

## Forest policy goals in Poland in light of the current forestry aims in Europe Part 1. Forest policy processes in Europe

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**Abstract.** The Polish "National Forest Policy" was adopted by the Council of Ministers in April 1997 and since then no revisions of this document have been made. However, over the last two decades policy changes affecting forests and forestry have been implemented worldwide including Europe. Nonetheless, in more recent years, significant changes in social, economic, institutional, and legal aspects of forestry have also occurred in Poland.

This paper is the first of a series of five articles, which aim at highlighting necessary changes in the "National Forest Policy" following the achievements of European forest policy processes and trends in forest policy of selected European countries. The focus of the present paper are the most important European processes of forest policy formulation, in particular the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe process) as well as forest-focused and forest-related policies of the European Union. Included in this research are the Forest Europe resolutions as well as decisions and EU policies, strategies and legal acts in terms of the general objectives set for forests and forestry. The analysis focuses on the period 1997–2016, i.e. starting from the year the "National Forest Policy" has been adopted. The conclusions of this first paper are that in recent years, forests and forestry have been increasingly included in various sectoral policies of the European Union (environmental and biodiversity protection, climate, energy, agricultural policies), which requires the member states to revise and adjust their own forest-related regulations and policies.

**Keywords:** policy analysis, Forest Europe, forest-focused policies, forest-related policies, forestry strategy

### 1. Introduction

The core directions of forestry development in Poland were set out by the National Forest Policy adopted by the Council of Ministers over 20 years ago (April 1997). The document defines the objectives and priorities of forest policy, outlines the organizational, economic and legal conditions for its implementation, as well as describes the schedule of tasks and their expected effects. The "National Forest Policy" has been implemented, which is applicable to the forests of all ownership forms, forest functions that comprise the objectives and principles of forest management and relationships of forestry with the society, national economy sectors and a range of organizational units working together with Poland's forestry (MOŚZNiL 1997).

The past two decades have been a period of profound political, economic and social changes, not only in Poland but in

Europe as well. The shape of policy both at the international and national levels has been significantly influenced by the process of globalization that has limited or removed barriers to the flow of goods and capital, urban development and depopulation of rural areas, changes in natural environment, including climate change, as well as enhanced technology and information transfer between the world's countries and regions (Paschalis-Jakubowicz 2010a). The main factor in socio-economic and cultural changes, as well as those in the awareness of Poland's society, was Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004, and thus the adoption of the Community acquis and successive involvement in the process of shaping policy and establishing the Community law. Significant changes have also taken place within the European Union, basically in its institutions and a range of policy areas (Hix 2010). Foremost improvement of policy has been achieved in the domains directly or indirectly

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affecting forests and forest management, i.e. policies as regards agriculture and rural development, environmental protection including preservation of biodiversity and water resources, as well as policies on climate change, energy, trade, not to mention regional policy and that on research and development. Changing policy frameworks at the EU level directly or indirectly translates into the shape of solutions adopted in individual member states (Pülzl, Hogl 2013).

In spite of profound changes in social, economic, institutional and legal environments of Poland's forestry in the past two decades, the "National Forest Policy" has been neither reviewed, revised nor updated. The document refers to the provisions of the "Ecological Policy of the State" adopted by the Polish Parliament in 1991 as well as the "Forest Principles" and "Agenda 21" adopted at the Earth Summit (UNCED, Rio de Janeiro 1992) and also the declarations signed by European ministers responsible for the protection forests, which were adopted at the conferences held in Strasbourg in 1990 and Helsinki in 1993. Nonetheless, the recommendations of the subsequent political processes, agreements and documents, adopted both at the international and national levels that have ever since shaped forestry policy and modalities for forestry functioning have not been taken into account in the "National Forest Policy".

