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## Forestry policy in the European Community

(Communication from the Commission  
to the Council of 6 December 1978)

**Opinion of the European Parliament (11 May 1979)  
and of the Economic and Social Committee (22 May 1979)  
on the Commission's Communication.**

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## Introduction

### The need for new initiatives

This report on forestry policy in the European Community is presented by the Commission to the Council of Ministers in response to a request made by several Member States' delegations at a meeting of the Special Committee of Agriculture in May 1976.

Also the major organizations of forest owners and forest industries at Community level have made representations to the Council, the Commission, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee in which they point out the importance of forestry to the well-being of the people of the Community and request that forestry problems be given appropriate attention at Community level. The Economic and Social Committee has also prepared a report on forestry policy.

There are several reasons why national forestry policies and management practices which have been built up so successfully in Member States over several generations as well as the limited forestry measures which have already been taken at Community level must be suitably developed by new initiatives:

1. Increasing and to some extent conflicting demands are made on the forests for the:

- production of timber,
- conservation of the environment,
- provision of recreational facilities,
- creation of employment and improvement of living standards in poor rural areas.

2. Because of its multiple functions forestry policy influences and is influenced by other policies at both national and Community levels. The supply of wood to forest industries is an essential element of raw material and industrial policies. There are strong links with agricultural and regional policy because large areas of forest and of marginal and submarginal agricultural land which is suitable for forestry occur in the poorest regions of the Community where forestry and the industries based on it provide opportunities for employment and help to ensure a reasonable standard of living for the local population.

The main contribution of forests to social policies is that they facilitate the enjoyment of nature by urban populations. The role of forests in the conservation of soil, water, wild life and landscape provides a link with environmental policy. These links are illustrated by the proposal for a Council regulation on a common measure for forestry in certain dry Mediterranean zones of the Community<sup>1</sup> and by the section on forestry in the Community's Environment Programme 1977-81.<sup>2</sup>

3. The Community's negative trade balance for wood and wood products is exceeded only by the oil sector and it will continue to rise well beyond the end of this century in the absence of new initiatives. Moreover, the viability of the wood processing industries in the Community depends on increased wood supplies from within the Community.

4. There are well over two million small woodland owners in the Community, whose problems and interests require attention. Forests cannot be managed sensibly if their various functions and links with other policies are considered separately and piecemeal. The object of this report is therefore to summarize the facts and problems of forestry as a whole and to suggest how some of the problems might be approached. An account of the forestry situation, prepared by the respective national forestry services, has already been presented to the Council as a separate document.

The solution of some, but by no means all problems will necessitate some form of Community intervention.

For the above reasons it is the Commission's intention to propose the development of a common forestry policy but only in the sense of having some clearly defined objectives and principles of national forestry policy which are common to all Member States.

The Commission has therefore arranged for its report to be followed by a proposal for a Council Resolution on the objectives and principles. This draft has been the subject of wide consultation both with governmental and non-governmental forestry interests.

A complementary necessary step to this approach is the creation of adequate consultative machinery in

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 117 of 20. 5. 1978.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 139 of 13. 6. 1977.

order that the coordination of forestry policies of the Member States may develop as envisaged above. A proposal for a Council decision to set up a Permanent Forestry Committee is therefore also appended to this report.

With this report and the adoption of the above two proposals for Council decisions referred to above a foundation will have been laid for the development and subsequent updating of a Community forestry policy that is clear in direction, practical, and flexible in application. Common measures, however, will be proposed only as and when they are necessary for the achievement of the common objectives or of broader Community policies.

## **Main elements and Community action to date**

1. Forests produce wood, one of the few major renewable raw materials; they cause no pollution. On the contrary, they are essential for the environment. In addition, they afford the public the opportunity to enjoy nature and seek healthy relaxation.

2. The productive, environmental and recreational objectives of forestry can normally be pursued in conjunction with one another by multiple use management, but the weight that is attached to each function must be varied according to local circumstances. Over the greater part of the Community's forest area the production of timber, which provides the essential economic base for forestry is and should remain the main objective.

In certain forests, however, notably in the mountainous and mediterranean regions of the Community, the forests' main function is to provide protection against erosion by water and wind, desiccation and flooding. Some forests must also be managed primarily as habitats for species of animals and plants which are in danger of extinction. Near large towns the recreational use of forests may be their most important function.

3. Forest trees take anything from 20 to 200 years to mature. This long term nature of forestry calls for careful planning and renders sudden changes in policy undesirable. In the formulation of policies the distinctive characteristics and complementary roles of State forests, other publicly owned forests and private forests should be recognized. In all three categories of ownership, however, the successful implementation of forestry policies will largely depend on being able to ensure the economic viability of efficiently managed woodlands.

4. The Community depends on imports for more than half of its consumption of wood and wood products. Every Member State is a net importer. The total negative trade balance for this sector which amounts to 8 000 million EUA per year is exceeded only by the sector of petroleum and petroleum products. Demand which has almost doubled within the last 25 years is expected to continue to rise by a little over 2% per year up to the end of the century if present trends continue.

5. Annual production is about 80 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood in the Community and this is expected to rise under existing national forestry policies by about 1% per year — i.e. about half as fast as demand. The need for imports will thus increase. Bearing in mind that the European Community already accounts for more than one third of world trade in wood and wood products, the following points must be borne in mind:

- Little or no additional supplies can be expected from Scandinavia which is already experiencing some difficulty in maintaining the present level of exports from indigenous wood resources. Even if additional wood continues to be available in North America, the USSR and the tropics, supplies from the natural forests there will have to come from less accessible areas than hitherto; this will add to the cost of harvesting and transport;
- Although the potential supply of wood from plantations of fast growing species in the tropics may be great, the actual amounts that will become available are still very uncertain;
- The Community will be in competition for its additional requirements with other customers including some developing countries where present consumption is low but may be expected to rise fast if they are to progress as one must hope;
- The cost of imports is likely to rise even faster than the volume because exporting countries are understandably insisting more and more on the export of wood products rather than of wood.

6. The above considerations point to the desirability to grow more wood. But would the cost be justified? Forestry normally yields a low return on the capital value represented by the forest. Real rates of return more than 3% are an exception. There are, however, other factors than cash income which must be taken into account: the forest industries which require more wood to remain competitive as well as the contributions which forests can make to the balance of payments, rural employment, regional development, tourism and conservation of the environment.

7. As stated in the introduction forestry has many links with other policies in the Community, but it also influences and is influenced by events outside. In the first place, the price of timber on the world market largely determines the price in the Community. This price is low in relation to the cost of growing timber in

the Community, a situation which is not likely to change while certain exporting countries can continue to treat some of their forests as 'mines' instead of managing them as a renewable resource. To seek to increase the internal price of wood above the world price would be no solution. Either the wood processing industries in the Community would become quite uncompetitive or they would have to be protected against imports in a way which would be contrary to the Community's trading policies and interests. Other solutions must be sought.

There are also other links between forestry in the Community and elsewhere. For example, on the one hand, the production potential of our forests has been increased and can be increased further by the introduction of fast growing species from other parts of the world; conversely, foresters from Member States have played and continue to play a leading part in helping to develop the forest resources in many countries in all continents.

In this context it is relevant to refer to the useful cooperation in forestry which is developing between the services of the Commission and international organizations, notably FAO, OECD, UN and IUFRO.<sup>1</sup> A further strengthening of such links could be to our mutual advantage by eliminating duplication of effort; it would in no way prejudice the contributions which Member States make individually to the work of these organizations.

8. There has hitherto been no Community forestry policy as such, but some forestry policy measures have been taken or are under consideration in the context of other Community policies. A financial contribution from the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) has been available for over a decade under Regulation No 17/64/EEC of 5 February 1964<sup>2</sup> or the financing of certain forestry projects. In the three years 1974-76 the EAGGF has contributed to 30 million u.a.

9. This method of aid is to be replaced by a directive concerning forestry measures, the proposal for which was submitted to the Council of Ministers in 1974.<sup>3</sup> Approval by the Council is still awaited. The directive

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<sup>1</sup> IUFRO = International Union of Forest Research Organizations.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 34 of 27. 4. 1964.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 44 of 19. 4. 1974.

is intended primarily as a contribution to the improvement of agrarian structures and as a complement to the other directives issued for that purpose. It will encourage the afforestation of land which has become submarginal for agriculture and is more suitable for forestry, but only where the afforestation contributes to the improvement of agrarian structures. From the forestry point of view it is a very limited measure but useful as far as it goes.

10. A proposal for a Council regulation on a common measure for forestry in certain dry Mediterranean zones of the Community was submitted to the Council by the Commission on 2 May 1978.<sup>1</sup> The object is to improve the geophysical and cultivation conditions which hamper agriculture, particularly as regards the conservation of soil and water. The measure concerns afforestation, the improvement of deteriorated forests and necessary supplementary measures such as the construction of forest roads, terracing, fire protection and indispensable preparatory studies. A Community financial contribution from the EAGGF is envisaged of 184 million EUA over three years which may be increased to 230 million EUA after review.

11. Under certain conditions projects covering limited aspects of forestry may also be eligible for grants from the Regional Fund and Social Fund. In practice very few forestry projects have benefited. Loans for forestry and forest industrial projects are available in principle from the European Investment Bank, but little use has been made of this facility.

12. Some forestry measures at Community level have been taken in the context of Articles 43 and 100 of the Treaty of Rome primarily in order to facilitate trade with the Community.

• Three directives are concerned with the genetic quality of forest reproductive material (e.g. forest tree seeds and nursery plants). They are:

— Council Directive of 14 June 1966 on the marketing of forest reproductive material;<sup>2</sup>

— its amendment by the Council Directive of 18 February 1969;<sup>3</sup>

— its further amendment by the Council Directive of 26 June 1975.

• Council Directive No 71/161/EEC of 30 March 1971 deals with the exterior quality norms of forest reproductive material.<sup>4</sup>

• Council Directive No 68/89/EEC of 23 January 1968 deals with the classification of wood in the rough.<sup>5</sup>

13. Three other measures with forestry implications deserve mention in the present context:

— Directive of 24 October 1967<sup>6</sup> which deals with the freedom of establishment and provision of services by self-employed persons in forestry and logging.

— Directive of 21 December 1976<sup>7</sup> on phytosanitary measures which is intended to minimize the risk of plant diseases of importance to agriculture and forestry being imported into the Community and transmitted from one country to another within the Community, while at the same time placing the minimum restrictions on trade.

— The Council Decision of 16 and 17 May 1977 to approve the Environment Programme 1977-81<sup>8</sup> which states in a short section on forestry that 'the chief functions of forests in the various types of region should be studied together with the best ways of reconciling them'.

14. Some studies on forestry subjects have been undertaken, e.g.:

— access by the public to forests and their use for recreation;<sup>9</sup>

— mechanization of forestry operations;<sup>10</sup>

— State aid for forestry;<sup>11</sup>

— forestry taxation.<sup>12</sup>

Certain forestry statistics are also compiled on a Community basis and published in the series of Agricultural Statistics by the Statistical Office of the Commission.

15. First contacts have been established at technical level with the forest services of Greece, Portugal and Spain in order to study the likely forestry implications of the possible entry of these countries into the Community.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 117 of 20. 5. 1978 (NB: The Council adopted a regulation on the basis of this proposal on 6 February 1979, OJ L 38 of 14. 2. 1979).

<sup>2</sup> OJ 125 of 11. 7. 1966.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 48 of 26. 2. 1969.

<sup>4</sup> OJ L 87 of 17. 4. 1971.

<sup>5</sup> OJ L 32 of 6. 2. 1968.

<sup>6</sup> OJ 263 of 30. 10. 1967.

<sup>7</sup> OJ L 26 of 31. 1. 1977.

<sup>8</sup> OJ C 139 of 13. 6. 1977.

<sup>9</sup> Commission: Information on Agriculture, No 31, May 1977.

<sup>10</sup> Commission: Information on Agriculture, No 32, May 1977.

<sup>11</sup> Commission: Information on Agriculture, No 33, May 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Commission: Information on Agriculture, No 34, May 1977.

The inclusion of these three countries in the Community would increase its forest area by about two thirds and its production of wood by a little less than one-third. It would appear from the information at present available that the forestry implications would be limited. The only significant new factor is that Portugal is by far the world's largest producer of cork which is included in Annex II of Article 38 of the Treaty as an agricultural product. Half of the country's 3 million ha of forest are devoted to the cultivation of cork oak. In contrast to all existing Member States Portugal also has a trade surplus in respect of other forest products which amounts to between 100 and 200 million EUA. Both Greece and Spain, however, have deficits which are considerably larger. The overall effect of the Community's proposed enlargement will therefore be an increase in the Community's net import requirements in the wood sector other than cork.

While most of Portugal's forests enjoy the advantages of an Atlantic climate, the forestry conditions of Greece and in parts of Spain are similar to those in the Mediterranean zones of the existing Community, but the proportion of the total land area covered by forests is greater. Statistics on a comparable basis are, however, not yet available.

16. The chapters which follow summarize for the Community the situation, problems and measures concerning the structure of the forest estate,<sup>1</sup> the principle functions of the forest,<sup>2</sup> and the instruments of forestry policy in the Member States.<sup>3</sup>

The texts prepared by the forest services of the Member States and presented to the Council on 5 July 1978 as well as the statistics and studies compiled at Community level have served as the basis for the report. The report also points to those aspects of forestry policy which call for closer coordination within the Community or for new initiatives at national and Community levels.

