

Forest policy goals in Poland in light of the current forestry aims in Europe Part 2. Forest policy priorities in Europe

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Abstract. The aim of the paper was to evaluate the priorities set for policy-making in forestry formulated under the Forest Europe process and in programmes, policies, strategies and legal acts of the European Union after 1997, which is also the year when the Polish ‘National Forest Policy’ was adopted by the Council of Ministers. During the last two decades, rapid policy development has been occurring Europe-wide. Forest policy goals defined within the Forest Europe process have also been reflected in EU’s strategic documents and legal acts and both processes are complementary as well as influencing each other.

Forest policy priorities after 1997 cover all three major aspects of sustainable forest management (SFM): ecological, economic and social. However, the main emphasis has been put on economic and social aspects of SFM. The key priorities defined in numerous Forest Europe and EU documents are the following: enhancing the role of forests and forest management in mitigating climate change including the promotion of production and wide use of wood; adapting forests to climate change and changing environmental conditions; conserving, protecting and enhancing forest biodiversity; enhancing the role of forests and forest management in rural development; fostering coordination and cross-sectoral cooperation within forestry. The need for enhancing forest research has been pointed out in almost all analysed Forest Europe commitments as well as in numerous EU documents.

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

1. Introduction

In April 2017, it has been 20 years since the Council of Ministers has adopted the ‘National Forest Policy’ defying the main directions of forestry development in Poland (MOŚZNiL 1997). During this period, deep political, economic and social changes took place in our country and all over Europe. Main reason for the socio-economic and cultural changes, and also the changes in public awareness in Poland, was joining the European Union in 2004 and adopting *acquis communautaire* and participation in the process of forming policy and drafting Community law.

At the European level, aims and tasks of forest policy are defined foremost within the Forest Europe process,

which concentrates on all the European countries and the EU, and within the European Union. Both forums are strongly related and complement each other. Due to lack of legal possibility of conducting by the European Union’s separate forest policy, forest and forestry are covered by fragmentary regulations within other sectoral policies (natural protection, conserving biodiversity, climate and energetic, agricultural, industrial and others). On the other hand, definition and realization of complex forest policy lies within the competition of the Member States.

This paper is the second in the series of articles written in order to indicate the justified directions of changes in the ‘National Forest Policy’ based on the analysis of the

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political processes forming the forest policy in Europe and trends in forest policy of the selected European countries. This paper contains the results of analysis of the most important priorities of forest policy formulated in the documents of the Forest Europe process and defined in the legal acts and strategic and programme documents adopted within the different policies of the European Union after 1997, that is, after adopting the 'National Forest Policy' by the Council of Ministers.

2. Methodology

Priorities of forest policy in Europe were identified by the analysis of content of the documents adopted within the Pan-European Forest Europe process (content analysis; Buttolph et al. 2010; Weimer, Vining 2011). General declarations and resolutions were the key agreements that were adopted during the following conferences of the Forest Europe process. The exception was the Oslo Conference (2011). During this conference, the Parties adopted the Oslo Ministerial Mandate for Negotiating a Legally Binding Agreement on the forests in Europe and the Oslo Ministerial Decision: European Forests 2020, and the Extraordinary Conference in Madrid (2015), which resulted in adopting only one decision. The research focused on the aims and priorities formulated in the resolutions and decisions, and also in the Oslo Ministerial Mandate, but general declarations were not included in the analysis. They are more general documents that cover the issues that are developed in detail in the adopted resolutions and decisions. The analysis covers the period from the Lisbon Conference (1998) till the Madrid Conference (2015). In the case of documents adopted until the end of 2003, their official Polish translation was used (MŚ 2004). A content of later agreements was analysed on the basis of their English language versions available on the official Forest Europe internet site (Forest Europe 2016).

Identification of several dozens of detailed goals of forest policy formulated and developed within the last two decades was a result of the conducted analysis of content of the Forest Europe documents. Those goals were then structured and formulated as 15 priorities of forestry on the European level.

The next step was to analyse the presence of the defined European forest policy priorities in EU programmes, strategic documents (policies, strategies, action plans) and legislation (regulations, directives, decisions) adopted from 1998 to 2016. It covered the forest-focused documents that are directly forest-related and forest

management-related and those that not only had a strong influence on forestry but also serve as realization of aims and tasks of individual sectoral policies like natural protection and biodiversity conservation, climate and energy, agriculture and development of rural areas and industry and trade (Pülzl, Hogl 2013). In the research, the official Polish translation of documents was used. In case of absence of such translations, their English versions were used.