Due to the long-term nature of forest management and long-term effects of forestry activities, relevant policy solutions are usually adopted for a period of ten or more years. However, socio-economic changes instigate the necessity to periodically review and evaluate and possibly amend these policies. It is believed that the most important factors determining the need to substantiate the national policy are the changes in public perception of forestry, progress in establishing international agreements, as well as the change of forestry priorities on a global or regional scale (Fraser 2002). All the three aspects are met by Poland's "National Forest Policy", and furthermore, in this case, the appropriate time period elapses between the adoption by the Council of Ministers and launching the implementation of the policy.

In the recent years, a few studies have been conducted as regards European and Polish policy on forests. The analyses of changes in policy concerning forest in Europe in connection with global trends are presented in a series of articles by Paschalis-Jakubowicz (2010a, b, c). The same author has carried out detailed studies on international modalities with reference to the preparation of a strategy pertaining to the State Forests Holding in Poland (Paschalis-Jakubowicz 2012). A wide review of the needed amendments to Polish policy on forests and forest-related policies was prepared in the context of work on the National Forest Program, as part of a research project implemented in 2012–2015 at the Forest Research Institute (IBL), the results of which were published in a series of thematic studies (Gołos et al. 2014; Gwiazdowicz, Rykowski

2014; Rykowski 2014; Borowski, Rykowski 2015; Jodłowski, Rykowski 2015; Kaliszewski, Rykowski 2015; Zając, Rykowski 2015; Rykowski 2016). Zaleski (2017) analysed forest policy priorities formulated under the Forest Europe process, including the occurrence frequency, and attempted to find links between the priorities important for countries participating in the process. Yet, the latter work does not refer to the priorities and goals set out in the "National Forest Policy".

The present paper is the first in a series of articles aimed at analysing the directions of changes in the "National Forest Policy" based on the review of the processes shaping forest policy in Europe, including policy trends observed in several European countries. The most important processes shaping forest policy in Europe are described, in particular the process Forest Europe (previously the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe [MCPFE]), as well as pertinent activities relating to the EU sectoral policies that have direct or indirect impact on forests and forestry. The next two articles in this series will present the results of the analysis of forest policy priorities in Europe and review the Polish program and strategic documents directly or indirectly related to forests and forestry, in view of European priorities. The fourth article will discuss the directions of forest policy development in selected European countries with regards to Polish forest policy. The series will be concluded by the paper concerning revisions and amendments to Polish policy on forests proposed in the last two decades and summarizing in conclusion the discussed issues.

## 2. Methodology

Desk research, i.e. the analysis involving the collation and synthesis of existing available data from various sources (McNabb 2010; van Thiel 2014) was performed. The course of proceedings included the identification of applicable documents (agreements, legal acts, policies, strategies) adopted under Forest Europe and by the EU (directly or indirectly connected to forests and forestry), and then their analysis in terms of priorities specified for forestry (Buttolph Johnson et al. 2010; Weimer, Vining 2011). The research covered the period from 1997 (when Poland's "National Forest Policy" was adopted) up to 2016 (inclusive).

## 3. Results

### Main challenges for forest policy in Europe

The evolution of forest policy in Europe is conditional on the trends at a global level (Paschalis-Jakubowicz 2010a). For at least a hundred years, at the heart of the discussion on forest policy in Europe and North America, there were issues of ensuring the right amount of wood to meet the demand towards

sustaining economic growth, as well as creating the strategic reserves of wood raw material. Over the last decades, significant changes have taken place. Since the early 1970s, issues related to forests and forestry have been ‘internationalized’, mainly due to the progressive loss of tropical forests and the recognized role of forests in the mitigation of the impact of climate change (Hyde 2012). Not without significance were the conflicts regarding forest utilization escalating between local communities and large forestry corporations, mainly in developing countries in the Southern Hemisphere (Fraser 2002). Currently, the following issues have been essentially emphasized in the political debate on forests:

- Carbon sequestration to mitigate climate change on a global scale
- Wood for energy production and establishment of forest plantations for energy and wood processing purposes
- Protection of biodiversity and valuable habitats
- Encouragement of environmental-friendly tourism and recreation in forests and preservation of aesthetic values of forests
- Protection of forest soils against erosion
- Water security

Sustainable forest management and reduction of deforestation on a global scale (Cubbage et al. 2003; Paschalis-Jakubowicz 2010a, b, c; Hyde 2012).