The rich diversity of climate, topography and soils as well as of the history of the forests in the European Community will ensure that the framework of coordination will always encompass a variety of approach and measures adapted to suit the characteristics of each forest region.

<sup>1</sup> Points 17 to 24.

<sup>2</sup> Points 25 to 63.

<sup>3</sup> Points 64 to 90.

## Structure and ownership of the forest estate

17. In the European Community forests cover over 31 million ha or 21% of the total land area. This is about the same as the area occupied by cereals and one third of the area devoted to farming as a whole. Forestry, although it has many links with agriculture, differs from it not only because of the long production cycle of anything up to 200 years: the forester is, in a sense, where the agriculturist was in the stone age; he manipulates what nature has provided. The introduction of species which are not native and the application of modern genetics to produce improved tree seed are still in their infancy. This situation offers a great challenge. The forester has much scope for improving the production potential of the forests in the Community; on the other hand he is also the custodian of highly sophisticated semi-natural ecosystems and a unique gene bank about which we as yet know so little; we owe it to posterity to preserve this heritage.

Forests are very unevenly distributed among the Member States as is evident from Table 1.

Table 1 — Distribution of forests in the European Community

Member State	Forest area		
	Total 1 000 ha	As % of land area	Ha per head
Belgium	615	20	0.06
Denmark	470	11	0.09
FR of Germany	7 200	29	0.12
France	13 950	25	0.28
Ireland	330	4	0.09
Italy	6 300	21	0.12
Luxembourg	85	32	0.24
Netherlands	310	8	0.02
United Kingdom	2 020	8	0.04
Community	31 280	21	0.12

France alone accounts for about 45% of the total forest area and, together with Germany and Italy, for almost 90 %. These countries are not only the largest but also, with the exception of Luxembourg, the most densely wooded in the European Community. The contrasts between Member States are even greater in terms of forest area per head of population. In France and Luxembourg this area is twice as great as in any

Table 2 — Forest Ownership

Member State	Areas 1 000 ha			
	State	Other public bodies	Private	Total
Belgium	75	220	320	615
Denmark	135	50	285	470
FR of Germany	2 250	1 800	3 150	7 200
France	1 720	2 480	9 750	13 950
Ireland	250	—	80	330
Italy	350	2 150	3 800	6 300
Luxembourg	5	30	50	85
Netherlands	85	50	175	310
United Kingdom	880	—	1 140	2 020
Community	5 750	6 780	18 750	31 280

other Member State and more than 10 times as great as in the Netherlands. But comparisons with countries outside the Community reveal just how poorly endowed with forests the Community is. In Sweden, for example, the forest area per head is about 2.4 ha. This is almost 10 times as much as in France, 20 times as much as the Community average and 100 times as much as in the Netherlands. These differences have important policy and management implications. The greater the population in relation to the forest area, the greater becomes the need for policy measures such as zoning according to prime function in order to achieve a sensible balance between wood production and the environmental and recreational roles of the forest.

18. Forests are owned by the State, by other public bodies such as local communities and by private persons. Table 2 shows the area in each of these categories of ownership.

The main points to note in Table 2 are:

- 60% of the forests are privately owned, the other 40% are more or less equally divided between the State and other public bodies;
- the distribution of ownership varies greatly between Member States;
- the proportion of State forests is relatively high in Germany, the United Kingdom and Ireland; in France the area of State forests is considerable but it constitutes only a modest proportion of the total forest area.

19. The ownership pattern has several implications for forestry policy:

- The State forests are generally in fairly large units and are efficiently managed by a hierarchy of highly qualified forest officers and foresters. New policies and new technological advances are easily introduced by appropriate administrative action;
- Private forests on the other hand are highly fragmented. All except about 50 000 of the 3 million woodland owners have less than 50 ha. Very few woodland owners, whatever the size of their holding, depend on forestry for their living. Most are farmers or other local residents but there are also town dwellers who own woodlands, usually as a safe refuge for capital or as a hobby. The standard of management of private woodlands varies greatly. Some are among the best managed woodlands in the world; but the average standard is lower than in the State forests. The reasons are not difficult to find: lack of motivation when the reward for additional effort is small, the management difficulties associated with very small units of ownership and, in some instances, insufficient knowledge of forestry. On holdings with both woodlands and agriculture the two activities are generally integrated to mutual advantage in a way which would not otherwise be possible;
- The other publicly owned forests occupy an intermediate position. They are less fragmented than the private forests and more closely linked to the lives

Table 3 — Forest areas according to form of management

(1 000 ha)

Member State	Productive high forest			Other	Total
	Conifers	Broad-leaved	Total		
Belgium	280	260	540	75	615
Denmark	260	140	400	70	470
FR of Germany	4 400	2 000	6 400	800	7 200
France	4 400	2 750	7 150	6 800	13 950
Ireland	240	50	290	40	330
Italy	1 100	1 600	2 700	3 600	6 300
Luxembourg	25	40	65	20	85
Netherlands	155	50	205	105	310
United Kingdom	1 200	300	1 500	520	2 020
Community	12 060	7 190	19 250	12 030	31 280

of the local communities than the State forests. This applies even where, as is the custom in some countries, the State manages these forests.

20. State forests, other publicly owned forests and private forests each make a distinctive and positive contribution to forestry. Member States in which any of these ownership categories are very poorly represented or absent might find it useful to examine the desirability of remedying the deficiency.

In the case of State forests it is particularly important to ensure the maintenance and, if necessary, the improvement of communications with the local inhabitants and especially with the owners of neighbouring land. In the case of private woodlands two lines of action seem particularly relevant. The first is to improve the flow of information to owners. It should be in a form which will be welcomed and understood; it should include simple technical advice, prices and other pertinent market news as well as details of any aids that may be available. The second necessary line of action is an intensification of the efforts being made to overcome the disadvantages of fragmentation.

It would be neither practicable nor even probably desirable to strive for any drastic reduction in the number of owners. Most owners depend on other activities for their main source of work and income. Very few would have the capital or the inclination to concentrate entirely on forestry. Two main methods have been tried in order to rationalize the management of small woodland holdings:

- Associations of woodland owners;
- enterprises which undertake the harvesting and sale of timber or the entire management of woodlands by contract; some of these enterprises are more or less independent while others are subsidiaries of forest industries whose main object is to secure their wood supplies.

Both approaches have given good as well as poor results. Member States might benefit by comparing their experiences and also by making a more systematic attempt than hitherto to learn from others.

Whatever methods are used to combat the effects of fragmentation of ownership, success is likely to depend largely on initiatives which the owners themselves are prepared to take. One category of woodland owners which is important in some parts of the world is almost completely absent in all Member States. These are the forest industries. The reasons are mainly historical and fiscal. Some forest industries do, however, encourage wood production in various ways, for example by doing research on poplars and other fast growing species and by making plants of these species available to private growers. This is a useful initiative.

21. Nearly all the commercial wood produced in the Community comes from areas classed as productive high forest which account for about 19 million ha or two thirds of the total forest area. Of the remaining 12 million ha at least 4 million are on sites where conversion to productive high forest would be possible

and indeed desirable. The remaining 7 million ha are less suitable for timber production but fulfil a vital environmental role in the prevention of erosion, the regulation of water regimes and as habitats of wild life. They include for example certain alpine forests near the upper limits of tree growth, coppice and scrub areas on poor sites, special vegetation types like the Mediterranean maquis as well as potentially productive forests managed as nature reserves.

The ratio of productive high forest to other forest areas which is shown in Table 3 does not differ greatly between Member States with two notable exceptions: Germany and Italy. In Germany 85% of the total forest area is productive high forest; this is because Germany has succeeded in converting to high forest practically all coppice areas which were suitable. By contrast, in Italy only a little over one third of the total forest area is productive high forest.

France and Italy between them account for 10 million of the 12 million ha of the areas classed as 'other', including their coppice areas which are suitable for conversion to high forest estimated to be of the order of 2 to 3 million ha in France and between 1 to 2 million ha in Italy. In countries where the forest area is small in relation to the total land area there is only very limited scope for converting 'other' areas to productive high forest, because the limited areas classed as 'other' must mostly remain as such for environmental reasons.

22. The division of productive high forest between areas where broad-leaved species predominate and areas which are mainly coniferous is also shown in Table 3. The distinction is significant because timber production (except in special cases such as poplars) is higher in coniferous forests while broad-leaved forests are, under certain conditions, considered preferable for soil protection although the claims in this respect are sometimes exaggerated. Also on environmental grounds both conifers and broad-leaved species have their place. In the productive high forest conifers exceed the broad-leaved species overall although in France and Italy the position is reversed. If the 'other' areas are brought into the reckoning the balance swings in favour of the broad-leaved species, because, these areas are predominantly broad-leaved.

23. The area under forest in the European Community is not static, although it changes slowly. For many centuries the forest area decreased as more

and more land was cleared for agriculture. More recently this trend has stopped and in some Member States it has been reversed. There are as yet no complete statistics of these changes but the information which is available gives some indications of what is happening. In Germany, for example, the total forest area has remained virtually unchanged during the past 15 years but each year about 10 000 ha of forest were lost, nearly all to urban use, while a similar area of bare submarginal agricultural land was afforested. The position has deteriorated in so far as the reductions in forest area took place near towns where the proportion of land under forest is in any case usually small and where the retention of the remaining forests is important for environmental reasons. In Belgium too the forest area has remained unchanged during the past two decades. In the United Kingdom, on the other hand, there has been an average net increase in forest area during this period of 30 000 to 40 000 ha per year, the afforestation being shared more or less equally between private owners and the State. In Ireland where the forest area is very small the annual rate of afforestation has been running at about 10 000 ha, nearly all by the State, and there has been almost no forest clearance.

24. The change of land use between agriculture and forestry is reversible and need not impair the long term biological production potential of a site. The conversion to urban use, on the other hand, is generally irreversible and takes the land permanently out of production. The consequences are therefore much more serious.

There are believed to be about 5 million ha of bare land in the Community which is submarginal for agriculture but suitable for forestry and not needed for other purposes. A more accurate assessment could only be made as part of a general land classification and the formulation of a general land use policy. Irrespective of ownership, the afforestation of this land would appear to be in the public interest, subject to appropriate environmental safeguards in sensitive areas where the conservation of a particular type of landscape or ecosystem is considered necessary. There is very little risk of the undesirable afforestation of good farmland; on most of this type of land farming is more profitable than forestry and where it is not, afforestation is unlikely to conflict with agriculture or other policies affecting land use.

It seems probable that there will continue to be little pressure to clear substantial forest areas for agriculture. Tree clearance is likely to be confined, as in recent years, to hedgerows and very small woods for the purpose of increasing the size and improving the shape of agricultural areas. The impact of such clearings on future wood production is negligible, but they may lead to wind erosion of the soil and the destruction of habitats of wild life which may be essential for the survival of certain species of animals and plants.

The pressure to clear forest land for urban uses, according to present indications, is likely to persist in the foreseeable future in spite of the recent decline in birthrates. The pressure is increased by the fact that land values for urban uses are many times higher than for forestry.

Although the areas involved are much smaller than the increases in forest area through afforestation, the clearance must cause concern for the reasons already stated, but this problem can be dealt with effectively only in the context of general land use policy and not in the context of forestry policy alone.

## Wood production

25. The economic production of wood has been the main forestry policy objective in most forests which are suitable for the purpose and the income from timber production has been and is likely to remain the main source of finance to pay for forest management in all its aspects including those concerned with the conservation of the environment.

26. Wood production in the Community has fluctuated at around 80 million m<sup>3</sup> per year for the last 20 years. As already stated, most of the wood comes from the 21 million ha of productive high forest, but some comes also from the remaining 11 million ha of land classed as forest as well as from trees outside the forest. Yields from coppice are of significance mainly in France.

Trees outside the forest constitute a significant proportion of total production in a few countries. In Holland, lines of fast growing poplars are planted on a large scale between fields and along roads; the same applies also to parts of Italy and France where there are also larger plantations of poplar. In England much of the oak that is felled comes from hedgerows and small clumps of trees which are still a typical and pleasing feature of the landscape. Within the high forest about one half to two thirds of the volume yield and a much larger proportion of the money yield is derived from the harvesting of mature stands and the rest from the thinning of young stands. The distribution of total production by countries as well as average production per ha of land classed as forest are shown in Table 4.

The main points to note are:

- The dominant position of Germany and France;
- The total annual yield of 78 million m<sup>3</sup> works out at only 2.4 m<sup>3</sup> per ha, if related to the total forest area and at 3.5 m<sup>3</sup> per ha, if related to the area of productive high forest; this is very low considering that in systematically managed forests average yields of 5 to 8 m<sup>3</sup> are obtained;
- In Germany the average yield per ha is relatively high because a large proportion of the total forest area consists of productive high forest and within the latter the proportion of conifers is high;

Table 4 — Wood production by countries in 1974

Member State	Total million m <sup>3</sup>			m <sup>3</sup> per ha
	Conifers	Broad-leaved	Total	
Belgium	1.5	1.1	2.6	4.0
Denmark	0.9	0.8	1.7	3.6
FR of Germany	23.5	8.4	32.0	4.4
France	14.1	16.2	30.3	2.2
Ireland	0.2	—	0.2	0.7
Italy	1.2	5.6	6.8	1.1
Luxembourg	0.1	0.1	0.2	2.4
Netherlands	0.8	0.3	1.1	2.8
United Kingdom	2.2	1.1	3.3	1.6
Community	44.6	33.6	78.2	2.4

• The very low yields in Italy are due in part to difficult site conditions, in part to the preponderance of broad-leaved species and in part to extensive areas of coppice on good land which could be converted into more productive high forest;

• The low yields in the United Kingdom and Ireland are deceptive, because they are due to the fact that a very large proportion of the total forest area consists of plantations which are in fact highly productive, but too young to yield a significant harvest.

