www.wrm.org.uy/actors/FSC/Defensa_Ria.html)

The organization stated its concern over the alarming expansion of large scale monoculture tree plantations – particularly of eucalyptus for pulp – and their effects on soil degradation, accelerated loss of biodiversity and disappearance or impoverishment of rural communities. Furthermore, it identifies FSC certification as “one of the tools companies are using to obtain authorizations and economic support, in addition to strengthening their position on the market.” To face this the Galician Ecological Federation declared that “support by the ecologist movement to the FSC cannot be taken as a blank cheque and has a sense if behind each certification forest management involved can reasonably be affirmed as being ‘environmentally responsible, socially beneficial and economically viable,’ something that today is very far from the true situation.”