The analogous catalogue of the most important challenges for the forest sector is contained in the report on current and future trends in forestry published by the United Nations European Economic Commission (UNECE) in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). The challenges listed include mitigating climate change, promoting renewable energy, protecting and adapting forests to climate change, safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity, providing renewable and competitive forest products, preserving forest sustainable management and improving forest policy and related institutions (UNECE 2011).

### **Processes shaping forest policy in Europe**

At the supranational level, Europe’s forest policy is shaped under two key processes. The first is the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCPFE), a pan-European forum begun in 1990 and now operating as Forest Europe. The EU constitutes the second forum for shaping forest-focused and forest-related policies (Kleinschmit, Edwards 2013).

### **Forest Europe**

Since 1998, five Ministerial Conferences and one Extraordinary Ministerial Conference have been held under the Pan

-European Forest Europe process. As the result, four general declarations, 11 resolutions, two decisions, and the “Oslo ministerial mandate to negotiate a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe” (Table 1) have been adopted. Currently, there are 47 signatories to Forest Europe (the EU and 46 countries situated wholly or partly in Europe), as well as 14 countries and 45 organizations acting as observers (Forest Europe 2016).

At the conference held in 1998 in Lisbon, Portugal, the emphasis was put on promoting social and economic functions of forests and forest management. One of the most important achievements was endorsement and further implementation of six pan-European indicators for sustainable forest management (SFM) as well as the recommendation of pan-European operational performance levels for SFM (MŚ 2004).

The Ministerial Conference held in Vienna, Austria (2003), focused on supporting the economic and social aspects of SFM, protecting and enhancing forest biodiversity and taking action to combat climate change and reduce its negative impact on forests. There was also endorsed the set of Improved Pan-European Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management (MŚ 2004).

The next Ministerial Conference held in Warsaw, Poland (2007), focused on increasing the role of the forest sector in energy production and mobilizing wood resources, maintaining and strengthening the protective functions of forests in relation to the soil and water, as well as mitigating natural disasters related to water as part of sustainable forest management (Rezulcja 2007a, b).

The conference held in Oslo, Norway (2011), resulted in the adoption of the “Oslo Ministerial mandate to negotiate a legally binding agreement on forests in Europe” and the resolution on “European Forests 2020”. The first document (Oslo Ministerial Mandate 2011) opened the way to negotiating the legally binding agreement on forests in Europe. The second document contained a vision of the future of forests in Europe and set out eight goals for European forests by 2020, summarizing the current process and indicating the most important directions of action in the implementation of the sustainable forest management model (Oslo Ministerial Decision 2011).

At the Conference held in 2015 in Madrid, Spain, the agreements were signed on the role of the forest sector in the green economy and on enhancement of forest protection, primarily through the development of pan-European principles for forest protection, raising awareness of the role of SFM in forest protection as well as on intensification of climate change adaptation measures in forests. At the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference (Madrid 2015), it was planned to adopt a legally binding framework agreement on forests. In the absence of a consensus on the final wording of the text of the agreement, the work on the draft document was extended until 2020 (Madrid Ministerial Decision 2015).

