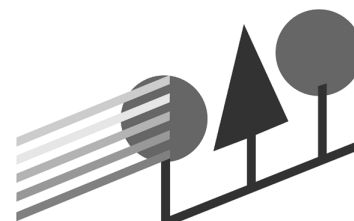


INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP “FORESTS AND FORESTRY IN
CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES –
THE TRANSITION PROCESS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD”

12 – 14 September 2001, Debe, Poland



MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE
PROTECTION OF FORESTS IN EUROPE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The international workshop “Forests and Forestry in Central and Eastern European Countries – The Transition Process and Challenges Ahead” took place in Debe, Poland on 12-14 September 2001. It was jointly organised by the government of Poland, the MCPFE Liaison Unit Vienna and the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Countries in Transition¹. The workshop was attended by 86 participants representing national institutions, the European Community, international governmental and non-governmental organisations and the Liaison Unit Vienna.

1. Opening of the workshop and introductory speeches

On behalf of the government of Poland, H.E. Mr. Janusz Radziejowski (Undersecretary of State, Ministry of the Environment) welcomed the participants of the workshop. In his introductory words, Mr. Radziejowski pointed to the importance of the workshop to address problems encountered in the transition process regarding forests and forestry, to exchange experiences gained and to discuss on how sustainable forest management could best be ensured in the region also in the future.

In his opening address on behalf of the MCPFE, Mr. Peter Mayer (Liaison Unit Vienna) particularly emphasised the significance of the workshop to give recommendations for further work of the MCPFE. He informed that the result of the workshop would constitute an important input into the preparatory discussion for the 4th Ministerial Conference which will take place on 28-30 April 2003 in Vienna, Austria.

Speaking on behalf of UNECE/FAO, Mr. Christopher Prins (UNECE) recalled the significant contribution of the “UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists to Monitor and Develop Assistance to Countries of Central and Eastern Europe in Transition in the Forest and Forest Products Sector” (Team of Specialists on CITs) in promoting assistance to CEECs and encouraged participants to provide further guidance for future international co-operation with CEECs.

¹ The workshop benefited from financial support kindly provided by the governments of Austria, Denmark, France, Norway, Poland and Portugal.

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In concluding the series of introductory speeches, Mr. Stanislaw Zajac (Forest Research Institute in Warsaw; Leader of Team of Specialists on CITs) briefly recalled the mandate and scope of the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on CITs and emphasised the importance of the workshop to contribute to the task of reviewing the work of the Team of Specialists.

2. Adoption of the agenda

The proposed agenda was adopted.

3. Session I: Forest Policy Developments and Related Institutional Changes in CEECs in the Transition Process

Forest policy developments and related institutional changes in the transition process were addressed in a series of keynote presentations and presentations giving an “external view”. Session I was chaired jointly by Mr. Stanislaw Zajac (Poland) and Mr. Alexander Korotkov (UNECE).

The following keynote presentations were given in session I of the workshop:

- Mr. Peter Csoka (Hungary) presented major steps and instruments in forest policy development in Hungary and outlined main lessons learned with regard to the restitution process, revitalisation of private forestry, the new roles of state forestry as well as financial incentives. Mr. Csoka also informed on recent and future activities in the development of a national forest programme for Hungary and highlighted the role of international co-operation.
- Mr. Gheorghe Florian Borlea (Romania) outlined forest policy objectives and institutional developments in Romania. His presentation put special emphasis on the forest restitution process, its implications and the lessons learned regarding the sustainable management and protection of forests in Romania. In this context, Mr. Borlea particularly pointed to the relevance of unitary management of large forest areas and the need for association of small forest owners.
- Mr. Arkadi Levintanous (Foundation for Enterprise Restructuring and Financial Institutions Development, Russia) informed on the current status of the Russian forest sector and identified administrative reform, economic and fiscal reform as well as a reform of the legislative and regulatory framework as important steps required to overcome basic impediments to progress of the forest sector in Russia. Information was also given on the IBRD-financed Pilot Project on Sustainable Forestry, carried out by the foundation in three representative pilot regions.

Following these presentations, different approaches chosen in restitution and privatisation of forests, aspects of ensuring co-ordination of private forest owners and other issues raised in the presentations were discussed in more detail. Furthermore, possible impacts of recent institutional changes in the Russian Federation were discussed.