28. The annual harvest of about 80 million m<sup>3</sup> at the forest is sold for about 3 000 million EUA as follows:

	million m <sup>3</sup>
to sawmills and plywood plants	45
to pulp mills	13
to particle board factories	7
as poles (telegraph, building, etc.)	3
as round mining timber	2
to other industrial users	2
as firewood and charcoal	8
	<u>80</u>

The main point to note is: Most forest management in the Community is geared to the production of saw logs which fetch a much higher price than pulpwood and, being larger, cost much less to harvest. This form of management requires longer rotations and the retention of a larger volume of growing timber in the forest; this is considered a disadvantage more by economists than by most woodland owners, public and private. The latter are understandably more concerned with net income and the security afforded

by a capital reserve than with estimates of the percentage return which the income represents on capital invested, especially as such estimates can give very misleading results in times of inflation.

In certain forests long rotations may be required for ecological or amenity reasons.

29. The 80 million m<sup>3</sup> removed from the forests annually in recent years corresponded to about 40% of the wood consumed by the Community. The other 60% had to be imported, mainly as sawn timber, pulp and paper at a net cost of about 8 000 million EUA after allowing 2 000 million EUA for exports.

In terms of raw material (round wood equivalent of wood products) net imports rose from about 40 million m<sup>3</sup> in 1950 to about 120 million m<sup>3</sup> in 1973 to 1975 while production in the Community as has already been stated remained more or less constant at around 80 million m<sup>3</sup>.

The net imports of 120 million m<sup>3</sup> wood raw material equivalent were made up approximately as follows:

	million m <sup>3</sup>
sawn wood	45
pulp	33
paper and board	22
round wood	10
wood-based sheet materials (mainly plywood and fibre board; for particle board exports more or less balance imports)	7
others	3
	<u>120</u>

30. Looking to the future, overall demand is expected to rise by a little over 2% per year up to the end of the century if present trends continue; the rise will be somewhat more for paper and particle board and correspondingly less for sawn wood. But will present trends continue? Is there likely to be some major technological breakthrough which would lead either to a major substitution of wood by other materials or conversely to major new markets for wood? The possibility cannot be ruled out, but present indications are that, as in the past, there will be developments in both directions. Recent examples are the partial displacement on the one hand of wood-based paper by plastics for packaging and on the other hand the development of disposable clothing and bed sheets made of paper. According to the present state of knowledge the manufacture of products such as paper from plastics instead of from wood is likely to remain prohibitively expensive for a very long time because of the very high energy input required.

It would appear equally premature to expect any major breakthrough in the opposite direction although research carried out mainly outside the Community suggests that in the long run the use of wood as a chemical raw material (e.g. for animal feed) or as a source of energy may open up large and valuable new markets. The desirability of a more intensive research effort in this field within the Community certainly deserves close examination.

Even without any major technological developments wood and other materials are to some extent interchangeable for purposes such as construction and packaging. This competition is to be welcomed because it is an incentive to efficiency and may also have a stabilizing influence on prices.

In view of the above considerations the most reasonable assumption to make appears to be that demand will rise in accordance with present trends at slightly over 2% as indicated above.

31. Member States have estimated that under present policies annual removals will rise from 80 million m<sup>3</sup> to slightly over 100 million m<sup>3</sup> by the year 2000. Annual growth during this period is expected to rise from about 90 million m<sup>3</sup> to 120 million m<sup>3</sup> and the volume of the growing stock from 2 600 million m<sup>3</sup> to 3 200 million m<sup>3</sup>. There is no doubt that removals could be raised to a level nearer to the increment without prejudicing the future production potential of the Community's forests. The fact that growing stock

must be allowed to build up in young plantations is largely offset by an excess of growing stock in many older forests.

There are four main ways of increasing the availability of wood and wood products in the European Community from indigenous sources:

- to harvest more wood,
- to raise the long term production potential of existing forests,
- afforestation of bare land,
- to use wood more completely and efficiently and to recycle wood products, especially paper.

These approaches which will be discussed in more detail below do not have implications only for forestry policy but also for policies concerning the wood processing industries, the environment, regional development, improvement of agrarian structures and of land use in general.

32. The harvesting of additional wood would make an immediate impact on the supply situation. The possibilities for increasing this harvest are considerable. In the first place there are over-mature high forest stands whose early regeneration would not reduce but increase the longer term production potential of the forest. The retention for a further period of some such stands may be justified for ecological reasons or because they add beauty and variety to the forest scene. Others, however, are retained because there is insufficient appreciation of the fact that in the long term a forest can only remain healthy, productive and beautiful if old trees are felled to make room for young ones; yet others are retained because the system of forestry taxation may unwittingly encourage owners to use their forests to store standing timber rather than to grow it. There is no easy way to encourage the mobilization of surplus mature timber. Two lines of approach in particular deserve to be considered: first, measures to disseminate a better understanding of forestry and secondly, scrutiny by Member States Governments of forestry taxation.

The mobilization of surplus timber in young stands presents a somewhat different problem. The surplus often is allowed to accumulate where the harvesting of thinnings does not pay because the cost is too high in relation to the price which is obtainable. That also applies to many stands of coppice which could

subsequently be converted into much more productive high forest. Cost reduction is sought in several Member States by organizational measures such as the encouragement of growers' associations which in turn permit the introduction of more efficient modern technology. Where such organizational measures include marketing they may also help to secure better prices. Price, however, is mainly governed by the distance of a forest from the market, the efficiency of the wood processing industries and the price of the imported products with which these industries have to compete. In some Member States the desirability of introducing subsidies for the thinning of young plantations has been considered. The case for such subsidies deserves to be examined more closely because, while the price of wood of small dimensions is necessarily low in relation to the cost of harvesting, the value added in processing and the impact on the economy of a region can be great.

33. The future production potential of forests can be raised in various ways. In the first place production in the 19 million ha of forest classed as 'productive high forest' could gradually be increased by careful choice of species and efficient management from the present low average of 3.5 m<sup>3</sup>/ha/year to at least 5 m<sup>3</sup> since the average yields of most State forests which are not normally on the best sites are over 5 m<sup>3</sup>/ha/year; that alone would raise production by some 35 million m<sup>3</sup>/year. Further substantial increases may be possible later when the results of recent research, especially in tree breeding become available for general application to forestry practice. Secondly, at least 4 million ha of the remaining 12 million ha could be made productive by clearance and replanting with suitable species; this applies especially to areas of neglected coppice which are often on relatively good soils and would either be systematically managed as coppice or cleared and converted to high forest. Long term yields of about 6 m<sup>3</sup>/ha/year could be expected; this would add 24 million m<sup>3</sup>/year to production on 4 million ha and leave 8 million ha of forest to be managed mainly for environmental and recreational purposes.

34. The afforestation of bare land also offers great scope for adding to timber production in the Community. There are at least 4 million ha of land which have become submarginal for farming, are eminently suitable for timber growing and are not needed for other purposes. In the United Kingdom and Ireland where a considerable amount of this land occurs, yields of 8 to 10 m<sup>3</sup>/ha/year can be obtained;

and 6 m<sup>3</sup>/ha/year would be a very conservative estimate for average yields in the Community as a whole; 24 million m<sup>3</sup> per year could thus be added eventually to production if 4 million ha are afforested.

35. The more complete and efficient use of wood and the recycling of wood products, especially paper, would influence the supply and demand position very considerably:

1. Under traditional methods of harvesting only the trunks of trees are utilized while branches, stumps and roots which together may account for anything between 20% and 50% of the total wood fibre are left in the forest. The fuller utilization of the tree raises problems of:

— technology: e.g. developing suitable harvesting machinery;

— economics;

— environment: removing too large a proportion of the biomass may be damaging to the fertility of the site.

Bearing in mind these difficulties the extra yield from branches, stumps and roots must be forecast very cautiously at about 10%. This would, however add 8 million m<sup>3</sup>/year to the present yield of 80 million m<sup>3</sup> and would rise proportionately as this yield increases. There would appear to be scope for useful cooperation between Member States in the research and development work they are doing on these and related questions.

2. The increased recovery of sawmill residues would provide additional raw material to the pulp, fibre board and particle board industries. The 45 million m<sup>3</sup> of sawlogs produced in the Community every year yield about 25 million m<sup>3</sup> of sawn wood and 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of residues; about another 5 million m<sup>3</sup> of residues are obtained from the sawing of imported logs. At present only about one third of the 25 million m<sup>3</sup> of residues is utilized industrially, while most of the other two thirds are burnt to generate heat and power. Under certain circumstances this may be justified, especially if the cost of other energy sources is high.

However, most modern sawmills situated within reasonable distance of industries that can use residues find it more profitable to sell the residues and depend on other sources of fuel for their energy requirements. The increased utilization of residues

will thus depend largely on progress in the modernization and rationalization of the still highly fragmented and in some regions antiquated sawmilling industry. Even modest progress in this direction should increase the proportion of residues which are available for pulping or chipping from the present 8.5 million m<sup>3</sup>/year to 12.5 million m<sup>3</sup>/year which would be one half of the total 25 million m<sup>3</sup>. The availability should thereafter increase at least in proportion to the increase in the volume of round wood processed by the sawmilling industry. Thus, by the time the harvest of saw logs has doubled to 90 million m<sup>3</sup> and the availability of residues to 40 million m<sup>3</sup> at least 20 million m<sup>3</sup> of these should be available for industrial use.

3. About 8 to 9 million tonnes of waste paper are recycled for the manufacture of pulp each year. They represent slightly less than 30% of the paper consumed in the Community and have a wood raw material equivalent of about 20 million m<sup>3</sup>. It is estimated that the recovery rate could be increased to between 35 and 40% at the present level of paper consumption; this increase would be equivalent to 5 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood. Given the dependence of the Community on wood imports, the importance of promoting recycling can hardly be over emphasized.

36. There are certain by-products which do not have a major direct influence on the supply and demand for wood but which should not be ignored.

1. *Bark*: the 80 million m<sup>3</sup> of wood harvested each year are covered by some 8 to 10 million m<sup>3</sup> of bark. Some is left in the forest, some is burnt by the wood processing industries, very little is utilized commercially. Good progress has, however, been made in recent years by some Member States in the development of processes which enable bark to be used in horticulture for mulching and as a potting medium in competition with peat. Recent developments have also enabled the chipboard industry to accept a limited proportion of bark with the wood. These developments could prove profitable to all concerned and deserve to be encouraged.

2. *Lignin*: in the manufacture of pulp, only the cellulose which contributes about 60% of the wood fibre is used while the lignin which constitutes most of the other 40% is usually burnt to generate energy. Until recent measures against pollution came into force, some was simply eliminated in effluent. To find

a major commercial use for lignin is a problem which has received the attention of research institutes around the world for many years so far with only limited success. A concentrated research effort at one or perhaps two centres in the Community deserves consideration.

37. While accurate estimates are not possible a broad indication of the present and possible future annual availability of wood fibre from indigenous sources is given below in the light of what has been said up to now in this section on wood production.

<i>Present availability</i>	<i>million m<sup>3</sup>/year</i>
• Existing harvest <sup>1</sup>	80
• Residues from sawmilling <sup>2</sup>	8
• Recovery of waste paper (round wood equivalent) <sup>3</sup>	20
	108

<i>Possible increases in availability</i>	<i>million m<sup>3</sup>/year</i>
• Immediate increase in harvest <sup>4</sup>	10
• Long term increase in harvest in existing forests <sup>5</sup>	60
from areas to be afforested	24
	84

This additional yield of 84 million m<sup>3</sup>/year will be increased by the yield from trees outside the forest; on the other hand there will be some reductions because of the inevitable conversion of some productive high forest to other purposes such as urban development, recreation and the creation of nature reserves. Given sensible policies the losses should at least be small.

	<i>million m<sup>3</sup>/year</i>
• Use of stumps, branches and roots: <sup>6</sup>	
— from present harvest of 80 million m <sup>3</sup>	8
— from eventual harvest of 164 million m <sup>3</sup>	16

<sup>1</sup> Point 29.

<sup>2</sup> Point 35 (2).

<sup>3</sup> Point 35 (3).

<sup>4</sup> Point 32.

<sup>5</sup> Point 33.

<sup>6</sup> Point 35 (1).

- Increased utilization of sawmill residues for pulping:
  - short term 4
  - long term 20

- Recycling of waste paper<sup>1</sup>  
increase from 30% recovery to 40% recovery in terms of wood raw material equivalent. 7

On the basis of the above figures and taking the present level of harvest of 80 million m<sup>3</sup>/year as a starting point we may conclude that in the short term wood availability to industry from indigenous sources could be increased by:

	<i>million m<sup>3</sup>/year</i>
• increase in traditional harvest of trunk alone	10
• use of stumps, branches, roots	9
• increased use of sawmill residues	4
• higher recovery of waste paper	<u>7</u>
Total	30

In the longer term the increases in wood availability could be as follows:

	<i>million m<sup>3</sup>/year</i>
• increase in traditional harvest of trunk alone	84
• use of stumps, branches, roots	16
• increased use of sawmill residues	15
• higher recovery of waste paper, at least	<u>10</u>
	125

To sum up, given dynamic but realistic policies the availability of wood fibre to industry from indigenous resources could, in terms of wood raw material equivalent, be increased from the present 108 million m<sup>3</sup>/year:

- in the short term by about 30 million m<sup>3</sup>/year,
- in the longer term by about 125 million m<sup>3</sup>/year.

