



Call on the Paper Trade and the Paper Industry in Germany for the Observance of Environmental and Social Standards for Paper

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For a Socially Just and Ecologically Sustainable Use of Paper

Our collective demand for paper has serious consequences: illegally cut timber is employed, some of the last remaining primeval-forest areas of the world are being destroyed, indigenous people are deprived of their land and the subsistence of future generations is endangered. Mainly responsible for this are the industrial countries which comprise approximately one fifth of the world's population, but consume more than 80 percent of the paper world-wide. Also in Germany, the paper consumption has reached a level that is not compatible with a sustainable development and global justice. With approximately 230 kilograms per capita, the consumption in this country is more than 4 times as high as the world-wide average. Less than 10 percent of the pulp being required to maintain our lavish use of paper, are manufactured in domestic factories from local timber, more than 90 p.c. however is being imported. Our excessive consumption of resources from other continents, aggravates the global imbalance between the poor and rich countries. As a contribution towards a socially and ecologically just development on earth, we shall have to use paper more economically.

The undersigned environmental- and consumer organisations call on the paper trade and the paper industry to tie the supply of raw materials to the observance of permanently supervised minimum standards, in order to ensure the ecologically sustainable and socially just origin of pulp and virgin-fibre paper. Beyond this, all forces in the society must contribute towards a drastic reduction of the paper consumption, and to limit the use of virgin fibre paper to the degree being necessary for the recycling process. In order to improve the paper cycle, the recycled portion should be further increased, and so much paper as possible turned to recycling. Where this is technically possible, the portion of waste paper in paper products should be increased, and – if possible – recycled paper with the “Blue Angel“ be used. Simultaneously, the Federal (German) Government should act that proofs of origin for paper products are stipulated within the European Union.

The Dark Sides of Virgin-Fibre Paper

On many continents, the pulp- and paper production causes considerable damage to humans and to the environment. World-wide, meanwhile, every fifth tree is logged for paper. In order to cover the timber requirement of this industry, precious forest-ecosystems are being destroyed by large-scale clearcutting and conversion to monocultures. The ecologic, economic and cultural value of these forests is thereby lost for ever. Millions of people living from and in intact forests thereby lose their livelihood, animal- and plant species become extinct, and climatic changes occur.

In many southern countries such as Indonesia and Brazil, but also in industrialized states like Canada and Finland, there exist serious conflicts for land rights and land exploitation between the paper industry and the local population. In several cases, whole ethnic groups fall into poverty. Lost by this is also the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples of a well-adapted and preserving use of nature.

Natural forests are the habitat of most of the world's known animal-and plant species. With their destruction and conversion to plantations or artificial forests, the pulp industry contributes decisively towards the global loss of diversity. Owing to the implementation of genetically-modified species of trees intended by the industry, there is now also the threat of their uncontrolled spreading and thus the elimination of the original flora and fauna also outside the plantations.

Further, forests have an indispensable function for the global climate. They store enormous amounts of carbon in the vegetation and soils, and have a significant influence on the earth's radiation- and water balance. By the destruction of intact forests, more carbon is released than can be entrapped by afforestation with plantations.

By the establishment of industrial monocultures which in most cases require the implementation of fertilizers and pesticides, precious agricultural areas, water resources, the ecological diversity and the cultural habitat of the local populations are destroyed.

Despite the technical progress in the production process, yet still large amounts of raw materials, energy and water are consumed for the manufacture of paper. Particularly where the environmental standards of the western countries are not applicable, the paper industry pollutes water, soils and air with toxic substances like chlorine and compounds of chlorine.

In order to ensure the ecologically and socially compatible origin of pulp and virgin fibre paper, especially the paper trade and the paper industry will have to tie the supply of raw material to the observance of controllable minimum standards.

The undersigned associations therefore raise the following demands to the paper and pulp manufacturers as well as to the wholesale and retail trade:

1. Increase the Application of Recycled Paper

The production of recycled paper clearly preserves the resources more and is more environmental-friendly than that of virgin fibre paper. The paper trade and the paper industry should therefore:

- Expand the line of products from 100 percent recycled paper with the "Blue Angel" in all areas, and maximize the waste-paper portion in all paper products.
- Advertise in favour of recycled paper on all sales levels as the most environmentally friendly alternative.
- Inform management, staff and suppliers about quality and the possibilities to use recycled paper.
- Change to recycled paper products for the internal as well as external communication.

2. Stipulate Environmental and Social Standards for the Origin of Raw Materials of Paper and Pulp as compulsory

In future, the paper trade and the paper industry should only market pulp and virgin fibre paper, if the origin of the raw material timber is from an ecologically sustainable, social just and legal forestry. For this purpose it has to be verified by an independent party that the following standards are being observed in the raw material exploitation.