In addition to the keynote presentations, the following speakers presented their views on the developments in the transition process:

- Mr. Joseph Barton (Confederation of European Forest Owners, Czech Republic) presented his view on forest policy developments in the Czech Republic and his experience gained in the transition process as an owner of forest land acquired through restitution. He pointed to various constraints and weaknesses in national forest legislation and administration from a private owner's perspective and reflected on the role of governments, environmental groups and the public in meeting the challenges for SFM in the future.
- Mr. Michael Evers (World Wide Fund for Nature) addressed problems, potentials and challenges ahead regarding the management and conservation of forests in Eastern Europe from the point of view of WWF. Mr. Evers focused on funding of forest activities in the context of EU accession, forest certification and on an ecoregional conservation approach.

Issues of private forest ownership in CEECs were further taken up in the subsequent discussion. Different country experiences were highlighted, also indicating the different stages of the privatisation and restitution processes in CEECs. Furthermore, the ecoregional approach as well as aspects of funding in the frame of SAPARD were discussed in more detail by the workshop participants.

4. Session II: Future Challenges to Ensure Sustainable Forest Management

Session II of the workshop focused on the challenges to ensure sustainable forest management (SFM) in the future. It was chaired jointly by Mr. Piotr Borkowski (Poland) and Mr. Peter Mayer (Liaison Unit Vienna).

The following keynote presentations were given in Session II:

- Mr. Arvids Ozols (Latvia) outlined approaches chosen in the institutional development of Latvian forest policy in the transition process. Reflecting on suitable ways and means on how to meet future challenges, Mr. Ozols particularly pointed to the relevance of participatory approaches in forest policy development and, as a prerequisite, the adequate development of human resources. He also underlined the importance of enhancing the linkage of forestry with other forest sectors.
- Mr. Kazimierz Rykowski (Poland) highlighted global, European and Polish challenges to SFM and identified most important failures in overall sustainable development so far. He stressed the need for a new approach to nature conservation integrated with social and economic use of forests. In this context Mr. Rykowski pointed to the "promotional forest complexes" established in Poland up to now.
- Ms. Ketevan Metreveli (Georgia) illustrated the challenges and urgent needs to ensure SFM in Georgia under circumstances of dramatic political and economical change. As important steps, Ms. Metreveli stressed the need for adequate financing, improved management planning, better marketing of forest products, better monitoring and control of forest management as well as of enhanced public education and awareness. Ms.

Metreveli also put strong emphasis on the protection of Georgia's remaining natural forests.

Also in Session II issues raised in the keynote presentations were further addressed in a subsequent discussion. Furthermore, complementary information was provided on the Georgian Forest Development Programme which is financed by the World Bank.

Further views on the future challenges in ensuring the economic, social and ecological aspects of SFM were presented by the following speakers:

- Mr. Sten Nilsson (International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) focused on economic aspects of SFM. He emphasised the importance of establishing a holistic, adaptive framework as a "Sustainability Concept", defining and balancing overall societal goals for the forest sector and goals of the forest policy. Mr. Nilsson, *inter alia*, pointed to a number of limitations of criteria and indicators for SFM and of forest certification as tools within the sustainability framework.
- Mr. Gustaw Matuszewski (Polish Forest Society) illustrated future problems and challenges for forestry in Poland, putting emphasis on the social dimension of SFM. He, *inter alia*, noted that enhancing public participation and ecological education as well as the elaboration of a national forest programme constitute important challenges to be addressed in the future.
- Mr. Tamas Marghescu (The World Conservation Union - IUCN) highlighted the ecological dimension of SFM. He reported on a consultative process conducted by IUCN to assess the situation of privately owned forests in CEECs with special emphasis on the identification of issues related to nature conservation. Mr. Marghescu mentioned the lack of political will combined with a lack of financial resources and the insufficient extension support to private forest owners as some of the main shortcomings related to forest and nature conservation in CEECs. He also pointed to the lack of information on and participation of private forest owners in international processes.

Again, the issues raised in the above presentations were further taken up in a subsequent discussion.

5. Working group discussion

An introduction to the work of the two working groups was given by Mr. Mayer. He explained that working group 1 would focus on the socio-economic dimension of SFM, while working group 2 would deal with the ecological dimension of SFM. Mr. Mayer invited both working groups to discuss

- major challenges in the future,
- lessons learned from the experiences made in the transition process so far,
- the current and future role of the MCPFE and the UNECE/FAO Team of Specialists on Countries in Transition,

- recommendations for future activities and international co-operation with a view to the 4th Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (28-30 April 2003, Vienna/Austria).

