FORESTRY STRATEGY of the EUROPEAN UNION

Strategy of forestry and forestry development up to 2030
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General Overview

- Snapshot on EU forests: diversity and multi-functionality
- Forest Policy organisational structures in the EU
- EU Forestry Strategy 1998 – until now
- Challenges “short time”
- Challenges “medium term”
1. The state of forests in the EU

In the EU, forests serve multiple and interrelated social, economic and environmental functions, often at the same time and place!
5% world’s forests

EU 27: 155 million ha
42% of EU land area

Public forests: 40%
Private ownership: 60%

16 million owners
(350 000)
diverse bio-geographic regions
different socio-economic situations
Forests provide jobs, income and renewable raw materials for industry and energy

- Sawn wood, wood-based panels, pulp for paper
- Firewood, forest chips and bark for bio-energy
- > 2 million jobs, often in rural small and medium enterprises
- € 300 billion turnover
- Large downstream value chain: furniture, construction, printing and packaging
- Forest sector provides around 8% of the total added value from manufacturing
- EU one of the biggest traders and consumers of forest products in the world

...and there are new challenges as for example “resource efficiency”
Resource efficiency example: Multifunctional “cascading” use of biomass

Land use – Production alternatives
Wood (short / long term rotation)
Raw materials for industry and energy

Material use
Construction, housing…
Pulp & paper, Chemicals

Energy use
Electricity
Heat
Fuels

Waste-to-energy

Multiple utility

Recycling

- Using biomass to produce a material first, then recover its energy content from the waste can provide multiple benefits and ensures more efficient use of biomass.
- Reutilization of biomass may reduce demand for land and maximise GHG mitigation potential.
Forests provide a considerable number of environmental and social services

- Protective forests for settlements and infrastructure (ex. mountainous forests, soil erosion...)
- Amenity purposes (recreation, health...)
- Preserving landscape and soil fertility (tourism, desertification)
- Regulation of freshwater supplies (water regulation, quality)
- Biodiversity conservation (integration), protected areas
- Role of forests in climate change (carbon sinks / sources)
2. General EU Policy Framework for Forestry

- Forest policy => traditional sector policy => “self feeding tendency”
- Sector policies are increasingly dominated by cross-cutting policy challenges: employment, climate change, etc.
Forest policies in Europe

- National / regional standards for forest management, nature and landscape management rules: subsidiary principle, huge differences in approaches (devolution, responsibilities...)
- Considerable interdependence between Member States (MS) forest policies and other relevant policy domains, including a number of EU policies: need for an EU Forest Policy framework
- CAP / Rural Development, cohesion/regional policies
- Internal Market: competition, Research policy
- Environment Policy and Climate change, plant health regime
- External policies: trade, development, international agreements
- .......
Just a few examples of cross-cutting issues, only linked to EU environmental policy

- Biodiversity Strategy: integration, invasive species...
- Wood products: Eco-label, public procurement, certification...
- Financial support: LIFE programme
- Information and knowledge sharing: SEIS and INSPIRE directives
- EU-FLEGT action programme, Voluntary Partnership Agreements, due diligence regulation
- Climate change: LULUCF, REDD+, bio-energies...
- International Environmental Agreements...
Political “weight” of forest policies

- Sometimes the impression that forest policies are perceived by other influential policy domains more as “a playing arena” than as a precondition for solving policy problems;

- Generally speaking, MS forest policies have quite important implementation tasks, but they are often lacking political leadership,.. with the consequence: they have substantial responsibilities on the ground without having always the adequate authority, power and resources to ensure these responsibilities.
3. THE EU FORESTRY STRATEGY

Based on the “Open coordination method”
Short description of the EU Forestry Strategy

- General principles: SFM, multifunctional role of forests, subsidiary principle, shared responsibilities, open sector of the economy: no common market policy
- MS forest programmes + interactions with EU policies
- Improvement of coordination, communication and cooperation in all policy areas with relevance to the forest sector within the Commission, between the Commission and the MS, as well as between MS
Coordination tools and challenges