**Table 1.** Declarations, resolutions and decisions adopted under the Forest Europe in 1998–2015

MCPFE conference	Documents
1998 Lisbon	General Declaration Resolution L1 – People, Forests and Forestry – Enhancement of Socio-Economic Aspects of Sustainable Forest Management Resolution L2 – Pan-European Criteria, Indicators and Operational Level Guidelines for Sustainable Forest Management
2003 Vienna	Vienna Declaration – European Forests – Common Benefits, Shared Responsibilities Resolution V1 – Strengthen Synergies for Sustainable Forest Management in Europe through Cross-sectoral Co-operation and National Forest Programmes Resolution V2 – Enhancing Economic Viability of Sustainable Forest Management in Europe Resolution V3 – Preserving and Enhancing the Social and Cultural Dimensions of Sustainable Forest Management in Europe Resolution V4 – Conserving and Enhancing Forest Biological Diversity in Europe Resolution V5 – Climate Change and Sustainable Forest Management in Europe
2007 Warsaw	Warsaw Declaration Warsaw Resolution 1 (W1) – Forests, Wood and Energy Warsaw Resolution 2 (W2) – Forests and Water
2011 Oslo	Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on Forests in Europe Oslo Ministerial Decision: European Forests 2020
2015 Madrid	Madrid Ministerial Declaration: 25 Years Together Promoting Sustainable Forest Management in Europe Madrid Resolution 1 (M1) – Forest Sector in the Center of Green Economy Madrid Resolution 2 (M2) – Protection of Forests in a Changing Environment Madrid Ministerial Decision – The Future Direction of Forest Europe
2015 Madrid Extraordinary Conference	Madrid Ministerial Decision

Source: Forest Europe 2016

### Forest-related activities in the European Union

The EU has not set out a separate, autonomous and common policy on forests. No basis for such policy were included in the Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community (Club de Bruxelles 1997). The legal framework for a common forest policy has also not been created by successive treaties of the European Union: the Treaty of Maastricht (Treaty 1992), the Treaty of Amsterdam (Treaty 1997), the Treaty of Nice (Treaty 2001) and the Treaty of Lisbon (Traktat 2007). The forestry measures undertaken by the EU are connected with the implementation of objectives under other policies, such as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the EU's Regional Policy and legislation concerning environmental protection, trade, internal market, research, industry, development cooperation and energy (e.g. Articles 4, 6, 26, 38, 180, 191, 194, 206 and 207 of the Treaty of Lisbon). When the aforementioned provisions do not constitute a sufficient legal basis for undertaking joint

actions, there is applied the Article 352 par. 1 of the Treaty of Lisbon: “If action by the Union should prove necessary, within the framework of the policies defined in the Treaties, to attain one of the objectives set out in the Treaties, and the Treaties have not provided the necessary powers, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament, shall adopt the appropriate measures (...)”.

The absence of any treaty as the basis for pursuing the common forest policy means that by reason of the principle of subsidiarity, forestry matters are under the competence of the Member States and the issues of direct or indirect policy regarding forests remain fragmented into various areas of the EU's activity. This situation leads to the dominance of a range of sectors over the forest sector, since forest-related activities are undertaken primarily and increasingly in the areas (sectors) other than forestry. Another problem is the lack of coordination and consistency of activities within particular policy areas at the EU level, and also between the Member States'

institutions and the EU's bodies. This state of affairs repeatedly brings about endorsement of incompatible goals and causes situations of conflict (Pülzl, Hogl 2013).

Even with the lack of a treaty as the basis for the implementation of joint forestry activities in the EU as a whole, since the 1960s, attempts have been made to establish the policy defining common principles of forest management. Initially, forestry initiatives were undertaken under the Common Agricultural Policy. These focused primarily on the development of forest plantations and on the improvement and distribution of forest genetic material. Basically, only the commercial aspect of forest management was then taken into account. At the end of the 1990s, the scope of forestry measures was expanded, among others, by the activities towards the protection of forests against pollution and fires, compilation of statistical data on forestry and enhanced scientific research in the fields concerning genetics, disease control, forest ecosystems and multifunctional forestry (Club de Bruxelles 1997).

In 1997, the European Parliament, using its legislative initiative for the first time, obliged the European Commission to prepare proposals for a coherent forestry strategy to complement national forest policies of individual Member States (Club de Bruxelles 1997). In November 1998, the Commission presented its position on the strategy, and in December of the same year, the Council of the European Union adopted the "Resolution on Forestry Strategy for the European Union" (Council Resolution 1998). The document consists of two parts. The general part underlines the importance of forest multi-functionality and sustainable forest management as well as the most important principles of the strategy, which include:

- the principle of subsidiarity and the concept of shared responsibility, according to which the European Community may, in certain cases, take measures to ensure the implementation of sustainable forest management,
- the principle of implementing international provisions by means of national and regional forest programs or other similar instruments along with active participation in global processes related to forests and forest management,
- improvement of coordination, communication and cooperation in all the areas relevant to the forest sector, both by the European Commission and the Member States (Council Resolution 1998).