Working group 1 – Socio-economic dimension of SFM

Working group 1 was moderated by Mr. Arvids Ozols; Latvia (Rapporteur: Mr. Ewald Rametsteiner, Liaison Unit Vienna). As a starting point for further discussions, the working group elaborated a list of major challenges/issues of relevance for CEECs in ensuring socio-economic aspects of SFM. Institutional and administrative reform, economic viability and financing of SFM, management of public forests as well as capacity building and human resources development can be mentioned as important topics prevailing in the debate. Also the issue of national forest programmes was highlighted in the discussion. All issues identified by the working group were further “clustered” under five topical headings (transition process, policy formulation, policy implementation and instruments, market and economic aspects, social aspects). For each of these headings and the related challenges/issues, a number of lessons learned in the transition process was identified by the participants of the working group. Consequently, recommendations were formulated for the MCPFE and the Team of Specialists on CITs. The results of working group 1 can be found in Annex I.

Working group 2 – Ecological dimension of SFM

Working group 2 was moderated by Mr. Peter Csoka, Hungary; (Rapporteur: Mr. Alexander Buck, Liaison Unit Vienna). The working group identified eight important challenges concerning the ecological dimension of SFM, which were consequently synthesised into three major issues. Restitution of areas rich in biodiversity and, related to it, financing of the maintenance and/or improvement of ecological functions were identified as the first major “cluster” of challenges in the future. The integration of protection and management concepts, including the need for integrated planning schemes and inter-sectoral approaches as well as for an improved information base, was considered as a second important challenge. And thirdly, the working group also highlighted the need for education and communication, both regarding education of new forest owners and the public as well as communication with the broader public. Finally, also a list of lessons learned in the transition process as well as recommendations regarding the role of international co-operation and the 4th Ministerial Conference could be reported to the workshop plenary. A detailed report on the results of the discussion in working group 2 is attached in Annex II.

6. Plenary discussion, recommendations

In the subsequent plenary session the findings of working groups 1 and 2 were presented by the rapporteurs. Adding to these reports, the role of science and professional education were emphasised in the discussion as important components to ensure SFM in CEECs. Furthermore, it was suggested to initiate national consultation processes to achieve integrated views of countries on issues and future needs prior to 4th Ministerial Conference.

It was noted in the plenary discussion that the results of the working groups would reflect very well the variety of challenges for SFM faced by CEECs. Furthermore, it was also acknowledged that the various similarities between the recommendations elaborated by the two working groups underline the significance of the issues discussed.

It was agreed that a “condensed” version of these recommendations should be presented to the next MCPFE Expert Level Meeting (22-23 October 2001 in Vienna, Austria). The Liaison Unit Vienna was asked to prepare a list of recommendations in a condensed format according to the guidance given at the workshop². In addition, it was communicated that the recommendations would also be discussed at the up-coming session of the Team of Specialists on CITs³.

Mr. Mayer informed that it is planned to publish the proceedings of the international workshop as an MCPFE publication.

In general the plenary discussion also confirmed the importance and success of the workshop in allowing communication and exchange of views and experiences among workshop participants, especially from CEECs.

7. Closure of the meeting

In concluding the meeting, Mr. Mayer thanked the delegates for their active participation and the comments and suggestions made in the discussions. He pointed to the success of the international workshop as a platform for dialogue and exchange of experiences and underlined the spirit for future dialogue and co-operation created through it. Mr. Mayer also expressed his thanks to the chairpersons of the working groups and the moderators of each session. Last, but not least, he thanked the Team of Specialists on CITs and the government of Poland for their important contribution to the joint efforts in organising the workshop.

² The Recommendations of the Workshop for the MCPFE can be found in Annex III.

³ This session of the Team of Specialists was convened immediately after the international workshop on Friday, 14 September 2001, afternoon.

