

ITALIAN NATIONAL RURAL NETWORK FOREST EVENT

Rome, 23rd-24th June 2011

*Present and future role of forest resources in the
socio-economic development of rural areas*



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Typology: European Congress.

Title: Present and future role of forest resources in the socio-economic development of rural areas

Dates: 23rd-24th June 2011.

Duration: 2 days.

Location: Rome.

Language: English.

Organising committee:

MIPAAF-NRN (National Rural Network - Italian Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Forestry Policies).

INEA-FO (Forest Observatory of the National Institute of Agricultural Economics),

Promoters:

ENRD (European Network for Rural Development),

Ente-CRA (Italian Agricultural Research Centre),

PQSF (Framework programme for Italian forestry sector)

Congress presentation

For centuries forests have represented, along with agriculture, the main resource for the development of rural and mountain areas. Today, great emphasis is placed by society and by international/national policies on environmental protection. This attention means that today the role of forests go beyond the production-related objectives, involving new issues and challenges such as climate change mitigation, biodiversity conservation, energy production, management of the water cycle, soil erosion and desertification containment, prevention of natural risks and management of forest historical-cultural landscape.

Forests represent a very important issue for the European Union, even though they are not taken into account by EU's constitutional treaties. Thus, they have no specific dedicated Common Policies and, according to the subsidiary principles, they are still under the full competence of EU Member States.

In the last few decades, the role of forests have become more and more important in a perspective of socio-economic development of rural and mountain areas and within the environmental protection strategies. The European Union has launched several actions related to the forestry sector, even if without activating a dedicated forest policy but operating within other thematic areas such as agriculture and the environment.

In the Eighties European Union adopted a set of Regulations aiming to contain deleterious anthropic impacts on forests [Reg. (EC) No 3528/86 and No 3529/86; Reg. (EC) No 2157/92 and No 2158/92; Reg. (EC) No 2152/2003 "Forest Focus"; Reg. (EC) No 614/2007 LIFE+].

The first actions of forest policy were formulated as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). An example is provided by the two main accompanying measures: the EU Reg.2080/92 (funding "*first afforestation of agricultural lands*"), and the EU Reg. 867/90, (funding "*forest firms' investments*").

In the late Nineties, with the aim to solve all the problems affecting the whole European forest sector, the EU approved the Resolution 1999/C/56/01 for a Common Forest Strategy. With this Resolution the Council asserted that "*EU can positively contribute to the implementation of sustainable forest management and can promote the multifunctional role of forests, giving to member States the role and responsibility in the formulation of forest policies*". This is the actual first Common Forest Strategy, which revises and reorganises all the forestry measures that were implemented to date in different ways across Europe. The Resolution provides an explicit connection to the international commitments undertaken for the forest sector (Rio de Janeiro 1992, MCPFE, etc).

With Agenda 2000, policies and strategies for the forest sector, start to assume a relevant and integrated role within Rural Development, both at National and European level. This scenery is today confirmed in the 2007-2013 Programming period, where a pool of forestry measures is provided within the four different prior axis of the Rural Development Policy. In this way sustainable forest management and forest multifunctionality assume a strategic role, also based on the relevance of the financial resources allocated to forest measures.

With the aim to achieve a sustainable forest management and to increase the value of forest multifunctionality, in 2006 EU adopted [COM (2006)302] its own Forest Action Plan (FAP). The FAP intends to increase the value of the European forest heritage, conserving and empowering the multifunctional role of forests by stimulating an environmental-aware forest management. This has been done to provide renewable and environmentally-sustainable raw material and to foster – especially in rural areas – local development, employment, environmental protection and public services.

In 2010 these concepts have been recalled within the EU Green Paper on “*Forest Protection and Information in the EU: Preparing forests to climate change*” [COM(2010)66].

In this context, given the new relevance held by the forest sector under the European Policy for Rural Development, some questions arise:

1. what will be the destiny of forests in Europe?
2. which are the orientations of rural development policies concerning the forest sector for the programming period 2013-2020?

The planned two-day congress aims to describe, analyse and get acquainted with the actions provided for forests and the forest sector by Rural Development, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and proposing ideas and suggestions for the present and future Common Program.

First day:

The congress is supposed to start with a plenary introductory session. Four/five presentations will outline the relationship between forest resources and socio-economic development of rural areas

- 9.00:** Registration.
- 9.30:** Welcome by the organisers and congress presentation.
- 10.00:** Man and forest resources: a hundred-years-old relationship.
- 10.30:** Present opportunities of sustainable and multifunctional forest management for the development of rural areas.
- 11.00:** Forest policies: an international perspective.
- 11.30:** Rural Development Policies and Forestry: the point of view of central and northern European Countries.
- 12.00:** Rural Development Policies and Forestry: the point of view of Mediterranean Countries.
- 12.30: Discussion**
- 13.00:** Lunch.
- 14.30: Parallel sessions and poster session**

The congress continues with parallel sessions which aim at investigating and describing, from different points of view, the role of forest resources in the socio-economic development of rural areas. Each session will be chaired by a *key-note speaker* who will introduce the topic with an introductory presentation. *Contributed papers* will be selected by the scientific committee to be presented in each of the six sessions. In addition posters may be presented and selected. They must be related to one of the session themes and should present concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints concerning the forest sector in the context of socio-economic development of rural areas. Considerations, results and methodologies concerning the evaluation of forestry policies will be also accepted both as papers or posters (eg. methodologies for assessment and evaluation of results and impacts).