The specific part of the strategy discusses the most important spheres of the European Community activities on forests and forestry: rural development policy, the protection of forests against air pollution and fires, the European Forest Information and Communication System, Community expansion, biodiversity conservation and implementation of the Natura 2000 network, climate change mitigation and adaptation, further development of wood and paper industry, forest certification and coordination of undertaken activities. The Council obliged the European Commission to present a report assess-

ing the implementation of the strategy recommendations, five years after its adoption (Council Resolution 1998).

In 2005, the European Commission presented the report on the implementation of the "Strategy ....". The report contained criticism in relation to the implementation of the recommendations. The Commission suggested the development and implementation of a specific EU forest management plan so as to improve the effectiveness of future actions. In mid-2006, the "Communication on the EU Forest Action Plan" was presented by the Commission to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament (Komunikat 2006).

The overall objective of the Action Plan was to support and strengthen sustainable forest management and the multi-functional role played by forests. The plan was to create a coherent framework for implementing forest activities in the Member States and to be an instrument of coordination between the Community actions and forest policy implemented by individual countries. The plan comprised the main principles and elements of the "Forestry Strategy of the European Union" (1998) and took into account the growing importance of global and cross-sectoral issues in forest policy. The latter required the improvement of coherence and coordination of actions. The need to strengthen the competitiveness of the forest sector and to ensure sound management of forests throughout the EU was also recognized.

The scope of the activities under the plan comprised four main objectives:

- Improving long-term competitiveness and promoting the sustainable use of forestry products and forest-related services
- Improving the condition of the environment and its protection, including preserving and increasing biodiversity of forest ecosystems, supporting efforts to allow forest sequestering more CO<sub>2</sub>, improving the condition of forests and their resistance to external factors
- Improving the quality of life by preserving and supporting the social and cultural dimension of forests
- Promoting coordination and communication, including improving coherence and cooperation between sectors towards maintaining the balance between economic, environmental and socio-cultural objectives at various organizational and institutional levels (Komunikat 2006).

The document also details 18 basic actions, including research and technological development to strengthen the competitiveness of the forest sector, promote the use of forest biomass for energy production, support in meeting international commitments to mitigate climate change and adaptation to climate change, contribute to the achievement of the revised Community targets for biodiversity set up by 2010 and for the coming years, as well as strengthen the coordination between policy areas on forest-related issues (Komunikat 2006).

The EU Forest Action Plan expired in 2011. The ex-post evaluation indicated that while the actions specified in the

plan were widely implemented, the voluntary instrument in itself was not very effective in coordinating the activities. This resulted from the lack of separate means and instruments for implementing the plan and also its factual implementation through measures taken in connection with other activities. The Action Plan significantly contributed to improving forestry communication between the Member States and the European Commission, but it did not improve the coherence of actions under individual EU policies related to forests or concerning forests and forest management (EFI 2012).

The evaluation of the Forest Action Plan identified the need for a new strategy on forests – setting out and implementing a common vision for multi-functional and sustainable forest management in Europe, which would specify priorities and objectives, establish links between the EU's and Member States' strategies and result in strengthening coherent planning, financing along with putting into operation cross-sectoral activities.

In September 2013, the European Commission published a "A New EU Forest Strategy for Forests and the Forest-based Sectors" (Komunikat 2013b). The strategy constitutes a reference for further development of forest policy and is to support the EU's forest sector to achieve a position that guarantees an effective contribution to the objectives of the European Union. The strategy is based on three guiding principles:

- Sustainable forest management and multi-functional role of forests, providing various goods and services in a sustainable manner and ensuring the protection of forests
- Effective resource management, optimization of forest and the forest sector contribution to rural development, economic growth and job creation
- Responsibility for forests at a global level, promoting sustainable production and consumption of forest products.

