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Svenska Samernas Riksförbund · SSR

Umeå March 23rd 2009

Statement on PEFC Sweden

Sámiid Riikkasearvi / The National Association of the Swedish Sámi People (SSR) represent 43 Sámi villages in Sweden. One of its main tasks is to guard the economic prerequisites for reindeer herding.

The Sámi people are an indigenous people that live in Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia. An important part of Sami culture is reindeer herding. Reindeer herding is a very space demanding occupation, constantly in need of different types of grazing areas. Furthermore, reindeer herding is very much affected by forest management. Hence, it has for a long time been a priority for SSR, to work so that forest management respects the needs of reindeer herding and Sami rights to land and water.

SSR does not consider that PEFC in Sweden respects reindeer herding, the indigenous rights of the Sámi people and Sámi culture in an adequate way. PEFC is not independent or transparent, since no other partners than the forest owners/economic stakeholders have any real influence in the system. The system is constructed and controlled by the forest sector. Since PEFC does not respect the rights of indigenous people, there is no protection within PEFC of the Sámi rights for grazing land within the reindeer herding area or for Sámi important sites. Since the economic stakeholders dominate at all decisions, other stakeholder groups, such as the Sámi, are not given equal rights in the decision making within PEFC. The requirements set up are too general to actually protect reindeer herding and the Sámi culture. To actually acquire that PEFC Sweden protects these interests they need first to respect the reindeer herding areas. As of today, it is possible to go to court and question the Sámi's right to land and still be certified within PEFC.

Malin Brännström

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