

CRA-SEL

CENTRO DI RICERCA
PER LA SELVICOLTURA

Lab. Risorse Genetiche Forestali

To all Partners of the
FAO - *Silva Mediterranea* Research Network
WG 4 - **"Forest Genetic Resources in
the Mediterranean Region"**

Dear Colleague,

as you would know, the XX Session of the FAO *Silva Mediterranea* Committee was held in Sofia (Bulgaria) 7 – 10 April 2008. In this event there was an opportunity to present the main issues after our meeting in Arezzo (21 – 23 June 2007, Arezzo and Rome, Italy).

During the same Session meeting, it was agreed that, in order to relaunch *Silva Mediterranea*, the activities of the "Mediterranean Conifers Working Group" should be broadened. It was decided to change the title of the Group to **"Forest Genetic Resources in the Mediterranean Region"**.

This new title is very ambitious. However, if we consider our common geographic region, it is clear that the Mediterranean forest ecosystems include not only conifers, but also many other important tree species which have to be conserved in view of the effects of climate change and other outside pressures. Scientific and public awareness and the evolution of research programmes over time have matured, and lead to the realization that we need to focus our attention on a wider range of species.

Most of the problems, often reported by the mass media networks as exceptional, are in fact a permanent expression of the typical climatic instability in the Mediterranean Region. However, desertification, which is increasing in many areas, is clearly related to human activities, to increasing average temperatures and to considerably reduced amounts of precipitation. The intensity and frequency of rainfall, as well as its geographic distribution and chronology, seems to be changing, too.

It is ethically worthy that we foresters, geneticists and breeders, together with professionals with other skills, support our countries in reaching decisions which contribute towards developing national strategies for conserving valuable natural resources. In this case, researchers must be more forward looking and more advanced than the rest of society, and help inform and train others, as well as test and propose possible ways to face these problems.

In this context Italy, in my person, accepted to lead the new *Silva Mediterranea* Working Group **"Forest Genetic Resources in the Mediterranean Region"**.

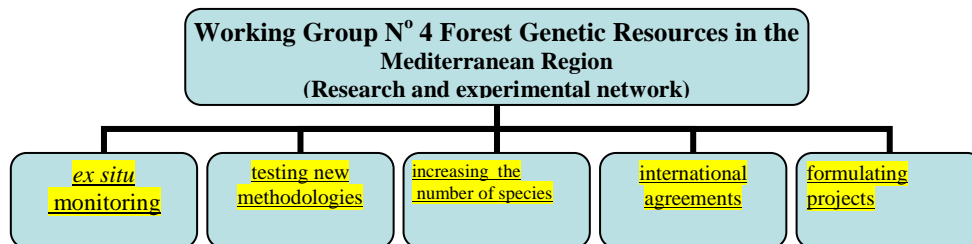
As most of you know, I'm a forester, and I work as research officer at the CRA – Research Centre for Silviculture in Arezzo, leading the Laboratory for Forest Genetic Resources. From the cultural point of view I'm Mediterranean of the northern part of the region, and my skills concern mainly species and ecosystems of the Apennines. I have, however, worked in programmes focused on conserving resources of both Conifers and Broadleaved trees.

This short presentation of my background is just to specify that I do not know really the characteristics and problems in all Mediterranean countries. Each of us will know well the local conditions, problems and limiting factors and their effects, and analysis and action at local and national levels will be best specified and handled by those coming from the countries in question. For this reason I hope to obtain your future and patient collaboration. Indeed, together with this new mandate within *Silva Mediterranea*, I have also to continue my own research activities in Italy.

I am open to suggestions and would much like to receive proposals on topics and future activities of the Working Group.

As stated at our meeting in Sofia, by August 15th 2008, a work plan should be ready to be officially presented in Rome in the coming autumn, during the European Forest Week, which will be held by FAO, in Rome on 20 October 2008.

According to the mission agreed by the Committee in Sofia, five main goals should be achieved over the next years:



Mission: (iv) **Working Group N° 4 (with new title): "Forest Genetic Resources in the Mediterranean Region"**

25. The Italian delegation reported to the Committee on the work of this group which had collaborated closely with IUFRO, particularly in establishing experimental networks and organizing international meetings to monitor activities. The programme of work for the next years would be based essentially on *ex situ* (**this is an error, it should have been in situ**) monitoring of networks, testing of new methodologies (including *ex situ* conservation methods), increasing the number of species targeted for conservation, concluding international agreements on the holding abroad of national genetic resources and formulating projects for new financing.

26. The Committee underlined the need to improve cooperation between researchers of the Mediterranean region and recommended that the working group support new joint activities, in particular those relating to the impact of climate change.

27. The Committee agreed to change the title of Working Group N° 4 from "Mediterranean Conifers" to "Forest Genetic Resources in the Mediterranean Region". The corresponding terms of reference, work plan and budget would be determined over the four months following the Silva Mediterranea session in Sofia.

Here enclosed is my short proposal that should be expanded and improved by your ideas, comments and suggestions. The structure of this document follows that one suggested by the Silva Mediterranea Committee meeting and should be completed and further developed in constructive debate between us. Please feel free to contribute especially in topics of major interest to you.

May I ask you to please return the attached document after reviewing it. I would like to have your contribution by the end of August.

After I have received your mails, I will try to summarize your contributions in order to present to the Committee our common and agreed proposal.

Thank you very much for your collaboration.

Best regards

Fulvio Ducci
Italy delegation and IUFRO WG 20213 chair

Arezzo, 11.VIII. 08