A *rapporteur* will join each session with the specific task of summarizing the contents of the contributions and report the main results during the plenary session scheduled on the second day of the congress.

Session 1: Forest management and conservation of biodiversity

Forest management and Rural Development in relation to biodiversity: an announced damage, a need to conserve habitats and ecotones?

Concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints in the frame of the forest sector for a socio-economic development of rural areas related to Biodiversity conservation and increase.

Contents:

1. Analysis of measures and actions planned in the frame of European Rural Development Policies for conservation and improvement of Biodiversity.
2. Trade-off between Biodiversity and forest productivity: how much does Biodiversity conservation cost?
3. Linkages, relationships and synergies with other Policies (environment protection, regional development, national and regional policies...)
4. Biodiversity measurement, monitoring and evaluation techniques.

Approximately 6 papers

Session 2: Forest management and hydro-geological protection

Forest management and Rural Development in relation with hydro-geological protection: is prevention better than cure?

Concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints in the implementation of measures related to hydro-geological protection.

Contents:

1. Analysis of measures and actions planned in the frame of European Rural Development policies for hydro-geological balance protection
2. Effects of active forest management on hydro-geological protection, Consequence of land abandonment: erosion, risk of landslides
3. Innovative solutions for hydro-geological protection
4. Linkages, relationships and synergies with other Policies
5. Measurement, monitoring and evaluation techniques to prevent hydro-geological risks

Approximately 6 papers

Session 3: Forest management and strategies for mitigation of, and adaptation to climate change

Forest management and Rural Development related to climate changes.

How can forestry measures of rural development contribute to contain climate change effects on European forests? Which adaptation measures can be implemented? Which strategy could be more convenient in a perspective of climate change mitigation: forest management or abandonment?

Concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints in the frame of the forest sector for a socio-economic development of rural areas related to different strategies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Contents:

1. Analysis of measures and actions planned in the frame of European Rural Development policies to contain climate change
2. Effects of mitigation and adaptation interventions
3. Carbon sink accounting systems
4. European forests and Carbon trade
6. Role of forest managers and owners in containing climate change effects

Maximum 6 papers. In case of many thematic papers, organisers are planning to split the session in two different sub-sessions (3.1 Mitigation and 3.2 Adaptation)

Session4: Forest management, landscape protection and public services

The role of active forest management in meeting social needs (culture, recreation, health, tourism, etc.) and landscape protection. What does society require from forests?

Concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints in the frame of the forest sector for a socio-economic development of rural areas related to the provision of public services and the protection of rural and forest landscapes.

Contents:

1. Analysis of measures and actions planned in the frame of European Rural Development concerning the provision of public services and the protection of rural and forest landscapes
2. Innovative solutions to enhance the social functions provided by forests within Rural Development
3. Evaluation of forests' social functions
4. Integrated planning for the valorisation of forest public services

Maximum 6 papers..

Session 5: Forest management and bioenergy

Forest management and Rural Development in relation to the production of energy from biomass. Utopia or real opportunity for environment and employment?

Concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints in the frame of the forest sector for a socio-economic development of rural areas related to the production and provision of energy from forest biomass.

Contents:

1. Analysis of measures and actions planned in the frame of European Rural Development concerning production and provision of energy from forest biomass.
2. Trade-off between production/provision of energy from forest biomass and environment protection
3. Innovative solutions within Rural Development for the production and provision of energy from forest biomass
4. Linkages, relationships and synergies with other Policies
5. Short chains and vertical integration
6. Measurement, monitoring and evaluation techniques of environmental and socio-economic impacts

Maximum 6 papers

Session 6: Forest Management and competitiveness of the production sector

Forest management and Rural Development related to the production of renewable raw material and to its competitiveness within the international trade. Ideal or factual contribution to European economy and occupation?

Concrete experiences, best practices, opportunities and constraints in the frame of the forest sector for a socio-economic development of rural areas related to the production and provision of raw material for industries.

Contents:

1. Analysis of measures and actions planned in the frame of European Rural Development for the competitiveness of firms and the production/provision of raw material for industrial purposes.
2. Trade-off between production/provision of raw material and environmental protection
3. Innovative solutions within Rural Development for firms' competitiveness and for the production/provision of raw material for industrial uses.
4. Linkages, relationships and synergies with other Policies
5. Short chains and vertical integration
6. Forest certification

Maximum 6 papers

Second Day:

9.00: Plenary session

Discussions opened by parallel sessions' rapporteurs (a specific synthesis form will be used to present relevant issues)

9.30: Session 1 - Forest management and conservation of biodiversity

9.45: Session 2 - Forest management and hydro-geological protection

10.00: Session 3 - Forest management and strategies for mitigation of and adaptation to climate changes

10.15: Session 4 - Forest management, landscape protection and public services

10.30: Session 5 - Forest management and bioenergy

10.45: Session 6 - Forest management and competitiveness of the production sector

11.00: Coffe Break

11.30: Lecture by the European Commission – The future of Policies

12.00: Discussion with planned questions (3 minutes each)

13.00: LUNCH

14.30: Round table with EU Commission, Stakeholders and some representatives of National Managing Authorities. Drafting of a summary document reporting shared proposals for future forest strategies within EU Rural Development.

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