

Renewable Resources



Sustainable Future

Press release 2.11.2006:

Replacing non-renewable resources by renewable ones is the answer to the challenge faced by Europe of how to continue enjoying economic growth and development while simultaneously protecting and improving the environment.

A cross-sectoral forum on the contribution of renewable natural resources to European competitiveness, sustainability and well-being gathered together over 40 decision-makers and opinion leaders from all over Europe in Helsinki on November 2, 2006. The seminar was organised in connection with Finland's EU presidency.

"The societal status and technical nature of the renewable resource base is totally changing. The boundaries between various sectors are disappearing and no sector can look at the future challenges only from its own point of view. Development of forest and energy sectors is a good example," Professor **Heikki Juslin**, President of the Finnish Forest Association, said in his welcoming speech. For this reason, cross-sectoral dialogue, like in today's forum, is necessary. According to Mr. Juslin, the demand for sustainability can be transformed into business possibilities. Wood as a sustainable and renewable material has huge potentials in European construction sector. "The demand for wood is there. Renewable materials, sustainable processes and new business models can mean competitive business."

State Secretary **Pekka Pesonen** of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry said that the linkages between economic growth and the use of natural resources have to be broken. "We have to replace the use of non-renewable resources by renewable resources. Europe should continue to be an active pioneer, both in increasing eco-efficiency and in shifting the focus from non-renewable resources to renewable resources." Mr. Pesonen said in his opening speech that the distinction between renewable and non-renewable resources should be even more prominent and clear-cut. "The use of natural resources should be adjusted, in a balanced way, among the various uses and objectives, including bioenergy, food, forestry products and protection of biodiversity."

Dr. **Peter Botschek**, Energy, Health, Safety & Environment Director of the European Chemical Industry Council (Cefic) said that from a technical feasibility perspective, renewable resources will not be able to replace petrochemistry in the foreseeable future. "However, we need to reduce our fossil resources consumption in order to preserve these as long as possible while searching for new solutions. We need to find long-term substitution for the fossil uses and we need to manage this transition in a way that protects our economies' competitiveness and employment," Dr. Botschek said in his key note speech.

Further information:

All presentations of the opening session can be downloaded at: www.smy.fi/renewableresources

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The forum was a joint effort of major players in the Finnish forest sector: Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Finnish Forest Industries Federation, Central Union of Agricultural Producers and Forest Owners MTK, Finnish Forest Foundation and Finnish Forest Association. After the forum, on 3.11.2006 an excursion focusing on wood in construction and energy production is arranged.