- **Standing Forestry Committee, Council Working Group**: preparing decision-making processes
- **Advisory Committees (AGRI, ENTR)**: stakeholder involvement based on exchange of information
- **Commission Inter-service Group**: inter-service consultation

*Lessons learned:*

- Institutional complexity makes agenda setting relatively easy but decision processes, commitments, implementation relatively difficult
- “Open method of coordination” based on informal coordination is only functioning under the pre-condition that there is a common objective and that the different parties have more or less “equal political weight”.
4. And in future? Stop or continue...
First, there are some challenges in the near future (2011 – 2012):

- Pan-European Process “Forests Europe”; Oslo conference
- Follow-up of the Green Paper on forest protection and information in the EU; EP report and…
- Climate change negotiations; Biodiversity Strategy
- FLEGT: illegal logging – implementation of the due diligence regulation
- Financial perspectives 2014 – 2021 and in particular future Rural Development policy: an opportunity for forest sector?
Secondly, the Commission is now planning to revise the EU Forestry Strategy

- Discussions starting in 2011: timetable, objectives and organisational questions yet unknown...
- Personal comments (1): we should not walk into the trap to start again a discussion on the possible need of “a comprehensive EU Forestry policy”
- Personal comments (2): we should mainly focus our efforts on the relationship between MS forest policies and relevant EU policy priority areas: if we agree that MS policies are the main instruments to implement the forest strategy, how can we make them more perceptible within EU policies?
- Personal comments (3): on organisational matters, we should take advantage of existing experiences / examples of multi-level governance and make use of recent information and communication technologies
We shouldn’t try to re-invent the wheel on forest policy principles and concentrate our efforts on possible linkages with existing EU issues:

- **Economic globalisation of the forest sector:** Internal market, competitiveness, international trade, FLEGT, land use changes, renewable raw materials for industry and energy
- **Forest related ecosystem services:** Implementation of NATURA 2000, biodiversity issues, WFD, protective functions, PES, TEEB...
- **Adaptation of forests to climate change:** to monitor changes in forests and to develop an early warning system for pests and diseases
- **Governance and communication issues:** trans-border regional cooperation, new opportunities deriving from the Lisbon Treaty such as enhanced cooperation, social networks, scientific & expert input, relevant info and communication tools to integrate forest issues in relevant EU policies.
We need to discuss on approaches and attitudes

- The slide before just shows some examples of EU policy issues that could be discussed in order to see how relevant they are to MS forest policies and if forest policies can provide any added value; there are probably much more issues to be considered!

- Euro-scepticism ? Brussels “bureaucracy”: clichés such as “harmonisation and standardisation” of 500 million people...for sure, more acknowledgement and rewarding of positive developments are needed and a higher degree of pragmatism will perhaps show us new roads;

- we further need to do efforts to diminish expert’s jargon and we should avoid hypochondriac and naïve denying attitudes...

- The message that forests are “living landscapes” (how to involve and engage people with nature) is essential.
Finally some fundamental questions before starting the debate:

- Do the different institutional levels implied in forest policies have the capacity and political will to set up a logic framework for forest policies at different levels which could produce a coherent set of actions and agendas? (pan-European, EU and MS level)

- Is it possible to design an EU forest strategy without necessarily shifting additional competences to the EU level, but seeking to reinforce the “political weight” of MS policies and defining clear added value policy tasks to be carried out by the EU level?

- If we focus on the link between “EU measures” and MS forest policies: can we define a “clear” political objective and provide solutions for problem solving within EU policies?

- EU Forest Strategy is not only a matter for forest experts but requires strong political determination and the involvement of industry and civil society: are we able to create at least a certain mutual trust allowing us to progress on integration?
All you need, is the right balance..
Thank you very much for your attention!