

materials, resources and expertise, together with the use of advanced, ecologically-safe plywood manufacturing techniques and the experience gained in the export development field would serve as a guarantee of the profitability of the joint enterprise.

The head of Novgorodlesprom, Igor Slutzker, also spoke in support of this view.

#### Background

Novgorodlesprom, a territorial production association, was formed in 1988 pursuant to the general plan for developing the timber industry and forestry in the Soviet Union. The complex consists of 31 enterprises involved in logging and wood-processing, and employs tens of thousands of workers.

Wilhelm Schomann Ltd. was founded in 1983 and is among the 10 largest timber industry complexes in Finland. It is the largest producer of plywood and particleboard panels in the country. About 6,000 workers are employed at the company's factories. The annual turnover exceeds 3 billion Finnmarks.

Raute Ltd. was founded in 1908 and consists of a number of branches specializing in the manufacture of equipment for the wood-processing industry. It is the world's leading producer of equipment for plywood manufacturing. The company supplies both fully-equipped factories and individual types of equipment. Raute also produces industrial electronic equipment, electronic scales, and a variety of weighing and measuring systems for