



October 2008

Silva Mediterranea Newsletter 1



History

Almost 100 years ago, in 1911, Robert Hickel launched the **idea of Mediterranean forestry cooperation** and, in 1922, a small group of foresters and naturalists from France, Italy, Spain and Yugoslavia met in Marseille to set up a Mediterranean Forestry League under the name of "***Silva Mediterranea***".

In 1948, ***Silva Mediterranea*** became an FAO statutory body. By 1970, *Silva Mediterranea* had held 11 sessions. These resulted in recommendations, studies and publications on various forestry issues: land-use policy in the Mediterranean region, forest grazing, minor forest products, forest management, evaluation and training, forestry research, introduction of fast-growing species and the impact of tourism.

After an interruption of 11 years, ***Silva Mediterranea*** resumed its activities by holding its 12th session in La Grande Motte, Montpellier, France, from 2 to 6 December 1985. This meeting reviewed the trends in the use of forest land in the Mediterranean region since the last session held in Ankara in 1970; discussed cooperation in the area of forest management, fire protection, forestry research and training; and, outlined the future programme of the Committee.



At the Committee's **18th session held at FAO headquarters in Rome in April 2002**, the future of ***Silva Mediterranea*** was the main topic on the agenda. A number of changes – such as the creation of working groups – were recommended by the member countries.

From 7 to 10 April 2008, ***Silva Mediterranea*** held its **20th session in Sofia, Bulgaria**. This was equally an opportunity for it to celebrate its **60th anniversary as an FAO statutory body**. Highlights of this 20th session are summarized on pages 2 & 3.





20th Session of the AFWC/EFC/NEFC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions

The 20th session of the AFWC/EFC/NEFC Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions, *Silva Mediterranea*, was generously hosted by the Government of Bulgaria, in Sofia, from 7 to 10 April 2008. Twelve member countries as well as observers from international non-governmental organizations attended the session.

The opening ceremony was chaired by Abderrahim Houmy (Morocco), Chairperson of the 19th session of the Committee. In his opening address, he welcomed the delegates and thanked the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria for hosting the session. He also thanked the FAO Secretariat for its efforts and the excellent technical documentation provided. Houmy's address was followed by those of Stephan Yurukov, President of the State Forestry Agency (Bulgaria) and José Antonio Prado, Director of the Forest Management Division, FAO.

Working Groups

Existing Working Groups

1. Forest Fires
2. Cork Oak
3. Mediterranean Forests & Sustainable Development
4. Forest Genetic Resources

Created at the 20th session in Sofia

5. Forests and Climate Change
6. Funding Mechanisms

Participants

Member countries (12)

Algeria (1)	Israel (1)
Bulgaria (7)	Morocco (1)
Cyprus (1)	Portugal (1)
France (1)	Serbia (3)
Greece (1)	Spain (1)
Italy (4)	Turkey (1)

Observers(4)

EFIMED (1)
CIHEAM (1)
Plan Bleu (1)
GTZ (1)

FAO(5)

Elected Bureau

Chairperson: Mr Spas Todorov (Bulgaria)

Vice-Chairs: Mr De Sousa Teixeira (Portugal)
Mrs Sükran Gökdemir (Turkey)

Rapporteur: Mr Alexandros Christodoulou (Cyprus)



Post Session identified activities for 2008

1. Working Group Leaders are kindly requested to submit four-year work plans by 10 August 2008, as recommended at the 20th session meeting in Sofia.
2. The SM Committee shall organize a side event at the European Forest Week (EFW) on 22 October 2008. SM members are requested to confirm their participation.
3. Members intending to make presentations at the EFW should submit a one page summary of their presentation by 31 July for forwarding to the organizers.



Some Key Recommendations to Member Countries

1. The Forest Fires Working Group and the member countries should adopt the guidelines on the prevention and control of forest fires elaborated with support from FAO.
2. The Cork Oak Working Group should produce a statement on the use and promotion of cork oak in different economic sectors.
3. Cooperation between Mediterranean researchers should be strengthened.
4. A study on the impact of climate change on Mediterranean forests should be undertaken.
5. Countries of the Northern Mediterranean region should be able to participate in The Near East Network on Forest Health and Invasive Species.
6. *Silva Mediterranea* should be involved in all relevant events organized by the FAO member countries.
7. The Working Groups should submit to the Secretariat, within four months, their work plans (with objectives, expected results and budget) and proposed terms of reference.

Some Key Recommendations to FAO and Member Countries

1. A number of member countries should consolidate the commitment to contribute towards the strengthening of the Secretariat, also in terms of finance.
2. The Forest Fires Working Group should initiate a study on the relationship between forest fires and climate change.
3. Future sessions would be held each four years while the Executive Committee, enlarged to include France and Morocco, would meet each year.
4. Participation of SM Committee in the European Forest Week.
5. The activities of the Working Groups should be continued and their respective mandates and terms of reference be clearly defined and made known.
6. The Committee recommended that the thematic Working Groups present their programmes of work at the European Forest Week.

Recommendation to FAO

The FAO/Blue Plan collaboration should be continued during the second phase of Project "Mediterranean Forests and Sustainable Development", and that negotiation of this phase be initiated as soon as possible by FAO, with broader donor involvement.

The next session is to be held in 2012, at a date to be decided in consultation with the host country and the Secretariat. Cyprus, Egypt and Israel are the candidate host countries.

For more details, kindly read the final report located at the *Silva Mediterranea* web site: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/silvamed>





Objectives

The main objectives of *Silva Mediterranea* are:

- Periodically review the trends in the use of forest land in the Mediterranean area and to assess the impact of changes implemented in the agricultural, industrial and urban sectors;
- Advise member governments accordingly on reorientation or improvements necessary to meet changing situations or newly-emerging needs;
- Periodically examine progress in forestry technology within regional and ecological contexts in order to better assess present forest land utilization methods;
- Determine and carry out technical studies and surveys to assist in the formulation and implementation of national forest policies;
- Identify forestry research priorities in the Mediterranean area.

International initiatives in Mediterranean forestry

The Mediterranean Action Plan (MAP), adopted in 1975 at an International United Nations Environment Programme Conference in Barcelona, was originally aimed at controlling marine pollution and seashore protection. However, it soon became apparent that there was a need to extend the mandate of the MAP to the conservation of terrestrial ecosystems, with due consideration to socio-economic conditions and requirements. The **Mediterranean "Blue Plan"** was elaborated in response to such needs.



Upcoming Events

23rd Session of the International Poplar Commission, 26-30 October 2008, Beijing, China.
<http://www.fao.org/forestry/ipc2008/en/>

International Conference "Water and forests: a convenient truth?", 30-31 October 2008, Barcelona, Spain. <http://www.efi.int/portal/efimed/>

International Conference "The European Forest-Based Sector: Bio-Responses to Address New Climate and Energy Challenges?", 6-8 November 2008, Nancy, France. <http://www.gip-ecofor.org/nancy2008>

2nd Conference on Drylands, Deserts and Desertification, 14-17 December 2008, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel.
<http://cmsprod.bgu.ac.il/Eng/Units/bidr/desertification2008/default.htm>

5th World Water Forum "Bridging Divides for Water", 15-22 March 2009, Istanbul, Turkey.
<http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/>

19th Session - Committee on Forestry, 16-20 March 2009, FAO, Rome, Italy.
<http://www.fao.org/forestry/37836/en/>