



The Woodland League

Statement of The Woodland League regarding the state of FSC Certification in Ireland

Read out at the IFCI EGM of the 28th August 2004

To date, Coillte and its employees show no signs of reform since 1999, when the FSC Certification process began in Ireland. There has been no serious move to improve their standards, only shallow PR exercises.

Two good people led the environmental and social chambers in good faith – Jacinta French and Dr. Anne Behan, recently deceased and sadly missed. (This is not to forget Freda Rowantree, who gave her all to change forest-planting policy in Ireland to more native planting.) Between them, they created the Forestry Coalition to reflect the views held by most genuine NGOs, individuals and communities who mistakenly thought their views would be valued by Coillte and IFCI. Unfortunately, these two women were frustrated at every turn and were forced out of the process, which in turn weakened the Coalition.

We must remember this process is honouring the Helsinki definition of sustainable forest management, as well as the definition of an eco-label. The IFCI have shown zero accommodation for social and environmental concerns. Under the current standard agreed by IFCI to certify Coillte, the IFCI cannot meet the requirements of the National Biodiversity action plan now emerging through local authorities.

The standard at present cannot satisfy the social and environmental chambers supposed to have representation within IFCI. The consultation process that led to this “sub-standard” was a farce. For example, one public meeting in Mallow, Co. Cork, was attended by 17 people, out of a population for Munster of over a million people.

At no stage has Agenda 21 been invoked during this process. This standard dishonours the environmental and social chambers of FSC, and is by no means sustainable.

The standard devised by IFCI is a doctored British standard, which was altered by ex-Coillte employees. One in particular was a Coillte employee during the public consultation at Mallow in February 2000, which he never disclosed to the stakeholders present at the meeting; he misrepresented himself.

Coillte are currently out of control, and are being given an eco-label by a standard that has been developed under questionable circumstances.

It is the prognosis of the Woodland League that certification through IFCI is no longer environmentally or socially viable, and we would appeal to all that concur to withdraw from the IFCI, and no longer give them credibility.