

NATIONAL REPORT – SLOVAKIA

1. In what way are the EFSOS “Conclusions and Policy Recommendations” relevant for your country?

Nearly all policy recommendations are of great importance to Slovakia; perhaps only recommendations listed in 1b) and 1k) are of less relevant.

1a) Need for policies to stimulate the sound use of wood (governments, forest industries, forest owners)

This policy recommendation is of great importance even though current policies pay attention to some aspects of the sound use of wood.

The assessment of long-term trends in national supply and demand for wood was performed in the programme “Wood – the 21st Century Raw Material” that was approved by government of the SR in 1999. Its aim is to achieve more efficient utilisation of full wood potential in conditions of the SR. On the basis of wood potential analysis it is proposed to adapt structure of wood industry with respect to assumed growing logging possibilities and tendency in development of assortment structure of felled timber. Wood industry should mainly increase final processing and utilising of wood and stimulate long-term and effective utilisation so called timber of lower quality. Besides the programme of science, research and development in production, processing and utilising of wood should be supported.

In “Concept of the Forestry Policy of the Slovak Republic by 2005” there is in this context a program goal of forestry aimed at “Optimal utilization of the forest production potential, particularly cutting possibilities in order to generate financial resources sufficiently covering the cost of silvicultural activities, of the renewal and maintenance of fixed assets and the improvement of material and social conditions of forestry workers”.

In currently valid “Mid-term Concept of Forestry for the Period 2004-2006” in the priority “Increasing the effectiveness in forestry” there is a partial task “Increasing intensity of timber production and utilization”. This task is to be secured mainly through afforestation of land unsuitable for agricultural use; performing reasonable reconstruction and conversions in low-productive forests; formation of intensive stands; applying differentiated silvicultural systems, tending methods, tree species compositions respecting changed ecological and economic conditions of forest management with aim of increment increase; complex utilization of timber biomass.

1b) Urgent need to address threats to sustainability in south-east Europe and the CIS sub-region

This policy recommendation is not relevant for the Slovak forest policy but we can positively affect this through active participation in international, multilateral and bilateral cooperation in the field of sustainable forest management.

1c) Need to devote policy attention to the consequences of the dynamic developments in Eastern Europe and the CIS sub-region

Consistent analysis of developments in mentioned sub-regions have not been performed and therefore this policy recommendation is of great importance to Slovakia.

1d) Improve the economic viability of forest management in Europe

The policy objectives mentioned in 1a):

- optimal utilization of the forest production potential in order to generate financial resources sufficiently covering the cost of silvicultural activities, of the renewal and maintenance of fixed assets and the improvement of material and social conditions of forestry workers,
- increasing the effectiveness in forestry, especially through the increasing intensity of timber production and utilization,

are decisive also for securing the economic viability of forest management. Financial means obtained from timber sale are insufficient to cover needs of the forest management. Therefore in the area of economic tools there is used support from both national public financial sources and EU structural funds.

A significant constraint encountered refers to fact that volume of public financial means needed for sustainable forest management has been decreasing and it does not secure realization of all political principles of forestry. Also not inclusion of public beneficial functions into market process has negative impacts on viability of the forest management.

State support of forest management is aimed mainly at: Investment to improvement and rationalization of silviculture, protection of forests, timber felling, primary processing and market of timber raw material and other forest production; Public-beneficial investments (to support sustainable forest management, to preserve and improve ecological stability of forests) and Afforestation of agriculture land.

Some measures can be supported also according to Law on Agricultural Payment Agency and new Law on forests, which will come into force on the 1st July 2005,

1e) Balanced implementation of wood energy policies

In the field of renewable energy sources we suppose that optimum diversification of both renewable and non-renewable energy sources in relation to ecological and social acquisitions should be achieved.

Development of utilization of the renewable energy sources was in Slovakia slow and insufficiently effective mainly due to marginalization of this matter on all levels (state energy policy, funding, research and development, legislation). In currently being prepared national forest programme we propose to decrease a great difference between present rate of utilization and potential of renewable energy sources through the measures in: elaboration of strategies; defining economic, ecological and legal frameworks; research and development; preparation and realization of projects.