The timber exploitation shall take place by observing all regional, national and international laws.¹

In the areas from which the raw materials originate, the legally or traditionally established land rights, the political civil rights² and the basic interests of the local population such as the co-determination concerning the land use shall not be disregarded.

In the exploitation of raw materials, fundamental employment and social standards³ as well as the relevant international conventions concerning the protection of human rights⁴ have to be taken into consideration.

The raw materials shall not originate from the destructive exploitation of primeval forests, primary forests or natural forests with a special protective value (High Conservation Value Forest) (Observance of FSC-Standards).⁵

The raw material shall not originate from plantations which were created by the conversion of natural forests after 1994.⁶

The timber used for the pulp- and paper production shall not originate from genetically-modified trees.

3. Take Care of Transparency

So far, there has hardly been any transparency concerning the raw material origin of paper products. In order to exclude any non-acceptable sources or raw materials, the paper trade and the paper industry will have to disclose the chain of custody, and to enable a control of the product channels.

In order to verify the data, evidence of an independent party is necessary which proves conceivably the raw material origin of the products (chain of custody)(i.e. data concerning the country of origin and the manufacturer for pulp and paper, the trees and the bleaching procedures used for the pulp, forestry certificates as well as the exclusion of using genetically-modified species of trees).

Currently, on the international level, these demands are closest met only by the seal of the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). Other international forest-management certificates neither represent any guarantee for an ecologically sustainable exploitation of the forests nor do they safeguard the rights of the population⁷. Even indications to environmental management systems do not provide any information as to whether ecological and social minimum standards are being observed with the exploitation of the forests.

So far, the industry has not offered enough paper products which are certified in a suitable way. In order to exclude the use of particularly critical pulp and paper products already today, industry and trade are being requested to compare the data of origin with the information of the environmental organisations about areas of conflict and problematic companies. For this purpose, the undersigned organisations offer their support.

4. Choose Clean Production Processes

In the selection of pulp and paper suppliers, the paper trade and the paper industry should take into consideration also the negative environmental impacts in the production process.

- Energy, water, chemicals and raw materials shall be used as economically as possible, and the discharge of pollutants, waste heat and refuse to the environment be reduced. For this, the use of closed production systems as well as the adherence to the most advanced environmental technologies are necessary to retain pollutants (“Best Available Technologies“). According environmental standards shall also be complied with outside the western countries.
- The use of health-endangering and environmentally-damaging chemicals, especially of chlorine or chlorine-organic compounds shall be stopped. Production processes, in which chlorine compounds are completely refrained from (TCF), are the standard to be aimed at.
- To evaluate negative impacts through pollutants, the pulp and paper manufacturers shall submit environmental reports pursuant to international guidelines⁸.
- The use of additives in the paper production and further processing which impede the recycling process (e.g. adhesives, certain paints) should continuously be reduced and avoided altogether in the long term.

5. Consideration of Transport Routes

Short transport routes between the manufacturer and the consumer will improve the ecological balance of pulp and paper. In order to reduce the negative effects of our paper consumption abroad, the domestic timber supplies should be better utilized and the domestic raw material portion for the production of pulp and paper be increased.

Our paper consumption may no longer be at the expense of the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and of the last remaining primeval forests. The paper trade and the paper industry must act now, so that our paper demand is being directed to ecologically sustainable and socially just paths.

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Footnotes:

1: Definition illegal logging: <http://www.forestandtradeasia.org/files/ABN%20Amro%20Risk%20Policies.doc>

2: For example land rights, participation and assembly rights

3: ILO- Fundamental Work Rights: freedom of association, the right to organize and to collective bargaining; the abolition of forced labor, the elimination of child labor; and the prohibition of discrimination in employment and occupation (equality of opportunity and treatment)

4: ILO-Convention 169 for the Protection of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
General Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
UN Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1966)
International Agreement on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
International Agreement on Civil and Political Rights (1966)

5: Definition of Primary Forest, Natural Forest and High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF):

Primary Forests are relatively intact natural forests which have remained essentially unchanged by commercial human exploitation throughout the last 69 – 80 years Bank of America). Primary Forests are being mapped by the World Resource Institute (WRI).

Natural forests are forest areas in which many of the original characteristics and key elements of natural ecosystems, such as for example complexity, structure, diversity, predominate (FSC).

High Conservation Value Forests are defined as those that possess one or more of the following attributes:

- a) forest areas containing globally, regionally or nationally significant concentrations of biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species, refugia); and/or large landscape level forests, contained within, or containing the management unit, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in natural patterns of distribution and abundance
- b) forest areas that are in or contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems
- c) forest areas that provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection)
- d) forest areas fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health) and/or critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with such local communities).

6: See Principle 10 of the Forest Stewardship Councils (FSC)

7: <http://www.fern.org/pubs/reports/footprints.pdf>

8: <http://www.globalreporting.org/>

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