3. Results and discussion

Identified priorities of forest policy in Europe developed for the last 20 years are presented in Table 1. Each priority given in Table 1 was referenced to the analysed documents of the Forest Europe process and the European Union.

Forest policy priorities that were formulated after 1997 in Europe concerned diverse areas connected to the management and protection of forest resources. Clear separation and structuring according to the traditional division into three major pillars (ecological, social and economic) of sustainable forest management (Rametsteiner 2001) is practically impossible considering the multidimensionality, mutual penetration and complementing of majority of formulated priorities. In order to systematize them, the Pan-European criteria of sustainable forest management developed within the Forest Europe process were used, in their latter version included in the Annex 1 to the Madrid Declaration of 2015 (Annex 2015).

Among the priorities presented in Table 1, dominant are the issues concerning social and economic aspects of forest management. They refer to criterion 6 – Maintenance of other socio-economic functions and conditions. Priorities that may be classified in this group are: 6 – Improving economic viability of forest management, 7 – Enhancing a role of forests and forest management in rural development, 8 – Securing contribution of the forest sector to a green economy, 9 – Forest valuation and reflecting it in forest-related policies and programmes, 10 – Improving social aspects of forest management, but also 13 – Preserving cultural values of forests and forest management and 14 – Forest education of society. With this group, the priority no. 3 is also connected partly, in part referring to the promotion of wood as a source of energy and also to the replacement of non-renewable materials and products with wood.

Dedicated to the economic aspects of forest management is also the criterion no. 3 – Maintenance and encouragement of productive functions of forests (wood and

Table 1. Priorities of European forest policy after 1997 formulated in the Forest Europe commitments and the EU programmes, strategies, communications and legal acts

Priority	Forest Europe commitments	European Union documents	
		forest-focused	forest-related
1. Conserving, protecting, restoring and enhancing forest biodiversity	Resolution V4 (2003), Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Council Directives: 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC (Birds and Habitats Directives) - Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development) - Decision No 1386/2013/EU (Seventh Environment Action Programme) - The EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 (Komunikat 2011)
2. Adapting forests to climate change and changing environmental conditions	Resolutions: V5 (2003), M2 (2015); Decision: European Forests (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Strategia UE w zakresie przystosowania się do zmiany klimatu The EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change (Komunikat 2013a) - Rozporządzenia Rady (WE): nr 1257/1999 i 1698/2005 (rozwój obszarów wiejskich) Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Rozporządzenie Parlamentu Europejskiego i Rady (UE) nr 1305/2013 (rozwój obszarów wiejskich) Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development) - Decyzja 1386/2013/UE (7. program działań w zakresie środowiska naturalnego) Decision No 1386/2013/EU (Seventh Environment Action Programme)
3. Enhancing a role of forests and forest management in mitigating climate change including:	Decision: European Forests (2011) and:		
Enhancing carbon sequestration and storage in forest biomass and soils	Resolutions: V5 (2003), M1 (2015)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006)	- Decision No 1386/2013/EU (Seventh Environment Action Programme) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development)

Priority	Forest Europe commitments	European Union documents	
		forest-focused	forest-related
Mobilization of wood resources, also from non-forested areas	Resolutions: W1 (2007), M1 (2015)	- A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
Substitution of non-renewable materials and products with wood	Resolutions: V5 (2003), M1 (2015)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- The state of the competitiveness of the EU forest-based and related industries (Communication 1999) - A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
Promoting use of wood as an energy source	Resolutions: V5 (2003), W1 (2007), M1 (2015)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (renewable energy sources) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
4. Maintaining and improving forest ecosystem services (protecting water and soils)	Resolution W2 (2007), Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development) - Decision No 1386/2013/EU (Seventh Environment Action Programme)
5. Combating illegal harvesting of forest products and related trade	Resolutions: V2, V4 (2003); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- FLEGT Action Plan (Communication 2003) - Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Timber Regulation) - Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 (FLEGT Regulation) - A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008)
6. Improving economic viability of forest management including:			

Priority	Forest Europe commitments	European Union documents	
		forest-focused	forest-related
Promoting production and use of wood	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2, V3 (2003), W1 (2007), M1 (2015); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (Sixth Community Environment Action Programme) - Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development) - A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008)
Supporting innovations in forestry	Resolution M1 (2015), Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development) - A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
Stimulating differentiation of sources of income in forestry	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2 (2003), W1, W2 (2007); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development)
Supporting private forest owners and their associations	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2 (2003), W1, W2 (2007), M1 (2015)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development)
7. Enhancing a role of forests and forest management in rural development	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2, V3 (2003), W1 (2007), M1 (2015); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development)

