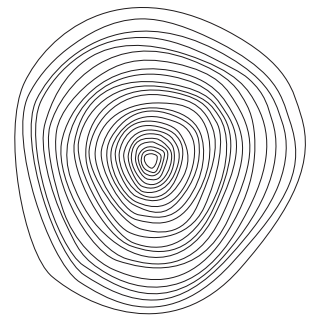


# eurobinia: quality timber from transparent forestry

Why our robinia products (robinia pseudoacacia) are not FSC-certified.



**eurobinia**<sup>®</sup>  
sharing robinia competence



Recently, our robinia products were criticised by Greenpeace and the WWF. Products were criticised as unclear in origin and “possibly from overexploitation”. The reason for criticism: our robinia products are not FSC-certified.

We want to inform you in the following, why we do not use the FSC-certificate, or any other “green label”, but nevertheless provide quality timber in good conscience.

## The eco-appearances are deceiving, nature suffers

We disagree on the FSC laboured opinion, the FSC certificate would be a guaranty for ecological and social responsible forestry. This position of the FSC is inaccurate and assumptive. On closer inspection, one determines that gross violations of nature and social standards are committed repeatedly under the “green” label of FSC.

We do not want to support this misuse! We rather invest in ecological improvement of our forests, than to invest in an eco-label with questionable objectives and assertions.

## An FSC-certified old-growth forest is a dead old-growth forest

The FSC certifies a variety of forests in all climates, which provides accessibility for forest industries. This is ecologically unaccountable. By means of certification, even old-growth forests are subject to industrial use and with it, their destruction (e.g. in Russia, Canada, Brazil)<sup>1</sup>. Areas, which should never have been allowed to be certified, like huge plantations of cloned eucalyptus trees in Portugal and Brazil<sup>2</sup>, receive the eco-certificate. Thus,

FSC-certified timber guaranties by no means ecological or socially responsible forestry. The authorization of utilising e.g. highly toxic pesticides<sup>3</sup> in FSC-certified forests is yet another reason to consider the certificate with scepticism.

## Out of control – exploitation booms

Violations of FSC rules are repeatedly committed and recognized time after time. Nevertheless, no effective control is introduced, which would prevent from clear-cutting and destruction of old-growth forests or canonise the shortfall of social standards and corruption. Therefore, no difference may be detected between FSC-certified forest areas and “conventional” forestry.

Due to insufficient control mechanisms, it is, moreover possible to counterfeit, change certificates, and make further use of withdrawn certificates without restriction<sup>4</sup>. That way wood of overexploitation from Brazil, softwood with changed declaration from Canada and Siberia or conflict timber (e.g. teak) from Burma with the FSC-label regularly arrives on the market<sup>5</sup>.



FSC-certified plantation in Brazil:  
Clear-cut of cloned trees

FSC-certified deforestation in Australia's tropical forests: far away from any ecological responsibility



Source: www.hancock-forests.org.au

## Corporations benefit, consumers are misled

Currently, the FSC certificate serves in many cases to legitimize trade in all varieties of timbers. Tropical timber, for example, becomes re-marketable through the FSC-label, although criticism on utilisation of tropical timber is still prevalent.

Trust in the certificate, which is still supported by some NGOs, serves after all only those timber traders, who sell their products with the "eco"-label for higher prices. As long as the certificate can not guarantee an ecological and social quality, its utilisation is a constant deception of consumers. They are misled to believe, tropical timber from FSC-certified plantations with clear-cut practices is an ecologically harmless product, whereas uncertified wood is a blemished blanket. Illegal old-growth timber from Laos<sup>6</sup> better than Hungarian robinia – that's absurd.

Organisations like Greenpeace, or the WWF are demonstrably aware of the nuisances with FSC. According to Greenpeace, it has tried not to express the problems, in order to not harm the label and alienate the consumers.

## Turning away from the FSC-label

Meanwhile, an increasing amount of environmental groups, including famous organizations, such as the "Swedish society for nature conservation"<sup>7</sup>, or "Friends of the Earth" England, Wales and Northern Ireland<sup>8</sup> have forborne participating with the FSC. One of the reasons is in the FSC's incapacity to solve the familiar problems in an adequate time period. One of the initiators, Simon Counsell, became an FSC slasher. Norway abandoned the FSC last year in regards to its public procurement policies. The country reasoned that there neither is an international, nor national certification scheme at present, which can guarantee the legal origin and sustainable production of timber<sup>9</sup>.