The main objective of the strategy is to guarantee management of all forests in the EU compliant with the principles of sustainable forest management and to increase the EU's contribution in promoting sustainable forest management and reducing deforestation at a global level by the year 2020. The document identifies eight priority areas, within which strategic directions of actions of the Member States and the European Commission are defined, i.e.:

- Supporting rural and urban communities, mainly from funds for rural development
- Supporting competitiveness and sustainability of the EU's forest-related industry, bioenergy and the green economy
- Enhancing forest adaptation to climate change and maintaining forest contribution to climate change mitigation
- Enhancing the protection forests and biodiversity should aim to enhance, restoring forest ecosystems' resilience

and multi-functionality, as well as preventing negative impacts on forests

- Improving knowledge-based information on forests in the EU
- Stimulating innovative forest management and added-value products
- Supporting coordination and communication
- Participating in the processes related to the protection of forests on a global scale.

It was also assumed that the review and assessment of progress in implementing the strategy will be carried out by 2018 (Komunikat 2013b). The absence of a treaty as a basis for pursuing a common forest policy at the EU level means that the issues of direct or indirect forest policy are dispersed between different areas of the Community's activity (Pülzl, Hogl 2013). The most important areas affecting forests and the forestry sector include

- environmental policy and biodiversity conservation,
- climate and energy policy,
- agricultural and rural development policy, and
- industrial and trade policy.

The shape of policy on forests and forestry is also influenced, albeit relatively to a much lesser extent, by the EU's activities in the field of water management, research and technology, development cooperation, plant protection and civil protection (Winkel et al. 2013; Pülzl, Hogl 2013).

### **Policies on environmental protection and biodiversity conservation**

The objectives and scope of the EU's activities in the field of environmental protection are set out in the environmental action programs. The 6th Environment Action Programme set out a framework for environmental policy-making in the period 2002–2012 and outlined actions that need to be taken. Forestry was an important area for achieving the objectives in the priority areas: climate change and nature and biodiversity (Decyzja 1600/2002/WE). In the 7th Environment Action Programme, in force until 2020, forestry is recognized as an important component of the activities as regards the protection, preservation and improvement of the natural capital, including enhancement of biodiversity and forest functions as well as resistance to climate change impacts, fires, storms, pests and diseases (Decyzja 1386/2013/UE).

Forest issues are also referred to in the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020. The main strategy aims are:

- to endorse by 2020 the forest management plans or equivalent instruments for all state-owned forests and forest holdings with particular areas to ensure a measurable improvement in the conservation status of species and habitats that depend on or are affected by forestry,

- to improve ecosystem services compared to the EU reference level of 2010 (Komunikat 2011).

The key legal instruments for the implementation of the EU's biodiversity policy that affect forests and forest management are the directives: Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (the Birds Directive) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna (the Habitats Directive). The objective of the Birds Directive is to preserve the populations of bird species at levels that meet ecological, scientific and cultural requirements, taking into account the economic and recreational conditions, or to regulate species populations to this level (Dyrektywa 79/409/EWG). The Habitats Directive aims to ensure biodiversity through the protection of the natural habitats, including those constituting refuges of wild fauna and flora in the European territory of the Member States. Measures taken in accordance with this directive serve to preserve the appropriate conservation status of habitats and species of wild fauna and flora significant to the Community, taking into account the economic, social and cultural requirements, as well as regional and local characteristics. Consequently, the Member States are required to create a coherent ecological network, Natura 2000, consisting of the protected sites comprising the habitats and species listed in the annexes to the document (Dyrektywa 92/43/EWG).

### Climate and energy policy

The EU's climate policy is based on a treaty for a common environmental policy, introduced in 1987 by a consistent European act (Delbeke, Vis 2015). The policy was launched following the adoption of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by the European Union and its Member States in 1992. The ultimate objective of the convention is to “achieve (...) stabilization of greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system” (Ramowa Konwencja 1992). Among others, the Kyoto Protocol (Protokół 1997) and the legally binding global agreement on climate (the Paris Agreement 2015) were endorsed under the convention. Forests are an integral component of the Paris Agreement as it allows the possibility of taking into account the greenhouse gas (GHG) absorption and fossil fuel substitution by forests in emissions accounting towards achievement of zero net emissions (Komisja Europejska 2016).