'Short term' in this context refers to a period of about 18 to 15 years and 'longer term' to some time during the first half of next century. It would be premature to attempt a more precise definition of possible time scale at this stage.

38. What is the capital investment needed to increase forestry production and what is the expected return on this investment? Clearly there can be no simple answers to these questions and the answers will

vary according to the measures envisaged and according to local circumstances.

39. The emphasis that should be given to the various ways of increasing the availability of wood products from indigenous sources will depend on their relative cost effectiveness as well as on other factors which need to be clearly identified. It therefore seems highly desirable for Member States which have not already done so to draw up and periodically review programmes of measures designed to increase wood availability giving estimates of cost and expected gains in wood availability for the stated cost. These programmes and estimates should be prepared on a comparable basis in order to make it easier for Member States to benefit from each others experience and in order to ascertain to what extent coordination of effort would be in the mutual interest especially in the context of Community policies which affect or may be affected by measures to promote wood production.

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<sup>1</sup> Point 35 (2).

## Conservation of nature and protection of the human environment

40. The role of the Community's forests in the conservation of nature has many aspects. In this regard the second action programme on the environment<sup>1</sup> gives a specific place to the forest because of its general role in the utilization of land as well as for its more specific effects which have particular importance in certain conditions. The actions foreseen in this context aim, on the one hand, to analyse these functions by defining their extent and efficiency, and on the other hand to propose the measures which would enable forests to fulfil these functions more effectively.

41. Forests conserve the soil and help to prevent erosion whether by water or wind; they reduce the flooding and drying out of rivers by acting like a sponge which absorbs water when it rains and releases it slowly afterwards; they add variety and beauty to the landscape; they fulfil special functions such as in the fixation of sand dunes and by acting as screens against wind and noise (e.g. near motorways); they play a part in regulating the carbon dioxide cycle in the atmosphere; and they provide essential habitats for wild life. Indeed some constitute unique gene banks the value of which we are only beginning to recognize as a result of recent developments in genetical and other research. Even small forests have been found to contain several thousand species of living organisms.

42. In any given region some aspects of conservation are more important than others. In the Mediterranean region and the Alps the prevention of erosion and soil and water conservation are of supreme importance. Without them there can be no civilized rural life and forestry is the key to soil and water conservation under these extreme conditions of topography and climate. Specific actions needed are:

- the protection and appropriate management of existing forests;
- the rehabilitation of forests degraded through grazing, fire or excessive past exploitation;
- the afforestation of bare slopes combined where necessary with terracing and other engineering works;

- further research to enable the above actions to be taken more effectively.

The excellent work that has already been done demonstrates the possibilities of bringing back new life to areas where past destruction of the forest has created barren mountain sides and has converted former agricultural land into grazing which is almost too poor even for the frugal and destructive goat.

Under these conditions there is a particularly close link between forestry and agricultural redevelopment. Under less extreme conditions of climate and topography the main conservational aspects of forests that need attention may be as habitats of wild life and their role in the landscape.

43. Under exceptional circumstances a forest can only fulfil its conservational function if all timber harvesting and recreation are excluded. In most cases, however, the production of timber and the recreational use of a forest are quite compatible with conservation although some adjustments to management may be necessary, for example the avoidance of large clear fellings on steep slopes, or on dry, hot sites. Forests with a particularly important conservational role are rarely those which are best suited for the economic production of timber because they tend to be on sites where the soil is poor or the terrain is difficult for logging; but there are exceptions.

Too great a concentration on wood production could, under certain circumstances, have serious direct and indirect effects on wildlife as well as imposing strains on soil fertility and long term productivity. These matters require further investigation.

44. The forest cannot fulfil its role in safeguarding the environment unless it is itself protected. Forests are exposed to many dangers the importance of which varies according to local circumstances. Among the most important are fire, wind and diseases of various kinds. Uncontrolled grazing in forests used to be more widespread than now, but where it still occurs the damage can be great, especially in the Mediterranean region. Recent developments have increased greatly the risk of damage caused by man: the influx of visitors has

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 139 of 13.6.1979.

added to the fire danger; in order to create ski pistes forests have been cleared on steep slopes where they are most needed for the prevention of erosion; in some areas the haphazard development of second residences is not only eating into the forest but adding to the risk of fire in what is left of the forest.

The forest services in the Member States have developed a high degree of competence in taking the necessary protective measures, but they are not always given the necessary support. The decisions concerning such matters as the development of second residences on forests and the creation of ski pistes normally rest elsewhere. Member States should ensure that forestry interests are adequately taken into account in such matters and that the protective measures which are necessary are taken.

45. The costs and possible loss of revenue which are associated with conservational aspects of forest management are difficult to quantify; even more difficult is the quantification of the benefits either in physical terms or in money although the damage that is done when these aspects are ignored is only too evident. In the circumstances, there are very few statistics on these matters either in the Community or elsewhere. Nor has a study as yet been made at Community level of the measures taken and results achieved in furtherance of environmental objectives in forestry in the Member States. This is an omission which it is intended to rectify as soon as possible for two main reasons. First, the little that is known strongly suggests that Member States have much to learn from one another; secondly, it is only on the basis of reliable information that the need, if any, for further measures either at national or Community levels can be judged objectively.

46. Even in the absence of detailed factual information it is possible to define certain problems and establish certain principles. The first point to make is that it is useful to distinguish between the minimum conservational requirements which should apply to all forests and the additional requirements which have to be met only in certain cases.

47. A reasonable minimum requirement is that forests should be managed so as to

- maintain the long term fertility and productivity of the site and, where necessary, the forest's role in regulating the water regime,
- minimize the risk of causing damage elsewhere,

- take account of the landscape,
- ensure a minimum standard of wild-life conservation.

The first two of these requirements entail, for example,

- the avoidance of clear fellings or other practices where these could lead to erosion and excessive surface run-off of water,
- adequate precautions against fire and the spread of disease,
- the control of grazing and the avoidance of the excessive removal of surface litter,
- the choice of species suited to the site.

The question of landscape raises somewhat different issues, because landscape is largely a matter of taste and most people like the landscape to which they are accustomed. To take account of landscape means essentially to avoid causing offence by introducing rapid change and taking account of public opinion.

48. The additional conservation measures which are necessary only in certain areas might include, for example, special protective measures on steep slopes or the creation of a nature reserve to maintain an ecosystem that is essential to the survival of species of animals or plants which are in danger of extinction and whose survival is regarded as important. Such additional measures are usually taken in publicly owned forests for the very good reason that they are a public responsibility which private owners should only be expected to shoulder even against compensation, if there is no alternative.

Such special areas also usually require a degree and intensity of specialized supervision which is rarely available outside the public service. If measures of this kind are considered necessary and the only suitable sites are in privately owned forests it is in the interests of all concerned that there should be the fullest possible consultation with the owner beforehand.

49. The question to what extent, if at all, private and public forest owners other than the State should be compensated for the implementation of their conservational and environmental responsibilities is one that has received attention in several Member States. The rules concerning these matters must be

adapted to suit the widely different local circumstances but it would seem desirable that the rules should be such that woodland owners in some Member States are not substantially worse off than those in others. It would also seem desirable that a distinction be made between the general minimum requirements described above<sup>1</sup> and the additional requirements referred to in the following paragraph.<sup>2</sup> In the case of the general minimum requirements any specific payment towards meeting the cost would seem inadvisable. Every owner of landed property has certain obligations in respect of that property towards his neighbours and the community at large which may involve him in costs and loss of revenue and for which he receives no specific compensation; it would be difficult to justify an exception in the case of forest property. There would also be the great difficulty of devising a scheme that is both fair and practicable given the difficulties of quantification. It would seem far preferable to acknowledge the contribution which forests make to the conservation of the environment in the level of general financial support given by governments to private forestry; this support could, and indeed should of course be varied to take account of differing environmental circumstances. If specific additional measures are considered essential on a private forest holding, this is quite another matter; each case can be considered on its own merits and appropriate compensation agreed. If these measures necessitate major restrictions on forest management, a useful solution under certain circumstances might be for the authority concerned to offer to buy the woodland in question.

## Public access and recreation

50. The opening of forests to the public and the provision of recreational facilities such as picnic sites, car parks, information centres, have become major elements not only of forestry policy but also of social policy. These are, in fact, aspects of forestry with the greatest appeal to wide sections of the general public, especially in towns and other densely populated areas. The opening of forests can also lead to a better understanding by the public of forests and of nature in general. On the other hand the opening increases the risk of damage through fire and other causes, including vandalism.

51. State-owned and other public forests in the Member States of the European Community are generally open to the public for recreational purposes. Access to private forests varies from country to country and depend not only on the laws in force, but also on the density of population, the degree of urbanization, the distribution of forest within a country, the amount of accessible forest per head of population, local habits and a number of other factors. Out of more than 31 million ha of forest in the European Community, only about 16 million ha are open and usable for recreational purposes and an average of only 600 m<sup>2</sup> of forest is available to each inhabitant of the European Community. This figure varies as between Member States from 2 400 m<sup>2</sup> in Luxembourg to 150 m<sup>2</sup> in Great Britain and the Netherlands.

52. A glance at historical records shows that during the course of the last century in all the Member States, an interpretation of the concept of property grew up according to which third parties had no legal right of access to forests. It was open to the owner to protect his land against access by third parties and he could decide whether he allowed, tolerated or prohibited such access.

Varying use was made of the right to prohibit access to forests from one Member State to another and also within a given State. Whereas in the United Kingdom and Ireland, access was prohibited as a rule, in large areas of Germany it was tolerated. Access to privately owned forest for recreation during the last century and at the beginning of this century admittedly occurred only rarely and was thus an event of no great consequence. It was only with

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<sup>1</sup> Point 47.

<sup>2</sup> Point 48.

increasing urbanization and higher population densities that a more generalized need for open air recreational facilities first made itself felt in such areas.

53. Owing to national and regional differences in population density, standards of living, leisure time available, forest density and recreational preferences as to areas and activities, there grew up a varying demand for the recreational use of forests. This found legal expression in several Member States. In others, no changes occurred in the legal situation, though the laws in force may not always have been strictly observed.

State and other publicly owned forests have been made accessible to the public in all the Member States of the European Community. The existing situation as regards access to private forests by third parties for recreational purposes may be grouped into four categories:

- Forests are by law accessible to the public. They cannot be closed by the owner for any considerable period of time without official authorization. This is the case in Germany and Denmark;
- Forests are not by law accessible to the public and access to them cannot be claimed by the public. In general, owners do not tolerate entry on to their land. This is the case in the United Kingdom, Ireland and Belgium;
- Forests are not, by law, accessible to the public, but the laws relating to protection of forests and wildlife provide for tax concessions or management subsidies to those forest owners who voluntarily admit the public to their forests. This is the situation in the Netherlands and, to a small extent, also in the United Kingdom;
- Forests are not, by law, accessible to the public, but such land is nevertheless used for recreational purposes by the public. Owners cannot prevent this except at the prohibitive cost of putting up a fence. The public regards entry as a right established by custom. This is the case in France, Italy and Luxembourg. No compensation or concessions are granted in cases where forests are voluntarily made accessible to the public.

A harmonization of the differences in law which have grown up during the last 150 years in the Member States, however desirable this might be, could not be fully achieved in the foreseeable future.

54. Where access to a forest is granted or tolerated, it may be necessary permanently or temporarily to limit, prohibit or restrict access to, and the pursuit of certain activities in, particular parts of the forest in the interests of one or more of the following:

- nature conservation, especially in areas where the survival of the forest or a rare ecosystem is threatened by adverse environmental conditions, or where the survival of endangered species of animals or plants depends on the conservation of a particular habitat;
- efficient forest management including protection against fire and damage from other causes;
- prevention of damage to neighbouring agricultural land;
- wildlife management including sport;
- safety of potential visitors (e.g. in areas with disused mine shafts).

55. When forests are opened to the public the aim should not be to provide the leisure facilities which are available elsewhere. Those who like crowds, noise and machines have plenty of opportunities for enjoyment outside the forest. On the other hand there tend to be few opportunities near towns except in forests for the quiet enjoyment of nature. It is therefore highly desirable that public access to forests should be mainly on foot.

Sensible exceptions which would normally apply only to publicly owned forests might include:

- access to picnic sites and other special recreation facilities;
- access by car to selected scenic drives, especially for the benefit of the aged and infirm;
- provision for horse riding in suitable areas.

56. Where there is public access to forests, the owner faces increased risks as well as a possible increase in management costs and a reduction of income. The risks are mainly from damage by fire and from vandalism; depending on national legislation there is also the liability in case a visitor has an accident. The increased management costs are incurred mainly by measures to prevent fire and vandalism and to keep the forest clean. Visitors, especially near towns tend to leave much dirt and

litter. Insurance against fire damage and liability in case of accidents may also add to the costs.

In some Member States either the costs of insuring against fire are partially met by the State or there is some provision for contributing to the cost of reforestation or other forms of compensation if fire damage occurs. In most Member States there are no such provisions. The laws concerning the liability of both owner and visitor also differ considerably. It is worth noting that whatever the law, very often the visitor has not the financial resources to pay for damage caused by a fire he may have started. Visitors may also cause indirect additional costs which are not easy to quantify; for example modifications in management and harvesting operations may be necessary in order to ensure the safety of visitors. In extreme cases, compaction of the soil may lead to loss of fertility. Loss of revenue occurs especially where public access interferes with shooting.