1f) Forestry, wood and climate change

In the scope of the issues related to forests and climate change, in addition to realization of mitigation measures, which resides in reduction of greenhouse gasses, we focus also on introduction and application of the adaptation measures. We have launched the research project dealing with these issues. Measures related to forests and timber as a carbon sinks

result from objectives under points 1a) and 1e). There is also proposed institutional securing the carbon trading since 2008 in forest management.

1g) Forest law enforcement and governance

Preventing and reduction of illegal activities related to timber felling and trading are secured by application of these legal provisions and measures:

- Planned logging can be executed only to the extent according to valid forest management plan after marking logged trees and on the basis of written consent issued by professional forest manager.
- Incidental logging has to be marked and notified to respective organ of state forest administration in advance.
- Pursuant to law professional forest manager is responsible for correctness of marking and executing timber logging.
- Timber logged and produced assortments are marked by hallmark that must contain prescribed data
- Timber carrier and timber buyer are obliged to dispose the certificate on timber origin in timber transportation and processing; they are obliged on request of the members of Police Corps, organs of state forest administration or forest guard attest by this certificate.
- Forest user is obliged to ensure proper performance of protection service in forests via forest guard appointed by the organ of state forest administration.
- State forest administration is obliged to carry out permanent supervision over observance of the provisions of generally binding legal norms on forestry; in case of offences or administration delinquencies these organs are entitled to impose fines.
- Forest user is obliged to keep records on volume of stolen timber and through the total annual results to submit these data to Forestry Information Centre for processing and archiving.

Export of illegally logged timber from Slovakia is impossible in practice. In export timber customs declaration must include timber origin; timber has to be marked by producer hallmark or hallmark of wood processing company. Origin of timber and locality where it was logged must be also given in the sanitary certificate. However we have not any mechanism so far for finding out an import of illegally logged wood or wood products.

The effectiveness of this system in considerable rate depends on human factor. Among the reasons of illegal logging (which is less than 1%) at present belong mainly complicated economic situation of some groups of population. There is high unemployment rate, which in some mountain regions of northern and eastern Slovakia reaches 30%. Timber thefts in mountain regions result also from price increase on other energies.

The most effective way of preventing timber thefts in the country and in mountain regions with high unemployment is first of all realisation of measures related to rural development with consecutive increase of living standard of population in rural and mountain regions.

1h) Institutional change in countries in transition

One of the priority areas of “Mid-term Concept of Forestry for the Period 2004-2006” is “Settlement of Forest Ownership and Forest Usage”.

Since the beginning restitution in 1992 more than 95 ths entities required returning back of the ownership and users rights to the area of 993 ths ha (49,5% of the total area of forest lands in Slovakia) to the end of 2004. Positively settled were applications to almost 87% of required area and 53% of the total number of entities. Returning back of remaining forest

lands is stagnating because it is a question of mainly small individual ownership of forests. These cannot be identified in terrain, as well as they are mainly in shared co-ownership. These owners refuse associating or they did not submit all documents related to their property.

Returning back of remaining forest lands their original owners will be possible only after essential amendments of restitution-related legislation.

Ownership rights are frequently restricted by application of various laws. Therefore in new Act on Forests there is enacted the right of forest owners for the compensation if mentioned restrictions cause property loss.

Current policy and legislation contain provisions creating suitable conditions for extension of non-state forest owners, associating forest owners with small area and support of the associations of non-state forest owners.

1i) Monitoring environmental and social benefits from forests and forestry

For finding out, evaluating and comparing the level in securing sustainable forest management (including environmental and social benefits) the SR adopted Pan-European criteria and indicators. On their basis there were elaborated National Indicators of Sustainable Management in Forests. They were approved by the Ministry of Agriculture of SR.

National indicators are formulated so that they meet the main Pan-European intentions, satisfy the national specifics, enable periodical evaluation of reached progress, elaboration of international reports on forest status and international comparability. During elaboration of national indicators there were identified those indicators which state we are not able to find out or express in accord with internationally adopted definitions by means of the procedures currently applied in Slovakia. Substantial part of inconsistencies will be removed by introducing the method of large-scale forest inventory – National Forest Inventory 2005-2006. In the interest of harmonisation of the inventory procedures Slovakia has engaged to COST E43 project “Harmonisation of National Inventories in Europe”.