The EU's action to implement the provisions and to achieve the objectives of the Kyoto Protocol initiated the “European Climate Change Program” (Communication 2000), endorsed by the European Commission in 2000, to identify

environmentally and economically effective policies and measures to reduce GHG emissions at the EU level. In the following years, the solutions were expanded and refined. Current activities and objectives in this area are determined by the 2020 Climate and Energy Package, i.e. binding legislation aiming to ensure that the European Union meets its ambitious climate targets by 2020. The package sets out three key objectives:

- A 20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels (30% in the case of accomplishing an international agreement in this respect)
- Raising the share of EU energy consumption produced from renewable resources to 20%, including the minimum Member States' target of 10% share of biofuels in the total consumption of gasoline and diesel in transport within the European Union
- A 20% improvement in energy efficiency (Obwieszczenie 2009).

The core package comprises four pieces of complementary legislation: Directive 2009/29/EC (EU ETS Directive), Decision 2009/406/EC (Effort Sharing Decision), Directive 2009/31/EC (CCS Directive) and Directive 2009/28/WE (Renewable Energy Directive).

Land use, land use change and forestry (LULUCF) sector has not been included either in the EU emissions trading system or CO<sub>2</sub> reduction scheme, which is described in the EU ETS Directive and the Effort Sharing Decision (non-ETS). There are two main reasons for this state of affairs. First, the European Union is concerned that the inclusion of LULUCF to the ETS could significantly reduce the incentive to reduce emissions in other sectors of the economy. This is because of the dubious accuracy of the reporting of emission volumes and emission reduction (attributable to the difficulty in assigning specific emission volumes to human activities and the risk of including the false reduction of emissions by carbon sinks). Second, including LULUCF could create the risk of unfair advantages resulting from the unequal capacity of this sector in mitigating climate change in individual Member States. The inclusion of emission reduction attributable to LULUCF would have to be adopted in the so-called burden-sharing agreement, specifying how the reduction commitments of the European Union should be divided between individual Member States by 2020 (Ellison et al. 2014).

In 2013, the Decision No 529/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 were adopted on accounting rules for greenhouse gas emissions and removals resulting from activities relating to land use, land-use change and forestry and on information concerning actions relating to those activities (Decyzja 529/2013/UE).

The document set out the rules for accounting emissions and removals of greenhouse gases in the LULUCF sector. The decision is one of the first steps towards including LULUCF in the EU with respect to emission reduction targets.

The activities of the European Union also include adaptation of forests to climate change. The most important program document in this respect is the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change (Komunikat 2013a), which aims at increasing the readiness and ability to respond to the effects of climate change at the local, regional, national and EU level, as well as a consistent approach to climate change threats and improvement of the coordination of activities undertaken. With regard to the forestry sector, the document draws attention to climate change impacts on forests and indicates the actions already taken to minimize forest risks and losses.

### **Agricultural and rural development policy**

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the European Union has been implemented within the two pillars distinguished by a reform carried out in 1997: Pillar I, regulating the common organization of markets in agricultural products, and Pillar II, covering rural development policy (Hix 2010). Pillar II is the most important instrument for forestry EU financial support, although its main focus is on achieving the objectives related to agriculture (Winkel et al. 2013).

In the current financial perspective (2014–2020), the scope of support for measures in forestry is determined by the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council (EU) No. 1305/2013. The regulation sets out the following priorities in the field of forestry support:

- Support for knowledge transfer and innovation in forested and rural areas
- Promotion of innovative technologies in agriculture and forests sustainable management
- Restoration, protection and enrichment of ecosystems related to agriculture and forestry
- Support for resource efficiency and the transition to a low-carbon economy resilient to climate change in the agricultural, food and forestry sectors
- Economic support for development in rural areas (Rozporządzenie nr 1305/2013).