57. Owners are best off where they can keep the public out, but that is contrary to the public interest. Where there is access, whether legally provided or merely tolerated by custom, owners in some Member States are worse off than in others depending on:

- whether or not they get paid for opening their forests to the public;
- the laws of liability;
- whether or not the State contributes to the cost of fire insurance and/or compensation in case of fire damage.

58. One may conclude that:

- within the limits set by custom and national legislation, access on foot free of charge should be extended to as many forests as possible subject to the provisions referred to above;<sup>1</sup>
- where access is granted, the rights and responsibilities of the visitors, of the forest owner, of the State or other appropriate public authority should be clearly defined in rules which, subject to meeting specific national and local requirements, should be reasonably consistent throughout the Community.

59. So far access as such has been considered with no provision for any special facilities for the visitor. There is, however, an increasing demand and need for facilities such as car parks, picnic sites, camping

facilities and information centres; and where such facilities are created, there is also a need to make the necessary sanitary arrangements.

Recreational facilities help to concentrate the public in certain areas where suitable exhibits, literature and verbal explanations by qualified personnel, can also help to create an interest in and better understanding of nature in general and forests in particular. The concentration of visitors in certain areas also reduces pressure elsewhere in the forest where the public would be less welcome for any of the reasons given above.<sup>1</sup> The creation of recreational facilities in forests is, with few exceptions, a very recent development of the past 10 to 15 years and the amount and type of facilities provided vary greatly between Member States to suit local circumstances. The demand is obviously greatest in densely populated areas, especially where there are no beaches and few other open-air leisure facilities within easy reach.

The installation and maintenance of leisure facilities in forests requires special skills and adequate supervision; it is also expensive and there is rarely much income. It therefore seems desirable that the cost of the provision of recreational facilities in the forest beyond the mere granting of access on foot and from which no commercial return is to be expected should be borne by the State and other public bodies. Private forest owners should be under no obligation to provide or let others provide such facilities in their woodlands.

60. Cooperation between Member States on questions concerning access to and recreation in forests would for the time being be most useful if it were to concentrate on

- exchange of information between Member States and closer contacts between the relatively few experts in this field;
- research and planning problems in this field which are of common interest;
- laying the foundations for sound planning and any necessary future statistics by agreeing how to define and categorize facilities and the costs associated with them.

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<sup>1</sup> Point 54.

## Wildlife management

61. The management of wildlife in forests must be coordinated closely with the other aspects of forest management if a sensible balance is to be achieved between the conservation of wildlife, silviculture, sport and opening forests to the public. The aim must be to provide adequate habitats for the animals which depend on forests for their survival while at the same time preventing the population of any species from rising to a level which would pose a threat to other species, to the forest and possibly also to neighbouring agriculture. The Commission's proposal for a Council directive on bird conservation<sup>1</sup> includes provisions to satisfy these aims as far as birds are concerned. Similar problems arise with mammals. Deer, for example need forests for shelter but excessive deer populations can destroy forests by killing the young trees through browsing or removal of the bark.

62. Wildlife management in forests as elsewhere is sometimes complicated by the conflicting demands made by certain sectors of the conservation and the hunting lobbies (hunting in this context refers to all forms of killing or capturing animals for sport), although the more knowledgeable sectors of both lobbies recognize their common objectives of maintaining healthy populations at a reasonable level, an objective which can only be achieved by a suitable combination of conservation measures with the elimination of individuals without a future and not required for propagation. Contrary to what might be expected, it is where the hunting interests predominate, that deer populations have multiplied so as to constitute a major nuisance in forests and indeed a danger to their survival.

63. Traditionally, the forester in most Member States has been a hunter as well as a conservationist and trained in all aspects of wildlife management. It is therefore not surprising that in a majority of Member States the forest authority is also the authority for hunting matters. Legislation concerning hunting varies considerably between Member States and is most highly developed in Germany where a comprehensive federal law on hunting has recently been passed. As hunting laws and customs are much

rooted in local tradition and are adapted to suit local circumstances there would be little point in altering this situation except to insist on certain minimum standards in the interests of safety to human life and prevention of cruelty to animals. For these reasons it would seem desirable that everybody who wants to go hunting should first have to satisfy an appropriate national or regional authority by means of a test or otherwise on the following points:

- that he or she is competent to handle hunting weapons and can be trusted with them;
- that he or she has sufficient elementary knowledge of wildlife to ensure correct identification and avoidance of unnecessary suffering;
- that he or she knows the relevant laws and regulations, e.g. those concerning hunting seasons; this point could be dispensed with in the case of hunters (e.g. visitors from abroad) who are accompanied by someone who is prepared to assume responsibility for the observation by the hunter of these laws and regulations.

Some Member States, notably Germany, already have satisfactory legislation on these matters. Mutual recognition of certificates of proficiency in the above subjects would obviously be welcomed by those who want to go hunting in another Member State but Member States which themselves enforce high standards can hardly be expected to accept the certificates issued by other Member States until they too adopt comparable standards.

There are also other matters which call less for Community action than for arrangements between neighbouring Member States. Examples are the timing of hunting seasons along common frontiers and any special conservation measures for species such as chamois which are restricted to limited habitats. Control measures against pests such as wood pigeons which do not respect national frontiers might also be considered in this context.

Finally, as in most other aspects of forestry, there may be scope for improving the flow of information from country to country with a view to learning from one another.

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 60 of 13.3.1975.

## Instruments of forestry policy

### Organization

64. The successful implementation of forestry policy in a country clearly depends on having a forestry authority which is effectively organized and staffed for the purpose and has the necessary powers. There are, however, also other points which have to be considered.

1. How should forestry be fitted into the general organization of government? The Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for forestry in Belgium, France, Germany and Italy; the Department of Fisheries is responsible in Ireland, the Ministry of Home Affairs in Luxembourg, the Ministry of Environment in the Netherlands and also in Denmark where, however, some residual functions in relation to private forests have been retained by the Ministry of Agriculture which had originally been responsible for the whole of forestry. In the United Kingdom the Forestry Commission, which is the forestry authority in England, Scotland and Wales is responsible to three Ministers but does not form part of any Ministry; in Northern Ireland, the forest service is in the Department of Agriculture. This diversity in organization is not surprising because forestry necessarily concerns several departments of Government and it is a matter of judgment where it should be placed.

2. Should the forestry authority itself manage the State forests or should these be managed by a separate organization? Here again Member States differ. In Germany and the United Kingdom, for example, the forestry authority combines both responsibilities while in France the responsibility is divided.

3. What degree of centralization is desirable? In France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, the Netherlands and Luxembourg there is a high degree of centralization while in Germany each *Land* has its separate forest service; in Italy too there is a high degree of decentralization to the regions. In this respect forestry tends to follow the general trends in the countries concerned.

65. The different approaches by Member States to the organization of forestry administrations are determined in part by circumstances which cannot

readily be changed, such as the fact that the ownership of State forests in Germany is vested in the *Länder*, and in part the approaches are a matter of choice. Where Member States contemplate making changes in organization they would do well to see how others have fared who have already had experience of the changes that are proposed.

Generally speaking it would appear that the greater the division of responsibilities, the more difficult it becomes to implement forestry policies efficiently. It is particularly important that the responsibility for all activities in the forest — timber production as well as conservational and recreational measures — should be undivided. Only in this way can a proper coordination of these functions of the forest be assured. Consultation between various interests especially at the planning stage, is of course desirable.

Given the long term nature of forestry continuity of policy is also essential to efficiency. Money spent on planting trees is wasted if they are then allowed to die for lack of money to tend and protect them. That does not mean there should be no changes in policies and programmes, but that changes should be properly planned and phased. Continuity is best assured if forestry programmes are not made too dependent on short term fluctuations in the economic situation. These are primarily national responsibilities, but the Community could exercise a useful stabilizing influence.

### Forestry legislation

66. Member States have kept the Commission informed of their forestry legislation and of the changes that have been introduced from time to time.

A preliminary assessment of the situation suggests that

- There is a marked difference between Member States in their whole approach to forestry legislation. Some, notably the United Kingdom, prefer to keep legislation to a minimum and to supplement legislation, where necessary, by administrative procedures while other Member States prefer very comprehensive legislation which leaves less administrative discretion.

- Partly as a consequence of the previous point, woodland owners in some Member States are much freer to manage their woodlands as they wish than in others; at the same time those who can most do as they please also tend to get least financial and technical help from the State.

- In some Member States there appears to be a need to consolidate legislation. Because of changes over a period of years it is very difficult to determine the legal position on certain points because reference has to be made to many successive acts.

- Generally speaking, forestry legislation in all Member States appears to be adequate or even more than adequate for the implementation of existing policies; an important exception in certain Member States is legislation concerning the problems associated with the opening of forests to the public. This deficiency is understandable because the large scale recreational use of forests is relatively new.

67. Clearly Member States should ensure that their forestry legislation is adequate for the effective implementation of

- national forestry policies,
- forestry as well as other measures agreed at Community level. No useful purpose would be served by attempting any overall harmonization of national forestry laws as long as they meet the above requirements.<sup>1</sup> The results of the proposed analysis of existing legislation will, however, reveal what, if any, harmonization may be desirable.

### *Taxation and incentives*

68. Assuming that it is in the public interest to foster the maintenance and development of a continuing forest resource, Member States must ensure that their systems of forestry taxation and incentives make it more profitable for forest owners to develop their forest resources rather than to neglect or even liquidate them. If this aim is to be achieved, the following points must be borne in mind:

- the income from forestry holdings is generally less than 3% of the capital value represented by the growing stock and the land;
- as over 95% of all private forest holdings are less than 50 ha in extent the income is generally small not

only in relation to the capital value but also in absolute terms;

- in these smaller holdings there is usually no regular annual income since fellings are only carried out periodically;

- even on larger holdings the forest rarely constitutes the owner's main source of income;

- in new plantations there is usually no income at all for 20 to 30 years except where growth is exceptionally fast, and there is a further period when income does not cover the cost of management;

- in forestry there is no ready distinction between income and capital because the trees are both production factory and product.

69. Forestry taxation and financial aids to forestry in the Member States have been examined in the study entitled 'Forestry problems and their implications for the environment in the Member States of the EC'.<sup>2</sup>

### *Taxation*

70. The systems of forest taxation in the Member States are based primarily on income tax which is supplemented in some countries by a capital or wealth tax, various taxes on land and other real property as well as the inheritance and gift taxes payable in the case of changes of ownership without valuable consideration. In addition to this, a value added tax, whose principles are standard, is payable on the turnover of forest holdings.

71. Both the income and other forestry taxes levied differ widely between Member States in content as well as in the level at which they are raised. Precise comparisons are difficult for a number of reasons which complicate the issue, for example the effect of a woodland owner's income from other sources and parafiscal liabilities such as social security payments in respect of employees. Nevertheless, the study referred to in point 69 gives some useful indications.

<sup>1</sup> Point 66.

<sup>2</sup> Commission of the European Communities: Information on Agriculture No 25, 1976.

The study also indicates how various Member States seek to adapt their taxation systems to the special characteristics of forestry listed above. The following are a few examples:

— For income tax:

- low rate or no tax at all under certain circumstances,
- simple method of assessment (based on rental value of land, yield potential or site quality),
- some provision for setting off losses against income.

— For taxes on transfer of property:

- low rate or high threshold below which no tax is payable,
- deferred payment if new owner continues to manage holding for a minimum period in an acceptable way.

— Generally:

- level of tax lowered if owner complies with certain standards of management.

Taxation provisions such as these may be conducive to efficient forest management and reduce the tendency to any further fragmentation of small private forestry holdings if the provisions are formulated with due regard to all relevant circumstances; if they are not so formulated the provisions intended to help forestry may either be ineffective or even lead to undesirable results such as the retention of overmature growing stock in stands that should be harvested and regenerated.

The study makes some recommendations concerning these matters which the Commission intends to examine with experts from the Member States. There can obviously be no attempt to harmonize forestry taxation in the Community in isolation from taxation generally of which it forms a relatively small part, but it is hoped that a close examination of the results of the study will enable each Member State gradually to improve, within the framework of its national taxation system, its system of forestry taxation so as to make it a more effective instrument of forestry policy. The process is likely to lead to a gradual convergence of forestry taxation systems but that is not an aim in itself.

## *Incentives*

72. State aid for the financing of forestry measures may be divided into direct and indirect subsidies. Direct subsidies comprise the provision of goods or money by the State or other central and local authorities to non-State forest holdings for the promotion of certain forestry measures and the maintenance of the holdings. These subsidies may or may not have conditions attached as to how they may be used; they are given without *quid pro quo*. They may be of the following kinds:

- grants of money or allocations having pecuniary value, e.g. grants in kind, carrying no repayment liability, and
- granting of loan facilities, the terms and conditions of which (deferred repayment, reduced rates of interest) are in the nature of a subsidy.

Indirect subsidies are a temporary or permanent waiving of public tax liability by the State or other central and local authority and thus constitute a tax advantage to forestry compared with other sectors of the economy. They belong to the field of taxation.

73. In all Member States with the exception of Belgium private forests receive some form of State aid. There are great differences in the purposes for which aid is given, in the way it is given and in the level. The main purposes for which aid is given in one or more countries are:

- the afforestation of land which has been submarginal for agriculture but is suitable for forestry;
- the planting of trees outside the forest;
- the raising of the productivity of existing forest areas through soil improvement and silvicultural measures;
- the construction of forest roads and tracks;
- procurement of specialized forestry equipment (e.g. for harvesting);
- protective measures against fire and disease;
- the formation of forestry associations;
- making good the damage from major calamities such as fire and wind;
- opening of forests to the public.