Annex I: Findings of working group 1 – Socio-economic dimension of sustainable forest management

Chair: Mr. Arvids Ozols (Latvia)

Rapporteur: Mr. Ewald Rametsteiner (Liaison Unit Vienna)

Topics:

1. Transition process
2. Policy formulation
3. Policy implementation and instruments
4. Market and economic aspects
5. Social aspects

1. Transition process

Challenges identified:

- Role of government in privatisation / restitution
- Institutional and political reforms
- Reform of state forest administration
- Adaptation of legislation, including duties between national and local levels
- Unbalanced (industry) structures in forest sector

Lessons learned:

- Internal initiation, build up of expertise and lead, subsequent external support
- Co-ordination with other sectors, environmental protection policy, national situation
- Change in the right direction is possible
- Transition processes of countries and their forest sector have different scope and speed
- Participatory approach is key
- Real political will is necessary
- There is no single model that fits all countries
- Use experience made in other sectors and regions/countries
- Different importance of forest sector influences process
- Insufficient communication and information creates problems

2. Policy formulation

Challenges identified:

- Rights and duties of public and private owners
- Participation, conflict resolution, but low public interest
- Formulation and implementation of national forest programmes
- Deforestation and afforestation issues

- Cross-sectoral activities and issues

Lessons learned:

- Agricultural land changes to be faced
- Integration of forestry and rural development needed
- Reform within macro-economic framework necessary
- National forest policy is important
- Involvement of all stakeholders for policy formulation
- Communication, information and transparency
- Support of private associations
- Role of forestry for and demand of the public
- Base on local experience and international knowledge
- Follow up instruments for revision of policies to integrate implementation experience
- Co-ordinated policies between forestry and forest industry sector

3. Policy implementation and instruments

Challenges identified:

- Law enforcement, including illegal logging and corruption
- Financing SFM
- Communication and information tools
- Institutions, including support and extension

Lessons learned

- Adequate instruments needed to implement policies formulated
- Clear definitions of tasks and functions is key
- Criteria for evaluation of implementation and instruments
- Holistic approach and cross-sectoral linkages important
- Low level of law enforcement has to be addressed
- Economic, market and fiscal reform/adaptation is necessary to succeed
- General favourable investment climate facilitates investment in forestry
- Forest management can be economically balanced
- Low political and public attention,
- Currently mainly/only external international financial support
- Possibly financial potential exists from „Kyoto forests“
- Step by step implementation in the right order (starting from political will, formulation processes, law decision, implementation, extension)
- More transparency of public forest management needed

4. Market and economic aspects

Challenges identified:

- Competitiveness of forest sectors
- Changing consumption and production patterns
- Role of forestry in rural development
- Economic viability and investment promotion
- Kyoto forests and certification
- Income creation and employment, incl. through non-wood
- Management of public forests

Lessons learned:

- No excess market barriers creation / subsidising
- Develop internal resources and private structures
- Close collaboration between government and private interest groups
- Definition of appropriate relationship between public and private forest industry sector
- Efficient linkages between public and private forest industry sector
- Role of certification
- Market information
- Promotion of the use of forest products
- Consider global forest products market developments (production, consumption and market structures)
- Support innovative solutions, such as eco-tourism

5. Social aspects

Challenges identified

- Occupational safety and health
- Capacity building and human resources
- Lack of trust between stakeholders
- Public use of forests

Lessons learned:

- Capacity building is an overarching issue, investment in human resources is key
- Qualified persons might become a bottleneck
- Role of recreation services
- Dialogue between stakeholders is important
- Transparency is necessary for establishing trust
- Education and information – opening up
- Stakeholders depend on each other
- Motivate public to participate policy formulation
- Lack of studies on behaviour of private forest owners

Role of MCPFE / Ministers and Recommendations:

- Address rural development and the whole forest sector/cluster, not only forestry
- Promote participatory approach and national forest programmes
- Address instruments more specifically and recommend reinvestment of forestry revenues

Role of Team of Specialists on CITs and Recommendations:

- Collect and distribute information and experiences, including background information on policies and markets, *inter alia*, through market workshops
- Elaborate proposals for procedures for forest policy implementation, instruments for assessment and evaluation
- Link to policy processes and support networking between bodies
- Formulate recommendations/proposals for stronger role of MCPFE

Role of both, MCPFE and Team of Specialists on CITs, and Recommendations:

- Provide forum to exchange views and experience, monitor progress made, incl. regional workshops
- Highlight issues and priorities, including the balance of private and public interest in forests
- Ensure wide stakeholder representation and involve private forest owner representatives in policy making
- Link more strongly with forest industry sectors, support integration into international markets
- Enhance human resource development and reinforce implementation of Lisbon Resolution
- Provide link between global, national/regional levels