Improvement of the national indicators following new scientific outcomes and introducing new procedures of monitoring the state and development of forests will be a continuous process.

1j) Necessity of a cross-sectoral approach

Preparation of the National Forest Programme of the SR is realised through the cross-sectoral approach and dialogue. At present there are elaborated a few cross-sectoral programmes: “Wood – the 21st Century Raw Material” as an example cross-sectoral approach – between forestry and wood-processing industry, “Plan of Rural Development (2004-2006)”.

1k) Need to control forest fires, and to intensify international cooperation in this area

From the aspect of natural, climatic and stand conditions the forest fires do not belong among the most serious threats to forests in Slovakia. Aerial Fire Service established in 2001 secures fire-fighting forest protection. Forest SR, state enterprise secures coordination of the fire-fighting prevention in forests with activities of the Aerial Fire Service. Forest owners and users secure land fire-fighting protective service.

1l) Employment and the work force

State and development of employment in forest sector has been still the consequence of not completed reprivatization and restitution process, organizational changes and constituting

new forest management subjects. In the proposal of national forest programme there are stressed objectives aimed at improvement of educational and pedagogical systems and programmes so that they contribute to development of quality work force as well as engagement of women to activities related to forestry. There is necessary to create conditions so that school-leavers with forestry education are sufficiently motivated to remain in forestry sector. Attention is also paid to safety and protection of health at work.

1m) Developing the region's comparative advantages and European forest sector in the global context

Both policy recommendations are of great importance to Slovakia. Mentioned issues should be solved on regional and Pan-European level. International organizations like FAO and UNECE could take the initiative in this way oriented co-operation.

2) Which of the policy scenario assumptions made in EFSOS fits best to the situation in your country?

Concerning the variables affecting the forestry sector in Slovakia, like economic growth, forest resources, real prices of forest products, supply and demand on forest products and services, "baseline" or "integration" scenario seem to be the most suitable ones.

3) What kind of significant changes are you expecting with regard to your country's forest sector policy in the next 3-5 years as a (direct or indirect) result of the EFSOS analysis, conclusions and recommendations?

Forestry sector in Slovakia develops gradually in accordance with needs and requirements of the forest owners, interested groups, society, as well as in keeping with EU legislation, international commitments and conventions. EFSOS analysis, conclusions and recommendations can assist us in this process and they can serve like a reasoning the suggested objectives and measures in forestry policy and legislation.

4) Who uses the information, conclusions and recommendations presented in EFSOS in your country? Who else could potentially benefit from EFSOS?

So far competent personnel and officials of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry section and Forest Research Institute use information, conclusions and recommendations presented in EFSOS. They were also given to understand to staff of Ministry of Economy who deals with issues of wood processing industry. They could serve to representatives of wood processing enterprises, entrepreneurs and forest owners in receiving and realization their entrepreneurial intentions and decisions too.

5) What process is used to make EFSOS known and review it at the national level?

There will be used professional magazines, website and related workshops and seminars to make EFSOS known at the national level.

6) *What are significant information / analysis / ideas to national policy debate (inside and outside sector) added by EFSOS?*

Information and analysis related to actual state and development of forest resources, production, consumption and international trade in wood products are very significant to national policy including policy debate. Especially significant are information and analysis related to non-wood forest products and services.

7) *Do you have any comments on the EFSOS country profile for your country?*

We do not have any comments to our country profile. It was elaborated on the basis of data provided by our national correspondents and by means of in advance publicized methods.

8) *What are your suggestions and comments with regard to further UNECE/FAO Forest Sector Outlook activities?*

Working-out the Forests Sector Outlook Studies should be continued. No country or group of countries would be able to obtain such needed, valuable and complex information for the whole UNECE region in such effective way without EFSOS. Future activities could be in a larger extent aimed also at the elaborating the studies on comparative advantages and disadvantages (according to regions, sectors etc.), issues of cross-sectoral relations and linkages, non-wood forest products and services and so on.

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