

PROJECT V2

FRANCO-FINNISH FOREST HIGH COMMISSION

SORREZE (Tarn) 10-11 march 2010.

Bilateral cooperation between Metsähallitus (MH) and ONF.

The cooperation between ONF and MH, which has been going on since 2001, was updated with the framework agreement signed on January the 21st of 2006 by the general directors of both public enterprises.

Yearly exchanges have been organised for small teams of one to 3 people on matters of interest for each contractor.

Forest issues of common interest are quite numerous and they allow to draw comparisons between our 2 countries.

The different exchanges which had taken place in 2005 and 2006 were presented at the meeting held at Lourmarin (South-Eastern France) in September 2006

In 2007, the exchange with Laatumäki, MH's estate management subsidiary was the discovery of a complete different context due to the contracting between ministries and forest enterprises.

Since the last meeting of the High Commission in Finland in 2008, our exchanges were limited to the visit of one of ONF's carbon specialist Marianne Rubio to Finland to see and discuss how the Finns measure the carbon stocked in forests as well as in the different types of wooden products.

In 2009, the financial difficulties of both public forest enterprises restrained them to invest in such visits. Nevertheless, ONF sent last summer, on behalf of its direction of the Environment, a questionnaire to MH's environment directorate about the management of forest national parks included in state forests. According to the expected answers, a French delegation could possibly travel to Finland and examine locally how Finnish foresters manage these forest parks and how they have contracted with environmental authorities.

But these bilateral meetings are not the only way of benchmarking and exchanging opinions over main issues concerning forest management, environmental problems, communication towards stakeholders concerned about forestry, or questions bound to the economical situation. EUSTAFOR, the European Association of Public Forest Management Enterprises, which is presided by ONF's director general P-O Drège, tries to promote common positions of European foresters in regard to important questions concerning the future of forests. Eustafor has contacts with other associations dealing with forests and industrial matters, and develops common position papers with them according to the partners involved.

Eustafor takes part in many working groups at European level and has constituted internal working groups, such as « Climate change and ecosystem services » or « Biomass and bioenergy ».

These working groups constitute good occasions for discussions, for learning from others, and for building a common approach of public forest problems.

These new opportunities of meeting may explain that both ONF and MH do not consider it as prejudicial not to have exchanged teams in 2009.

The recent green book of the DG Environnement about « forest protection and information about forests in the UE : preparing forests to climate change » proposes some guidelines for managing european forests and is considered as a document to initiate a large public debate on european forests. This UE document makes it necessary for EUSTAFOR to take position and express the views of the public forest managers in order to balance the common opinion which will come out of the open public consultation proposed by the DG Environnement. A special working group is being launched by EUSTAFOR on this subject ; it will surely recall and underline the necessity of a multifunctionnal approach of public forest management which is taken into account in our forest management plans, according to the definition of sustainable forest management by the MCPFE (1993).

The two coming years will be of highest interest for our forest organisations, with the official themes about biodiversity in 2010 and communication about forest matters in 2011. By working together on different topics, MH and ONF try to make arise the common voice of the european public forests.