Annex II: Findings of working group 2 – Ecological dimension of sustainable forest management

Chair: Mr. Peter Csoka (Hungary)

Rapporteur: Mr. Alexander Buck (Liaison Unit Vienna)

Major issues/challenges in the future:

- Restitution of areas rich in bio-diversity / Financing maintenance and/or improvement of ecological functions
- Integration of protection and management concepts
 - Need for integrated planning schemes and inter-sectoral approaches based on multi-stakeholder participation - national forest programmes
 - Need to invest in improving information base on forest biodiversity
- Need for education and communication
 - Education of new forest owners and the public
 - Communication with the public

Lessons learned in the transition process:

- Maintenance and improvement of ecological functions requires external funds and cannot be financed by the forest sector alone
- Cross-sectoral approach is needed
- Co-ordination between different instruments/institutions is essential
- Financial incentives should be based on strong government policies
- Compensation schemes exist in CEECs, but often proved to be too weak in practice
- Deeper involvement of stakeholders and increased transparency is needed in setting targets for SFM
- Tasks in maintaining and/or enhancing ecological functions that require additional resources need to be defined more clearly
- Innovative financial incentives (e.g. tax relief) should be considered
- Ecosystem approach is desirable, but more experience is needed in applying it on the ground

Restitution of areas rich in biodiversity / Financing maintenance and/or improvement of ecological functions

Role of international co-operation:

- Identify urgent needs in the protection of ecological values in regions of acute stresses
- Analyse existing EU experiences and develop models applicable in the CEECs
- Recognise role of forest owners associations in sharing of experiences and networking

- Recognise NGOs' "catalytic" role
- Establish demonstration areas and analyse and integrate the existing model forest initiatives

Implications for the 4th Ministerial Conference - Recommendations:

- Contribute to integration of sector policies
- Consider broadly legal framework for SFM
- Foster implementation of existing international commitments through an action-oriented resolution
- Identify mechanisms for long-term financing of ecological functions

Integration of protection and management concepts

Role of international co-operation:

- Exchange of experiences in measuring and monitoring biodiversity
- Building capacity in forest management planning
- Launch pilot studies on appropriate management techniques
- Improve capacity of forest owners in participating in setting management targets and identifying appropriate methods

Implications for the 4th Ministerial Conference - Recommendations:

- Foster implementation of existing international commitments through an action-oriented resolution
- Contribute to currently on-going work on further improvement of forest biodiversity related pan-European indicators

Need for education and communication

Role of international co-operation:

- Facilitate exchange of experiences gained in the transition process between countries, in particular among groups of countries characterised by different constraints
- Contribute to raising awareness on ecological functions and the sustained financial resources required for providing these functions

Implications for the 4th Ministerial Conference - Recommendation:

- Reinforce political commitment to promote multi-stakeholder co-operation and public participation

Annex III: Recommendations of the workshop for the MCPFE

International Workshop

FORESTS AND FORESTRY IN CENTRAL AND
EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES –
THE TRANSITION PROCESS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

12 – 14 September 2001, Debe/Poland

**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKSHOP
FOR THE MCPFE**

I. General

- Provide forum to exchange views and experiences and to monitor progress made
- Highlight issues and priorities, including the balance of private and public interest in forests
- Provide link between global and national/regional levels
- Initiate national consultation processes to achieve integrated views of countries on issues and future needs prior to 4th Ministerial Conference

II. Policy Formulation and Implementation

- Recognise cross-sectoral nature of sustainable forest management and contribute to integration of sectoral policies
- Reinforce political commitment to promote transparency, multi-stakeholder co-operation and public participation
- Promote national forest programmes
- Reinforce implementation of existing MCPFE resolutions and international commitments



MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
REPUBLIC OF POLAND



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III. Economic aspects

- Promote review of fiscal systems and re-investment of forest revenues
- Enhance linkage of forestry with other forest sectors and support integration into international markets

IV. Social aspects

- Enhance human resource development and capacity building, health and safety
- Enhance communication with the public

V. Ecological aspects

- Identify urgent needs in the protection of ecological values in regions of acute stresses (war, forest destruction, erosion,...)
- Consider implications of privatisation and restitution of areas rich in biodiversity
- Identify mechanisms for sustained long-term financing of ecological functions, including innovative mechanisms