## Robinia as an alternative for tropical timber from old-growth stocks

We consistently oppose trade with old-growth timber. Eurobinia sells European robinia wood products as an alternative to tropical timber. Some ecologists, though, categorise robinia as problematic: coming to Europe from North America in the beginning of the 17th century<sup>10</sup> – robinia is not a native European species. The species has invasive behaviour and according to the site, it

more or less interferes with the forest ecosystem. Furthermore, the majority of Hungarian and Romanian robinia forests grow in monoculture age classes, mostly on small plots of land). This type of forest management is not optimal – eurobinia cannot and does not want to affirm to produce "eco"-timber according to strict forest ecological criteria.

However, we personally engage in offering wood, which is superior to FSC-certified tropical timber, especially in ecological regard: robinia is currently one of the best domestic alternatives to tropical, boreal, and chemically modified timber. It is the only European species, which fulfils the criteria of the durability class 1-2 (DIN EN 350-2). Environmental protection groups recommend robinia timber for this application area.

In our opinion, central European wood species need to be preferred to tropical timber from old-growth forests, even if these are certified. Utilization of European robinia timber, regardless of being certified or not, contributes to decreasing environmental damage in tropical old-growth forests.

## We call for a labelling by law: transparency instead of an "eco" carte blanche

For some time, we have called for a full declaration of timber, creating transparency in the supply chain. The following shall be labelled:

1. The botanical name of the species
2. The trade name
3. The country of origin
4. The climatic region  
(boreal, temperate, subtropical, tropical)
5. The forest management form  
(primary forest, forest, monoculture, plantation)

By the means of the labels, consumers and timber traders are enabled again, to identify available timber, and have the ability to make purchasing decisions based on accurate and non-biased information.

## Our principles

Eurobinia stands up for ecologically responsible forest utilisation and the protection of the earth's atmosphere. Our robinia timber comes from European forestry with stringent obligations, which focus on a stable forest preservation. The origin of our timber can be traced throughout our supply chain. The central location of our forests and production units allows for manageable transportation distances within Europe. We guarantee a social minimum standard of all trades involved in eurobinia products.

Further information about the FSC difficulties can be found under: e.g. [www.fsc-watch.org](http://www.fsc-watch.org), [www.chrislang.org](http://www.chrislang.org), [www.regenwald.org](http://www.regenwald.org), [www.rainforestportal.org](http://www.rainforestportal.org), [www.wrm.org.uy](http://www.wrm.org.uy)

Soon, more under: [www.eurobinia.eu](http://www.eurobinia.eu), or contact via e-mail.

Sources:

- [1] e.g. <http://www.fsc-watch.org> „Logging at Clayoquot Sound - thanks to FSC“
- [2] e.g. <http://www.fsc-watch.org> „Veracel: FSC's Death Certificate“ and „FSC: Zertifizierte Zerstörung“
- [3] e.g. <http://www.raubbau.info/de/info/handel2.html>
- [4] e.g. <http://www.regenwald.org/regenwaldreport.php?artid=199> Betrug mit Öko-Holz“

[5] e.g. [http://www.illegal-logging.info/item\\_single.php?item=news&item\\_id=1478](http://www.illegal-logging.info/item_single.php?item=news&item_id=1478)

[6] e.g. <http://chrislang.org/2006/09/21/laos-fsc-certified-timber-is-illegal/>

[7] e.g. <http://www.fsc-watch.org>: „FSC crisis grows as major Swedish NGO withdraws“

[8] e.g. <http://www.fsc-watch.org> „Forest liars' campaign launched against environmental groups supporting FSC“

[9] e.g. [http://www.pro-regenwald.de/new\\_norw.php](http://www.pro-regenwald.de/new_norw.php)

[10] Göhre, K.: Die Robinie und ihr Holz. Deutscher Bauernverlag, Berlin, 1952