One form of aid which is conspicuous by its absence from the above list is a thinning grant for the dual purpose of ensuring good silviculture and the flow of more small sized wood to forest industries. As mentioned in point 32 above, this type of grant deserves to be considered.

74. Direct aids for specific purposes such as those listed above can be adapted to specific circumstances and varied according to changing needs much more readily than indirect aids given by means of tax concessions. All the same, to be effective and maintain confidence there must also be a reasonable measure of continuity in the granting of direct aids.

75. Aids from which the benefits are not obtained for a long time, such as afforestation grants can have no or only a marginal effect on timber prices or on the income of woodland owners in the short term. Different levels of aid, therefore, are unlikely to lead to any distortion of competition. Infrastructural aids such as road building grants may even tend to reduce existing distortions of competition by giving less accessible woodlands the advantages already enjoyed by those which have been opened up by roads. The position is different with regard to aids such as for the procurement of specialized equipment for harvesting or the possible thinning grant referred to above. Aids of this kind could cause a distortion of competition unless there is some measure of coordination at Community level.

Even where there is no risk that differing levels of aids will cause a distortion of competition, there may, under certain circumstances, be other good reasons for seeking to avoid excessive differences in the treatment of woodland owners in the European Community.

76. As stated in points 9 to 11, Community aid for forestry projects has been available from the EAGGF (European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund) and the Council of Ministers is still considering two further Commission proposals for forestry measures.

The Commission intends to examine the desirability of an increased participation by the Community in the provision of financial incentives to forestry as a means of:

- helping to achieve agreed forestry policy objectives;

- ensuring that forestry contributes as effectively as possible to the Community's regional, agricultural, environmental and other relevant policies.

### *Research and development*

77. Much forest research and development work undertaken in the European Community is of a standard as high as any in the world, but the research effort as a whole is very dispersed and as a result there is some lack of direction. Research is carried out by a large number of mostly fairly small research institutes. Some are directly controlled by the forest services concerned such as the research directorate of the Forestry Commission in Britain or the *Bundesforschungsanstalt für Forst- und Holzwirtschaft* at Rheinbeck and the forest research institutes of the *Länder* in Germany; some are controlled by other government agencies such as the *Centre National de Recherches Forestières* at Nancy in France; some form part of or are attached to university faculties of forestry; some are controlled by forest industries or forest industrial associations and finally research on certain aspects of forestry is carried out by agricultural or environmental research institutes. This great dispersal of research effort not only results in a lack of direction but also in some unnecessary duplication of effort. It must, however, be emphasized that not all duplication is wasteful since the particular approach to a research problem adopted by one research team may prove more effective than that adopted by another.

Given the historic origins and the institutional framework within which the research organizations operate, the fragmentation of research must for the time being be accepted as a fact of life. That does not mean to say that nothing can be done to improve the cost-effectiveness of the forestry research effort in the Community. In fact, the first modest steps have been taken.

78. At the suggestion of the heads of the forest services in the Member States the Commission has established an informal working group of the heads of the central government forest research establishments in the Member States. This group has been meeting once or twice a year since 1974. The first task undertaken was the preparation of a list of forest research institutes in the Community together with a brief description of main activities so that

research workers in any particular field at least know with whom they can establish direct contact elsewhere in the Community. Cooperation between Member States in certain aspects of research, notably tree breeding, has been strengthened and a few important research areas which call for action at Community level have been identified. They are:

- Dutch Elm disease;
- the better chemical utilization of wood;
- research into protection against fire.

The next logical step will be to attempt a systematic identification of research needs in forestry which will enable each Member State and indeed each research institute to get a clearer picture of how best to direct its efforts on the basis of a voluntary cooperation with others and, where appropriate, a partition of labour in the interests of economy. This approach should also help to identify priorities for action at Community level.

It will also be necessary to adapt the research effort to the changing needs of forest management both in the short and in the long term. The more general introduction of fast growing exotic species and the opening of forests for recreational purposes in particular have created management problems which cannot be solved without a major new research effort. This can be made more effective by cooperation. Moreover, traditional empirical research has reached a stage where further progress depends on more fundamental research for example in the biochemical aspects of genetics. Conversely, some of the traditional branches of silvicultural research may be less important now than they used to be.

79. Finally, it is necessary to mention the contribution which forest research undertaken in the Community has made and should continue to make to the development of forestry in the third world. This is a point which the forestry department of FAO strongly emphasized at a meeting of heads of forest services convened by the services of the Commission in 1976. The assistance given and needed is both at the level of helping to organize forest research in developing countries and in conducting research. Research by the United Kingdom into finding suitable species and provenances of fast growing tropical pines for some 30 developing countries is an example of highly valuable work which is underway and could perhaps be usefully strengthened.

## *Education and training*

80. The education and training of those engaged in forestry in the Community has undergone considerable changes within the past 20 years but even so has not been able to keep up with the changes in requirements brought about in part by the mechanization of forestry operations and in part by the enhanced environmental and recreational roles of the forest. It is useful in this context to distinguish between

- senior forest managers and administrators concerned with general planning and organization;
- junior forest managers concerned mainly with the technical supervision of forestry operations;
- skilled forest workers and machine operators.

Formerly it would have been customary to reflect the social status and earnings associated with these categories of employment by referring to them as 'levels'. That was appropriate when the senior manager was, as he is now, a highly qualified university graduate, the junior manager a man with some elementary practical forestry training and able to supervise unskilled labour and the workers themselves who were unskilled. Times have changed. Junior managers now must not only have a more thorough training in all practical aspects of forestry but they must also know how to organize highly mechanized harvesting operations and deal with increased environmental and recreational problems. The unskilled forestry worker, with the possible exception of the part-time worker in his own wood lot, is rapidly being replaced by the highly skilled machine operator who must be able to work more independently than his colleague in a factory where specialist help in case of breakdown is usually near at hand.

81. University courses for those who wish to make forestry their career are available in all Member States except Luxembourg. Belgium, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom each have several universities or institutes at university level which offer a forestry degree or a degree with some specialization in forestry; France which accounts for 45% of the total forest area in the Community has only two and that appears to be adequate.

Elsewhere, there is an unnecessarily large number of facilities and there are more qualified forestry officers

than there are jobs in forestry and the related fields such as town and country planning for which a forestry degree is an acceptable qualification. This is one aspect of forestry where considerable savings could be achieved.

82. Forestry remains essentially a branch of applied ecology but a forest officer to be effective must now also have a better understanding of business management and of machinery than was expected of his predecessors and he must collaborate more closely with other land use interests. Courses have only partially been adapted to these changing needs and further adaptation will be needed, but provided that the standards are sufficiently high, there appears to be no case for attempting any standardization of syllabuses. Indeed, any such attempt might stifle progress.

83. In contrast, the standard of training for junior managers differs greatly between Member States and the objectives do not always seem to be very clear. At one extreme the training is too elementary for modern needs, at the other extreme it is far too theoretical. The objective of training candidates to become highly competent practical organizers and forest supervisors with a sound knowledge of modern technology is achieved only in a few Member States. This is a question the Commission intends to study.

84. The training of forest workers has made enormous progress throughout the Community in recent years, but much remains to be done especially in the case of those engaged only part-time in forestry. Working groups and meetings of experts under the auspices of the FAO/ECE Timber Committee<sup>1</sup> have given and continue to give useful guidance on the training of forest workers and there appears to be no need for the time being for any separate initiative at Community level.

85. Periodic short refresher courses are essential for all categories of forestry employees if they are to keep abreast with new developments and maintain their efficiency and interest in their work. It is in this type of training that exposure to ideas from elsewhere is likely to be particularly valuable. It is quite extraordinary how little most forest officers and

foresters know of useful practices and ideas beyond their own borders. Subject to obvious limitations imposed by language barriers it is highly desirable to explore ways of making it easier for personnel in one Member State to attend refresher courses in another. The Commission intends to pursue this.

86. As in forest research, also in education and training the Member States have already done much to help developing countries either directly or through international agencies such as FAO and they will undoubtedly continue to do so. Whether or not there would be any advantage in any action at Community level is a question which merits study.

### *Information*

87. The formulation of sound forestry policy measures and the monitoring of their implementation is dependent upon adequate statistics and other relevant information. This applies at national as well as at Community level. National statistics on annual cut, imports, exports, forest areas and structures (i.e. size of holdings and ownership have been compiled at Community level for some years by the Commission's Statistical Service in Luxembourg. Except where there are special reasons to the contrary (e.g. the use of the NIMEX system for trade statistics) the Community statistics are based on the same definitions as the FAO statistics but give more detail where needed. Recently, the Commission's working group on forestry statistics has begun to tackle the important problem of labour statistics, of annual timber balances and annual changes in forest area. A study is also being made of the definitions that might be useful in connection with possible future statistics on the recreational role of the forest. The idea is to try and avoid the difficulties which were encountered with other statistics which were not comparable because each Member State had developed its own definitions. Although no major need is foreseen for developing additional forestry statistics in the near future, it is likely that statistics on costs and prices as well as technological indicators such as output per man/year and economic indicators such as capital investment per job created will be required later.

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<sup>1</sup> FAO = United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization;  
ECE = United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

## *Consultation*

88. The development of sound national forestry policies and their successful implementation depends in no small measure on adequate and regular consultation between the national forestry authority and the organizations representing

- private and public forest owners;
- employees;
- the primary wood processing industries;
- the timber trade;
- interests of nature conservation and landscape.

Consultations will help to resolve conflicts of interest and lead to a better mutual understanding; consultations will reduce the risk of important points being overlooked and they are a stimulus to constructive thinking and progress. Above all, if these different sectors of forestry learn to appreciate their common interests and speak with one voice, there is a better chance of forestry's voice being listened to. In most Member States there is some provision for such consultation but there are few where this provision could not be improved. The system adopted must be suited to local circumstances, but most Member States could learn something useful from others.

89. Similar considerations apply to consultations between the various forestry interests at Community level, but it will be difficult to achieve meaningful consultations until these various interests are each effectively organized at Community level. Progress in this direction is being made, but much remains to be done.

## *Public Relations*

90. The dynamic forestry policies and programmes which are essential to the future well being of the Community will only be initiated if they receive sufficient public support, and this support will only be forthcoming if the general public acquire a much better understanding of forestry than it has now. The lead must be taken by the national forestry authorities whose opportunities for informing the public have greatly increased by the provision of

recreational facilities in forests. Indeed some forestry authorities have grasped these opportunities by creating information centres, issuing readable publications, conducting parties etc. But every single person connected with forestry can help even if it is only by explaining to friends what forestry is all about. A better understanding of forestry will only strengthen support for sensible programmes which will benefit future generations; a better understanding can also add to the immediate enjoyment of life by those who acquire this understanding.

# Proposal for a Council Resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy

*The Council of the European Communities,*

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community;

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission;

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament;

Whereas it is desirable to enable the forestry sector to contribute more effectively to the achievement of the objectives of the Treaty;

Whereas certain objectives pursued at national level affect the interests of the Community as a whole;

Whereas the coordination of national forestry policies should be furthered to the extent that is necessary in order to orientate these policies towards the *achievement of objectives* of common interest;

*Hereby adopts this resolution:*

The policies of Member States shall pursue the objectives and respect the principles of forestry policy which are stated below:

## Objectives and principles of forestry policy

### *General principles*

1. Forests should be protected and managed as a renewable resource to supply products and services which are essential to the quality of life in the European Community now and in the future. The main objectives should be:

- a sustainable increase in the economic production of timber,
- the conservation and improvement of the environment,
- public access to forests for recreation.

Where practicable, these objectives should be pursued in conjunction with one another by multiple use management, the weight to be attached to each being varied according to ownership and the particular needs at a given place and time.

2. Forestry policy should

- recognize the long term nature of forestry which renders sudden major changes in policy undesirable,
- take account of the distinctive characteristics and complementary roles of
  - private forests,
  - State forests,
  - other publicly owned forests,
- seek to create conditions in which efficiently managed woodlands are economically viable.

3. Forestry policy measures should be formulated and implemented with due regard to other national and Community policies, especially those concerned with:

- land use;
- agriculture;
- wood using industries;
- regional development, including employment and standards of living, especially in economically less-favoured regions;
- urban and rural environment.

4. Conversely, agricultural as well as other policies with possible forestry implications should pay due regard to the functions of the forest and its effective management.

5. Within the limits set by national legislation, forest owners should be free to manage their forests as they wish.

6. Forestry policy measures should be coordinated at Community level to the extent necessary to achieve common objectives.

### *The forest estate*

1. In regions where, because of climate, topography or population density the use to which a particular piece of land is put, is of special public concern, the conversion of forest land to other land use and of other land to forestry should only be undertaken after consultation between the owner, the forest authority and other authorities concerned with land use in order to ensure a fair balance between

- forestry, farming and other land use interests,
- the interests of the owner of the land and the public interest.

2. The criteria should be clearly defined which should be taken into account when considering such changes of land

use. In particular woodlands should not be regarded as land reserves but in their own right on the basis of all the products and services that forests provide to the community.

3. Measures should be taken to protect forests against serious damage by fire and other calamities and to repair the damage when a major calamity has occurred.

### *Wood production*

1. When deciding on forest policy measures to increase wood production the expected direct return on the investment should be only one of the considerations; others should include the possible environmental benefits of forestry and the contribution which increased wood production can make to

- regional development and the living standards of rural populations, especially in less-favoured areas;
- the profitability of forest industries;
- improving the viability of forest holdings;
- cover the Community's requirements of wood.