In the earlier financial perspectives (2000–2006 and 2007–2013), the support for rural development had a similar scope and was financed under the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) (Rozporządzenie nr 1257/1999) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (Rozporządzenie nr 1698/2005).

### **Industrial and commercial policy**

The industrial and commercial policies relevant to the forestry sector relate mainly to wood industries, related to processing wood raw material, producing pulp, paper, plates and packaging as well as the printing and publishing industry. The strategy for the development of wood-based industries is included in the document COM (1999) 457: Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – The state of the competitiveness of the EU forest-based and related industries and Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on innovative and sustainable forest-based industries in the EU – A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008). The second of these documents presents the Commission's proposals to improve the competitiveness of the forest-related industries, grouped around the following issues: access to raw materials, combating climate change, innovation, research and technological development, trade and cooperation with developing countries and communication and information. The Communication was a stage in the implementation of the integrated EU industrial policy and complemented the EU Forest Action Plan (2006).

In 2013, the Commission issued the Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: “A New EU Forest Strategy for Forests and the Forest-based Sector”. The new strategy covers the industries such as wood processing, pulp and paper, furniture and the printing and publishing industry. The document details 12 challenges and proposals for measures concerning the entire sector, including, among others, development enhancement, efficiency improvement in the use of raw materials and energy, improvement of logistics (wood harvesting, infrastructure, transport), innovation, enhancement of research and education, implementation of the EU's climate policy after 2020, improvement of international competition and further development of trade and cooperation (A blueprint ... 2013).

The presence of forest issues in the EU trade policy is most visible with regard to promoting the principles of sustainable development in the rules of international trade. The first actions in this area were taken in 2003, when the EU Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) was adopted. FLEGT defines measures to combat the illegal use of forests, in particular:

- help in better management and capacity building in timber-producing countries and
- development of agreements on voluntary partnership with timber-producing countries, aimed at preventing the

importation of illegally-produced timber into the EU market (Communication 2003).

Over time, FLEGT was supplemented with two regulations, creating a legal framework for its implementation. These include Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 of 2005 and Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 2010.

#### 4. Conclusions

Forest policy in Europe is shaped primarily within the European Union itself and the pan-European Forest Europe process, bringing together the EU and all Europe's countries. The agreements developed and endorsed under the Forest Europe constitute on the one hand a very important instrument for transferring international agreements (of global and regional nature) to a national level and on the other hand they often provide the basis for the development of regulations and strategies directly or indirectly related to forests and forestry at a level wider than national. Both processes (the Forest Europe and EU policy-making) strongly interact and complement each other (Kleinschmit, Edwards 2013).

The absence of a treaty as the basis for the implementation of a common forest policy by the European Union means that the issues related to forests and forestry remain primarily within the competence of the Member States. Forest sector regulations are adopted within the framework of individual EU sectoral policies concerning in general the issues related with agriculture, environment, biodiversity, climate, energy, industry and trade. This situation leads to the dominance of forestry by other sectors, each of which has its own policy and various accompanying instruments. In this context, a considerable problem is the lack of coordination and coherence of actions within individual EU's policy areas as well not sufficient collaboration between the Member States' and the EU's institutions, and this favours the adoption of potentially conflicting goals and creates situations of conflict (Püzl, Hegl 2013).

Despite the aforesaid difficulties in the implementation of coherent measures concerning the forest sector, in the last dozen or so years, forests have been increasingly subject to regulation by the European Union. This is connected with the dynamic development of policy in the field of biodiversity protection (Natura 2000), climate and energy policy (carbon sequestration in forests, wood as energy source) or agricultural policy (forests as a factor of rural development), supported by legal regulations and economic instruments. Incorporation of forests and forestry in the implementation of various sectoral policies obliges the EU Member States directly (regulations) or indirectly (direc-

tives, strategic documents) to revise national legislation and to update strategic and policy documents with regard to forest policy, so that they are consistent with the objectives and actions taken in the EU.

#### Conflicts of interest

The author declares no potential conflicts of interest.

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