Priority	Forest Europe commitments	European Union documents	
		forest-focused	forest-related
8. Securing contribution of the forest sector to a green economy	Resolution M1 (2015), Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Directive 2009/28/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (renewable energy sources) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013) - FLEGT Action Plan (Communication 2003) - Regulation (EU) No 995/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council (Timber Regulation) - Council Regulation (EC) No 2173/2005 (FLEGT Regulation)
9. Forest valuation and reflecting it in forest-related policies and programmes	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2 (2003), W2 (2007), M1 (2015); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	
10. Improving social aspects of forest management including:			
Health and safety issues	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2 (2003), M1 (2015)		- A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
Developing human resources	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V2 (2003), W1, W2 (2007), M1 (2015); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- Council Regulations (EC) No 1257/1999 and 1698/2005 (rural development) - Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council (rural development) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)

Priority	Forest Europe commitments	European Union documents	
		forest-focused	forest-related
11. Securing participation of all stakeholders in decision-making, improving forest communication	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V1, V3 (2003), W1 (2007); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
12. Fostering coordination and cross-sectoral cooperation of forestry	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V1, V2 (2003), W1, W2 (2007); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- The state of the competitiveness of the EU forest-based and related industries (Communication 1999) - Decision No 1600/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (Sixth Community Environment Action Programme) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)
13. Preserving cultural values of forests and forest management	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V3 (2003); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006)	
14. Forest education of society	Resolutions: L1 (1998), V3 (2003); Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	
15. Forest research	Almost all the Forest Europe resolutions and the Decision: European Forests 2020 (2011)	- Forestry strategy for the European Union (Council Resolution 1998) - The EU Forest Action Plan (Komunikat 2006) - A new EU Forest Strategy (Komunikat 2013b)	- A contribution to the EU's Growth and Jobs Strategy (Komunikat 2008) - A new EU forest strategy for forests and the forest-based sector (A blueprint 2013)

non-wood), to which partly refer the following priorities: 3 – in part about mobilization of wood resources, 6 – in part about promoting production and use of wood and stimulating differentiation in the sources of income in forestry, and 8 – in part about ensuring the contribution of the forest sector to a green economy.

Visibly less attention was paid to the issues connected with the criterion no. 5 – Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of protective functions in forest management. Especially in reference to soils and water, to which the priorities no. 4 and no. 2 correspond to. They concern respectively maintaining and improving the forest ecosystem services (protecting water and soils) and adapting the forests to climate change and changing the environmental conditions and also the priority no. 5 indicating the need of combating illegal harvesting of forest products and the related trade.

Remaining criteria found reflection in single priorities. To criterion no. 1 – Maintenance and appropriate enhancement of forest resources and their contribution to global carbon cycles, responds the priority no. 3 that refers to enhancing the role of forests and forest management in mitigating climate change, in part about enhancing carbon sequestration and storage in forest biomass and soils. To criterion no. 4 – Maintenance, conservation and appropriate enhancement of biological diversity in forest ecosystems responds the priority no. 1 – conserving, protecting, restoring and enhancing forest biodiversity. Criterion no. 2 – Maintenance of forest ecosystem health and vitality finds its reflection indirectly in priorities no. 2 and no. 4 (indicating the need for adapting forests to climate change and changing environmental conditions and maintaining and improving forest ecosystem services).

In the Forest Europe agreements after 1997, a great emphasis was put on the general political solutions, institutions and instruments of sustainable forest management. To this group, the following should be included: combating illegal harvesting of forest products and related trade (priority no. 5); securing participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes and improving forest communication (no. 11); fostering coordination and cross-sectoral cooperation of forestry (no. 12). It should be emphasized that conducting forest research (no. 15) is mentioned in reference to all the areas of actions undertaken within the Forest Europe process.

In the Forest Europe process after 1997, relatively weakly emphasized was the necessity for actions related to criteria no. 1 and no. 2, that is, conserving and enhancing forest biodiversity and preserving sanitary conditions and

vitality of forest ecosystems. This is a result of emphasizing those issues particularly on the beginning of Ministerial Conferences on the Protection of Forests in Europe (name of the Process used until 2011), that is, during the conferences in Strasbourg (1990) and Helsinki (1993) (MŚ 2004). The ‘National Forest Policy’ from 1997 (MOŚZ-NiL 1997) refers to agreements adopted during both conferences.