2. The aim should be to raise the production and promote the better use of wood by measures appropriate to the particular circumstances of each country or region.

Among the measures to be considered are:

- silvicultural measures:
  - accelerating the regeneration of over-mature stands;
  - more general application of timely and adequate thinnings in young stands;
  - choice of species and provenances suitable for the site, application of fertilizers and other measures to promote faster growth in high forest;
  - conversion into productive high forest of poor quality coppice and other woodlands of low productivity;
  - additional protection against fire, storm and disease;
  - afforestation of bare land which is more suitable for forestry than for other purposes;
  - the planting of trees outside the forest, especially of fast growing species.
- Fuller utilization of
  - trees that are harvested (branches, stumps, roots);
  - wood and wood residues by the wood processing industries;
  - waste paper through recycling.

• Organizational, infrastructural and institutional measures to promote efficient management, harvesting and marketing in order to reduce costs and increase revenues from wood production. Such measures could include:

- encouragement of associations of woodland owners;
- encouragement of consolidation of scattered small parcels of woodland which are in a single ownership;
- provision of roads and tracks to improve access to forests;
- market promotion and the monitoring of markets;
- the creation and development of appropriate wood processing industries within reasonable distance of the forests;
- the promotion of relevant research and development;
- the improvement of training and educational facilities.

3. Member States should draw up on a comparable basis and periodically review programmes relating to the measures listed in paragraph 2 above, giving estimates of costs and expected benefits.

### *Conservation of nature and protection of the human environment*

1. As a minimum contribution to the conservation of nature and the protection of the human environment forests should be managed so as to

- maintain the long term fertility and productivity of the site;
- minimize the risk of causing damage elsewhere;
- take account of the landscape and wildlife.

2. Appropriate authorities should be authorized by legislation to initiate after consultation with the forest owner additional conservation measures where they are deemed necessary for specific purposes and especially for

- the protection against
  - erosion by water and wind,
  - desiccation and flooding,
  - avalanches;
- the conservation of habitats of species of animals and plants which are in danger of extinction and whose survival is considered important.

3. As the implementation of paragraphs 1 and 2 above may add to the costs of forest management and reduce the income, the definitions and rules concerning the

implementation of these paragraphs should not differ too widely between Member States and should take account of factors such as the special requirements of economically less-favoured regions.

### *Public access and recreation*

1. Within the limits set by custom and national legislation, access on foot free of charge should be extended to as many forests as possible subject to reasonable and clearly defined exceptions in the interests of

- nature conservation, especially in areas where the survival of the forest is threatened by adverse environmental conditions;
- efficient forest management including protection against fire and damage from other causes;
- prevention of damage on adjacent areas, especially land that is farmed;
- the forest owner;
- wildlife management.

2. Where access is granted, the rights and responsibilities of the visitor, of the forest owner, of the State or other appropriate public authority should be governed by criteria which, subject to meeting specific national and local requirements, should be reasonably consistent throughout the Community.

3. The cost of the provision of recreational facilities in the forest beyond the mere granting of access on foot and from which no commercial return is to be expected should be borne by the State or other public bodies. Private forest owners should be under no obligation to provide or to let others provide such facilities in their woodlands.

### *Wildlife management*

Subject to any Community measures which provide for more specific obligations, wildlife should be managed and controlled with the following aims in view:

- maintaining a healthy but not excessive population of as many species as are appropriate to a region and in harmony with local traditions;
- avoiding as far as possible interference with other aspects of forest management and agriculture, especially through game damage.

### *Instruments of forestry policy*

#### 1. Organization

The implementation of forestry policy in each Member State should be the responsibility of a forestry authority which is effectively organized and suitably staffed for the purpose and, given the long production cycle in forestry, not too dependent on short-term fluctuations in economic and other circumstances.

#### 2. Forestry legislation

Member States should ensure that their forestry legislation is appropriate for the effective implementation of

- national forestry policy;
- forestry policy measures agreed at Community level.

#### 3. Taxation and incentives

Forestry taxation and financial aids for forestry should be formulated within the general national and Community procedures for taxation and the granting of incentives, so as to provide an incentive to efficient and stable forest management, including protection against fire and other damage.

#### 4. Research and development

The major research and development effort should be directed to solve as cost effectively as possible the most urgent problems confronting forest management by

- careful choice of research priorities;
- cooperation and coordination at both national and Community levels, where this is likely to result in a worthwhile economy of effort;
- the promotion at Community level of selected research projects of particular importance and beyond the capacity of individual national effort.

#### 5. Education and training

Member States should ensure that adequate education and training facilities in forestry, including refresher courses, are available either nationally or by arrangement with institutions elsewhere. The facilities should

- cover all aspects of forestry;
- seek to achieve a reasonable balance between supply of and demand for personnel;
- meet the requirements of forest owners and other employers as well as of all categories of employees;
- bring about a gradual approximation of qualifications and standards throughout the Community as a means of facilitating the mutual recognition of qualifications and the

free movement of personnel at all levels in accordance with the accepted social policy of the Community.

#### 6. Information

Member States should exploit and develop the necessary statistics on forests on the basis of criteria and definitions common to all the Member States in order to:

- ensure that national statistics are comparable and
- enable statistics useful at Community level to be grouped together.

Exchanges of information other than statistics within the Community should also be intensified.

#### 7. Consultation

Measures should be taken, where they do not already exist, to provide for frequent consultations at national level between the forestry authority and the organizations representing:

- owners of private and public forests,
- employees,
- the primary processing industries,
- the timber trade,
- those concerned with conserving nature and the landscape.

Consultations at Community level between these various interest groups should also be encouraged.

#### 8. Public relations

Steps should be taken to give the public as a whole, and young people in particular, a better understanding of all aspects of forests.

Done at . . . , the . . . .

# Proposal for a Council Decision to set up a forestry committee

*The Council of the European Communities,*

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,

Having regard to the draft submitted by the Commission,

Whereas there is a considerable structural imbalance in the Community between the production of forest products and the need therefor; whereas efforts to improve production structures could be stimulated by promoting the coordination of the forestry policies of the Member States at Community level;

Whereas the rules relating to the functioning of the common market and the Community policies on various subjects have implications for the forestry sector; whereas a coordination of forestry policies would serve to bring them into line with Community policies and objectives;

Whereas such coordination can be facilitated by close and continuous cooperation between the Member States and the Commission; whereas a Standing Forestry Committee can best ensure such cooperation; whereas that Committee should consist of representatives of each Member State and be presided over by a representative of the Commission;

Whereas the coordination of forestry policies calls for a knowledge of the laws, regulations and administrative provisions in force in the Member States.

*Has decided as follows:*

## *Article 1*

A Standing Forestry Committee (hereinafter called 'The Committee'), shall be established.

## *Article 2*

1. The Committee shall be responsible for studying the forestry policies of the Member States and the measures and programmes relating thereto, and shall take into account any Community provision affecting the forestry sector and the relationship between that sector and Community policy.

2. An exchange of information between the Member States and the Commission on the forestry situation and policies of Member States shall take place in the Committee.

3. The Committee shall be consulted by the Commission on the important forestry aspects of measures which it proposes to take in order to implement decisions of the Council.

4. The Committee shall assist the Commission in preparing the report on forestry policy provided for in Article 4.

5. The Commission may consult the Committee on all matters relating to forestry policy.

## *Article 3*

The Committee shall consist of representatives of Member States and shall have as its Chairman a representative of the Commission.

Secretarial services for the Committee shall be provided by the Commission.

The Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure.

## *Article 4*

Every two years the Commission shall submit a report on forestry policy to the Council and to Parliament. This report shall include:

- a description of the situation;
- a review of the action taken by Member States in pursuance of their forestry policy;
- information concerning the coordination of forestry policies in the Community.

## *Article 5*

Member States shall provide the Commission with the documentation needed for preparing the report provided for in Article 4.

Done at . . . , the . . . .

## Annexes

## *Annex I*

### **Resolution embodying the opinion of the European Parliament on the communication from the Commission of the European Communities to the Council concerning forestry policy in the European Community<sup>1</sup>**

#### *The European Parliament,*

— having regard to the communication from the Commission to the Council,

— having been consulted by the Council pursuant to Article 43 of the EEC Treaty,

— having regard to the proposals for forestry measures submitted by the Commission in 1974 and the recently adopted Regulation establishing a common measure for forestry in certain Mediterranean zones of the Community,<sup>2</sup>

— having regard to the second report of the Committee on Agriculture and to the opinions of the Committee on Regional Policy, Regional Planning and Transport and the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc. 184/79),

1. Stresses the serious and urgent nature of the problems in the forestry sector having regard to the Community's growing timber requirements and its dependence on non-member countries for supplies, environmental conservation, the use of woodland for recreational purposes and the serious employment problems in undertakings connected in various ways with forestry;

2. Is of the opinion, therefore, that the Community should draw up a genuine common forestry policy which would enable it to replace the piecemeal, conflicting national policies by common solutions, negotiate as a single entity with the non-member countries which supply timber and avoid the waste of effort and financial resources involved in uncoordinated measures;

3. Stresses that although the EEC Treaty does not specifically mention forestry products in connection with the CAP, this should not be used as a pretext for preventing the implementation of a forestry policy;

4. Considers that the Commission has the possibility of taking various statutory measures, as is shown by the fact that certain Community forestry measures have already been implemented or are in the process of being implemented; in particular, Article 235 and other Articles of the EEC Treaty may be invoked in connection with the various implications (for environmental, phytosanitary, structural policies, etc.) of the forestry measures under consideration;

5. Welcomes the Commission's work on forestry policy which has resulted in detailed studies of the national policies and the problems in the sector, and the preparation of the present proposals;

6. Considers, however, that the draft Council resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy, whose content it fully approves, may only serve as a basis for discussion within the Council and is a first limited step which should be followed by other, far more wide-ranging measures;

7. Questions, in fact, the value and legal scope of a Council resolution which is not sufficiently binding on the individual national policies;

8. Urges the Commission, therefore, to draw up more detailed proposals which would also provide Community financial aid for specific forestry measures since the mere coordination by the Community of national measures and of action by the various Community funds, which are known to have financed very few projects in this sector, has so far proved to be insufficient;

9. Requests it to resubmit its 1974 proposals, possibly amended and updated;

10. Urges the Council not to delay any further in taking a positive decision on these proposals;

11. Stresses that, as a priority, the Commission's new proposals should approach the serious problem posed by the Community's growing timber deficit and the difficulty of increasing Community production which costs more than imports from non-member countries;

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 140 of 5. 6. 1979.

<sup>2</sup> Regulation of 6 February 1979 (OJ L 38 of 14. 2. 1979).

12. Is of the opinion that it is essential to improve the level of Community self-sufficiency in order to reduce the growing danger of sharp price rises, depletion or blocking of traditional sources of supply and changes in the trade policy of non-member countries;

13. Urges the Commission, therefore, to submit constructive proposals to ensure that timber, produced in the Community remains competitive with timber of comparable quality imported from third countries;

14. Recalls the principles and objectives underlying Regulation (EEC) No 269/79 of 6 February 1979 on a common measure for forestry in certain Mediterranean zones of the Community, but considers that in the draft Council resolution to which this consultation refers, and concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy, insufficient consideration has been given to the main aspects of the policy as they affect the Mediterranean areas (particularly Italy), where the nature of the soil means that forestry resources can be exploited little or not at all, and to the specific infrastructures necessary not only for environmental protection but for the regeneration of endangered or threatened ecosystems;

15. Believes that every effort to make woodlands into places of recreation for the population should be welcomed, but insists that, particularly in the disadvantaged areas, attention should be paid to the productive possibilities of suitably located animal farming and commercial silvicultures;

16. Stresses that the drawing up of a common forestry policy is seriously hampered by the differences in national legislation which make it extremely difficult to implement Community structural measures;

17. Requests the Commission, therefore, to provide, with due regard to the social implications, appropriate financial incentives for public and private owners who implement the requisite national and Community measures;

18. Points out the serious problems posed by certain plant diseases, e.g. in elms, cypresses and oak trees; forest fires, particularly in the Mediterranean

regions; the need to find Community substitutes for pulp; and finally, the elaboration of more efficient systems of management and exploitation of woodland resources;

19. Emphasizes the major role of scientific research in the abovementioned spheres and, in particular, the need for such research to be aimed at preventing, through recycling, unnecessary damage to the environment and at developing new techniques for converting new varieties into pulp and for improving the use made of branches and brushwood;

20. Believes it essential for the proposed Permanent Forestry Committee to have greater powers which would enable it to lay down guidelines for the formulation of common programmes and to have a status commensurate with the importance that forestry policy should have in the economic and environmental policies of the States and with its implications in the areas of tourism and of leisure and health activities, as well as of the general economic welfare of the population;

21. Considers that one of the Commission's priority tasks must be to coordinate, and possibly integrate, the various national measures, thus avoiding the risk of waste or shortages;

22. Approves, therefore, the Commission's proposals but nevertheless requests it to proceed with the preparation of a genuine Community forestry policy;

23. Requests the Commission to adopt the following amendments pursuant to the second paragraph of Article 149 of the EEC-Treaty.

Council resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy

Preamble, recitals and the sole article unchanged

OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF  
FORESTRY POLICY

OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES OF  
FORESTRY POLICY

1. General principles

1. General principles

1. Forests should be protected and managed as a renewable resource to supply products and services which are essential to the quality of life in the European Community now and in the future. The main objectives should be:

— a sustainable increase in the economic production of timber,

— the conservation and improvement of the environment,

— public access to forests for recreation.

Where practicable, these objectives should be pursued in conjunction with one another by multiple-use management, the weight to be attached to each being varied according to ownership and the particular needs at a given place and time.

2. Forestry policy should:

— recognize the long-term nature of forestry which renders sudden major changes in policy undesirable;

— take account of the distinctive characteristics and complementary roles of:

— private forests,

— state forests,

— other publicly owned forests;

— seek to create conditions in which efficiently managed woodlands are economically viable.

1. Forests should be protected and managed as a renewable resource to supply products and services which are essential to the quality of life in the European Community now and in the future. The main objectives should be:

— a sustainable increase in the economic production of timber,

— soil restructuring,

— the conservation and improvement of the environment,

— public access to forests for recreation.

Where practicable, these objectives should be pursued in conjunction with one another by multiple-use management, the weight to be attached to each being varied according to ownership and the particular needs at a given place and time.

2. Forestry policy should:

— unchanged

— unchanged

— seek to create conditions in which efficiently managed woodlands are economically viable not only in terms of timber production but also of livestock farming, particularly in the disadvantaged regions and with the aim of preventing hydro-geological disasters.

3. Forestry policy measures should be formulated and implemented with due regard to other national and Community policies, especially those concerned with:

- land use,
- agriculture,<sup>1</sup>
- wood-using industries,

— regional development, including employment and standards of living, especially in economically less-favoured regions,

— urban and rural development.

3. Forestry policy measures should be formulated and implemented with due regard to other national and Community policies, especially those concerned with:

- land use,
- agriculture,
- wood-using industries,
- hydrogeological protection,

— regional development, including employment and standards of living, especially in economically less-favoured regions,

— urban and rural development.

Paragraphs 4 to 6 unchanged

2. The forest estate

2. The forest estate

Paragraphs 1 to 3 unchanged

3. Wood production

3. Wood production

Paragraph 1 unchanged

2. The aim should be to raise the production and promote the better use of wood by measures appropriate to the particular circumstances of each country or region.

Among the measures to be considered are:

2. The aim should be to raise the production and promote the better use of wood by measures appropriate to the particular circumstances of each country or region.

Among the measures to be considered are:

(a) and (b) unchanged

(c) organizations, infrastructural and institutional measures to promote efficient management, harvesting and marketing in order to reduce costs and increase revenues from wood production; such measures could include:

- encouragement of associations of woodland owners,
- encouragement of consolidation of scattered small parcels of woodland which are in a single ownership,

(c) organizations, infrastructural and institutional measures to promote efficient management, harvesting and marketing in order to reduce costs and increase revenues from wood production; such measures could include:

- encouragement of associations of woodland owners,
- encouragement of consolidation of scattered small parcels of woodland which are in a single ownership,

<sup>1</sup> Line omitted in Italian version of the Commission's document (Transl.)

— provision of roads and tracks to improve access to forests,

— market promotion and the monitoring of markets,

— the creation and development of appropriate wood processing industries within reasonable distance of the forests,

— the promotion of relevant research and development,

— the improvement of training and educational facilities.

— provision of roads and tracks to improve access to forests, **especially those which are the most difficult of access, provided that this does not result in haphazard disturbance of the ecological balance of mountain and hill areas,**

— market promotion and the monitoring of markets,

— the creation and development of appropriate wood processing industries within reasonable distance of the forests,

— the promotion and coordination of relevant research and development,

— the improvement of training and educational facilities.

Paragraph 3 unchanged

4. Conservation of nature and protection of the human environment

4. Conservation of nature and protection of the human environment

Paragraphs 1 to 3 unchanged

5. Public access and recreation

5. Public access and recreation

Paragraphs 1 to 3 unchanged

6. Wildlife management

6. Wildlife management

Subject to any Community measures which provide for more specific obligations, wildlife should be managed and controlled with the following aims in view:

— maintaining a *healthy but not excessive population of as many species as are appropriate to a region and in harmony with local traditions,*

— avoiding as far as possible interference with other aspects of forest management and agriculture, *especially through game damage.*

Subject to any Community measures which provide for more specific obligations, wildlife should be managed and controlled **scientifically on the principles of nature conservation** with the following aims in view:

— maintaining a population of local species commensurate with the region's productive capacity as determined according to scientific criteria,

— avoiding the extinction or dangerous reduction of animal or plant species,

— avoiding increases in species population which might threaten the survival of the same or other species,

— avoiding, as far as possible interference with other aspects of forest management and agriculture, especially as regards damage by wild animals.

7. Instruments of forestry policy

7. Instruments of forestry policy

Paragraphs 1 to 3 unchanged

4. *Research and development*

The major research and development effort should be directed to solve as cost-effectively as possible the most urgent problems confronting forest management by

- careful choice of research priorities,
- cooperation and coordination at both national and Community levels, where this is likely to result in a worthwhile economy of effort,
- the promotion at Community level of selected research projects of particular importance and beyond the capacity of individual national effort.

4. *Research and development*

The major research and development effort should be directed to solve as cost-effectively<sup>1</sup> as possible the most urgent problems confronting forest management, including soil protection, protection against landslides, protection of continental and Mediterranean silvan ecosystems and the Mediterranean scrub as well as productivity of the forest, by

- unchanged
- unchanged
- unchanged

Paragraphs 5 to 7 unchanged

8. *Relations publiques*<sup>2</sup>

Des mesures devraient être prises pour permettre au grand public, et spécialement aux jeunes générations, de mieux comprendre la forêt sous tous ses aspects.

8. *Public relations*

Measures should be taken to enable the public at large and especially young people to gain a better understanding of the forest, embracing the whole wide range of forestry aspects and of their economic and social role in the present-day world.

<sup>1</sup> No change in English text (Transl.).

<sup>2</sup> This part of the Commission's communication not available in English (Transl.)

## Annex 2

### **Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the Communication from the Commission to the Council concerning forestry policy in the Community, proposal for a Council Resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy, proposal for a Council Decision to set up a forestry committee**

#### *The Economic and Social Committee*

Having regard to the decision taken by the Council on 18 December 1978 requesting an Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the Council concerning forestry policy in the European Community  
Proposal for a Council Resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy  
Proposal for a Council Decision to set up a forestry committee

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community;

Having regard to the decision taken by its Bureau on 18 December 1978, instructing the Section for Agriculture to do the relevant preparatory work;

Having regard to its previous work on this matter and in particular its Opinion of 12 July 1978 on the future of forestry in the Community<sup>1</sup> and its Opinion of 13 July 1978 on the proposal for a Council Regulation on common forestry measures in certain dry Mediterranean areas of the Community.<sup>1</sup>

Having regard to the Opinion adopted by its Section for Agriculture on 21 March 1979;

Having regard to the oral report of the Rapporteur, Mr Lane;

Having regard to the discussions at its 168th Plenary Session on 22 and 23 May 1979 (Session of 22 May 1979),<sup>2</sup>

Has adopted unanimously

#### *the following opinion:*

The Committee approves the Commission's proposals, subject to the following observations.

#### *I. Preliminary remark*

The Committee is pleased to note that to a very large extent the Commission has followed up the request it made in its Opinion of 12 July 1978 on the future of forestry in the Community.<sup>1</sup>

In general it regards the document presented by the Commission as a valuable analysis of most of the problems facing forestry in the Community. It hopes the Commission will quickly follow up the present communication with a more constructive draft Regulation, in particular as regards the implementation of an effective common forestry policy.

#### *II. General comments on the communication from the commission to the council on forestry policy in the Community and on the proposal for a resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy*

1. For far too long the Community has lacked a cohesive policy on forests, which cover 21% of the land area of the Community and have a substantial contribution to make in the fields of employment, regional policy, land use and environmental protection. The Community is becoming more and more dependent on imports of timber, supplies of which are becoming increasingly scarce, and less dependable in some cases. The Community will have to go on importing some types of wood, such as tropical woods, which are used for specific purposes, but the overall imbalance of trade cannot continue indefinitely.

2. The objectives and principles of forestry policy must indicate a commitment to develop to the full the employment potential not only in the forests themselves which are often situated in underdeveloped areas, but also in downstream industries. A special effort should be made to encourage the employment of young persons, in particular by promoting the development of cooperative farms, which correspond particularly well with the needs of the young. There would have to be a range of policies, in the short and medium-

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 114 of 7. 5. 1979.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 227 of 10. 9. 1979.

term, according to the state of development of the forests and social factors which exist currently in the different regions of the Community and also to cater sufficiently for the needs of State and municipally owned forests on the one hand and the interests of privately owned forests on the other.

3. A proposed forestry policy must also include a section on commercial policy. If private individuals are to continue to enter the business of forestry which is by nature very long term they must be sure of an adequate return. The Community should define the policy to be followed with regard to imports from non-Member States which do not comply with the normal pricing conditions and conditions of competition and thereby jeopardize the Community's efforts to make improvements in the forestry sector. This problem applies in particular to certain imports of pulp and board.

4. Moreover, it is important that fiscal policy be harmonized and made more attractive so as to encourage individuals to enter the forestry business.

5. The Committee thinks that special attention should be paid to the problems of the wood-processing industry. This sector faces immediate problems (for instance, the recent depreciation of the dollar, changes in consumer taste, etc.), while the problems of forestry policy are, *par excellence*, of a long-term nature.

The Committee therefore urges the Commission to give more thought to these differing situations and propose appropriate solutions for the wood-processing industry.

6. Forestry policy should also take into account the various situations in the Community. Firstly, it is necessary in the short and medium-term to make better use of the provisions which relate to existing forests, whether publicly or privately owned, in order to maximize their continual development and utilization. Secondly, for the long term, it is necessary to harmonize provisions under which clear felled forests will be reafforested and land which cannot be used for agriculture in the foreseeable future can be acquired and afforested.

7. It is essential that the interests of the various sectors — forest owners, farmers, workers, the primary users of forest products and consumers —

be reflected in any such policy and also that the policy should have regard to ecological and scenic interests, particularly those of urban dwellers for whom forests are an important recreational facility.

8. Finally, the Committee would in general stress that greater encouragement must be given to the sharing of resources and potential developments under study in the Member States. There should also be greater coordination of national forestry research and other joint research projects should be encouraged.

### *III. Specific comments on the communication from the Commission to the Council concerning forestry policy in the Community*

#### **Point 7**

The question of whether it is possible for foresters to market smallwood intended for the pulp and board industry and for the latter to guarantee its suppliers a minimum price should also be examined.

#### **Point 18**

To cover all the situations found in the Member States of the EEC, two of the comments on privately-owned woodland should be changed slightly to take account of the growing importance of forests owned by town dwellers.

#### **Point 20**

The advantages of cooperation for the forestry sector should also be taken into account.

#### **Point 30**

The Committee does not think that research into the use of wood as a chemical raw material need only produce results in the long term; the fact that in the Community the price of domestic fuel oil, with the same number of calories, is almost identical to the price of wood (delivered to boiler or factory) should be taken into consideration.

In fact, the difference in price between petroleum products and wood has been reduced appreciably,

which could mean that the feasibility of using wood as a chemical raw material is not relegated to the long term.

**Point 35**

Regarding the 4 million hectares referred to, we must not forget the technique of staddling which makes it possible, by additional planting, to convert existing coppice on relatively fertile soil into high forest more rapidly than clear felling followed by reafforestation.

The Committee believes that, where restrictions are imposed on a property in order to protect the environment, fair compensation should be given.

**Point 65**

The Italian version does not correspond to the other languages.

**Point 73**

Without giving an Opinion on the desirability of the various kind of aid referred to, the Committee would point out that the aid for thinning mentioned by the Commission would certainly be useful in the Community, where a large number of forests planted after World War II now need to be thinned.

**Point 77**

The Committee stresses the need to promote research into varieties suitable for the low-rainfall areas of the Community, in order to improve soil conservation.

**Point 80**

As far as education and training are concerned, owner-foresters have been forgotten. This is

regrettable in view of the role they could play in disseminating information.

*IV. Specific comments on the proposal for a Council resolution concerning the objectives and principles of forestry policy*

**1. General principles and the objectives and principles of forestry policy**

1.1. The Committee feels that 'access to forests' should be replaced by 'access to certain forests'.

1.2. The Committee would like a new indent added to the list of objectives in Paragraph 2, to read as follows:

'— research into varieties suitable for the low-rainfall Mediterranean areas and the development of afforestation in these areas.'

*V. Comments on the proposal for a Council decision to set up a forestry committee*

1. The Economic and Social Committee welcomes the initiative of the Commission in proposing the establishment of a permanent forestry committee. However, it is considered that the powers of the proposed forestry committee should be widened so as to enable that committee to propose to the Commission specific measures in furtherance of the common objectives and principles of forestry policy to be adopted.

2. The composition of this committee should take account of the important implications of forestry policy for regional policy, agricultural policy, social policy, employment, land use and the development of timber-based industries.

3. The Committee also recommends that a forestry Advisory Committee should be set up.

Brussels, 22 May 1979.

The Chairman  
of the  
Economic and Social Committee

F. Baduel Glorioso

The Secretary-General  
of the  
Economic and Social Committee

Roger Louet

European Communities — Commission

**Forestry policy in the European Community**

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In response to requests which had been made to it, the Commission undertook to present, to the Council of the European Communities, a communication concerning the forestry policy of the Member States and its coordination at Community level. In order to have the necessary means at its disposal to make actual proposals on forests, the Commission forwarded to the Council an analysis of the principal forest problems in the Community which are continually and rapidly changing. A description of forest policies of each Member State and the national institutions accompanies this communication.