In Strasbourg, six resolutions were adopted, out of which four were devoted to relatively narrow issues: creating European Network of Permanent Sample Plots for Monitoring of Forest Ecosystems (Resolution S1), Decentralized European Data Bank on Forest Fires (Resolution S3), developing Expansion of the EUROSILVA Network of Research on Tree Physiology (Resolution S5) and European Network for Research into Forest Ecosystems (Resolution S6). The remaining two resolutions (S2 and S4) were devoted to the issues of broader meaning and they concern supporting protective functions of forests and forest management, especially the Conservation of Forest Genetic Resources and Adapting the Management of Mountain Forests to New Environmental Conditions (MŚ 2004).

Agreements adopted during the Helsinki Conference set a wide range of actions serving the realization of permanent and sustainable forest management and protection of all the functions of forest. Resolution H1 defined the general guidelines for sustainable forest management. Resolution H2 has a similar character. It is devoted to the general guidelines for biodiversity protection in the European forests. In this resolution, the Member States committed to protect and enhance the biodiversity and treat it as a significant operating element of sustainable forest management. The remaining two agreements concern the Forestry Cooperation with Countries with Economies in Transition (Resolution H3) and developing strategies for a Process of Long-term Adaptation of Forests in Europe to Climate Change (resolution H4) (MŚ 2004).

Defined within the Forest Europe process, the goals of forestry find its reflection in numerous strategic documents or legislation of the European Union. Both processes – the EU and Pan-European – have a strong influence on each other and complement each other (Kleinschmit, Edwards 2013). Specific situation of forestry issues in the EU’s legal framework makes the forest-related documents (1998 Forestry Strategy, EU Forest Action Plan in 2006 and the new EU Forest Strategy from 2013) and postulates the guidelines resulting from them, not legally binding for the Member States (so called ‘soft law’). They are just recommenda-

tions and incentives to follow certain directions of actions. At the same time, the majority of identified priorities find its reflection in legislation (regulations, directives and decisions) regulating the areas of policy connected with forestry, supported by financial instruments (for instance the Common Agricultural Policy). In fact it means that many actions influencing forests and forest management are covered by regulations used for the realization of aims set in fields different than forestry (foremost connected to nature conservation and biodiversity, rural development, climate protection, supporting renewable energy sources) with legal situation based in primary legislation (i.e., the treaties). This situation is unfavourable for the forest sector because significant part of actions related with forests on the EU level is a result of processes occurring in other areas of the EU policy. This favours marginalization of forest sector and leads to the realization of divergent and often even contradictory goals (for instance, protection of biodiversity and increasing role of wood in energy production) and lack of consistency in actions related to forest resources (Pülzl, Hogl 2013).

Not having forestry as a separate area of the EU policy and domination of ‘soft’ instruments of forest policy realization on the European (and also Pan-European) level explains the attempts undertaken to create the legal basis for creation of sustainable forest management and functioning of forestry that transcend national boundaries. Lack of basis in treaties on running common forest policy within the European Union excludes the possibility of legal regulation for actions in this area. On the other hand, the attempts to develop the Legally Binding Agreement (LBA) undertaken within the Forest Europe process under the direction of specially for this purpose established the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee has come to a standstill in 2013 (Report 2013). The developed draft of the resolution transfers general agreements expressed in declarations, resolutions and decisions of the Forest Europe process, which the majority of countries implements successfully for over 25 years (Forest Europe 2015). Due to the lack of provided, efficient instruments of implementing resolutions of the Forest Europe process, LBA will not influence significantly the improvement of forest sector situation, especially in the context of its connections and dependencies on other sectors of economy. Even if it was possible, it wouldn’t have influenced the improvement of the forest sector in a degree in which potentially the common forest policy within the EU could have through its own regulations and financial instruments. That is why, the increasing influen-

ce of other sectors of the economy on actions within the forest sector on the European Union level, seems to be difficult to reverse or even to impede.

4. Conclusions


1. Within the last twenty years, an intensive development of forest policy on European level took place (the Forest Europe process, the EU polices). Adopted priorities cover three major aspects of sustainable forest management (ecological, economic and social); however, the main focus has been put on economic and social aspects of forestry.

2. Forestry goals formulated during the Forest Europe process find its reflection in strategic documents and legal acts of the European Union. Both processes – the EU and Pan-European – influence strongly on each other and complement each other.

3. To key issues defined in the numerous documents of the Forest Europe and the European Union concern: the increasing role of forests in mitigating climate change, including production and wide use of wood, forest adaptation to climate change, conservation and protection of biodiversity in forests, increasing the role of forestry in development of rural areas and developing coordination and trans-sectoral cooperation of forestry.

4. In almost all of the analysed documents of the Forest Europe process and in numerous documents of the EU the need for further development of forest research was indicated.

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Conflict of interests

The author declares lack of potential conflicts.

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