



MINISTERO DELL'AMBIENTE
E DELLA TUTELA DEL TERRITORIO E DEL MARE



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THE ALPINE CONVENTION IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL TREATY FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF A CROSS-BORDER MOUNTAINOUS REGION
italian presidency 2013-2014
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WORKSHOP

“The services of the Alpine forests ecosystems as a natural, economic and cultural asset for a regional and European green economy”

Dialogue promoted in the framework of the 2013-2014 Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention

PIEVE DI CADORE (BL), Italy – 11th - 12th SEPTEMBER 2014

Information note

A two-day meeting dedicated to the management and enhancement of the role of Alpine forest in the safeguard of mountain ecosystems and as an economic resource for the development of an Alpine green economy was held in the beautiful landscape of the Dolomites, in Pieve di Cadore. The events were promoted by the Italian Presidency of the Alpine Convention 2013-2014 in collaboration with the Veneto Region and the Great Community of Cadore. On Thursday 11th the technical-scientific meeting of the experts of the **Mountain Forests Working Group** of the Alpine Convention was held, followed by a public workshop dedicated to ***“The services of the Alpine forests ecosystems as a natural, economic and cultural asset for a regional and European green economy”*** which, with more than 50 participants, had a great participation of public and local institutions.

The Workshop aimed at fostering a public dialogue among institutional actors, experts from the scientific environment as



well as local, national and international stakeholders about methodologies, good practices and the characteristics of the existing approaches for the enhancement of the Alpine forest heritage and the environmental, economic and social services guaranteed by the multi-functionality of mountain forest ecosystems.

After the institutional greetings, the results of the work of the “Mountain Forests” Working Group of the Alpine Convention were presented. The Working Group has gathered and aggregated data on Alpine forests ecosystem services and is working on a document on the state, threats and opportunities of Alpine mountain forests and on the value of their products and ecosystem services in the framework of green economy.

Enrico Calvo, ERSAF Lombardia and Head of the Italian

Delegation in the Mountain Forests group, explained that the Alpine forests held a great value in terms of overall economic and social well-being, same time their value is low in terms of production and income added value (0,4% share of GDP, 0,5% share of employment). Forests cover about 45% of the entire territory of the Alpine Convention it is thus important to take account of the benefit they give to the territory. As regards the forest planning, *Mauro Giovanni Viti, Unit for Forests and Parks Project -Forest planning and research service - Veneto Region*, took the floor presenting a report on forest management in Veneto. Forests there cover about 23% the regional territory and are essentially individual and collective private property (about 66%); over the last 20 years, thanks to the efforts made by the Regional Forest Administration, the woodland area subject to regular planning has doubled. At the moment about 70% of forests are planned through public plans such as “Piani di Riassetto o Assestamento” and “Piani di Riordino Forestale”. Moreover, in order to simplify the regional framework, during the last years forms of vast areas planning have been



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experimented: the so called “Piani Forestali di Indirizzo Territoriale” elaborated, as of today, for the Mountain Community of Altipiano dei Sette Comuni (VI) and the Mountain Community Cadore Longaronese - Zoldo. Viti also highlighted that revolving around the forest management sector are several companies and professionals that are active and valuable for the local economy. At the moment 320 forest companies are operating in Veneto, employing almost 700 people (2,1 person per company).

Laura Secco, Dipartiment for the Territory and Agro-Forest Systems of the University of Padua, presented some data from the NEWFOREX project, implemented under the 7th EU framework Programme, in which Veneto Region is taking part. The project is proposed as an inquiry on Veneto citizens' inclination to payment for environmental services (PES). The



survey carried out shows that the availability is about 50/year/ha but greatly varies depending on the ecosystem service. For instance, on a large scale the demand for ES is very low (almost exclusively for recreation-tourism) and so there is scarce potential to activate PES. On the supply side, 18 collective properties and 34 municipalities of Belluno province have been interviewed in order to gather data on the inclination to provide ecosystem services, particularly for biodiversity and hydrogeological protection. In the case of services for biodiversity such inclination is fair even without compensation (60% municipalities, 30% collective properties) whereas the supply of hydrogeological services mostly tends to require a compensation in return (33% municipalities, 40%

collective properties). At the university research level, Marika Ferrari, University of Trento, proposed an analysis of the distribution of forest ecosystem services in Trentino.

The ecosystems of the Alpine forests provide a wide range of services which can be grouped in three main areas: supply, regulatory and cultural. Among the services provided by the Alpine forests, the regulation of hydrogeological cycle is very important: as explained by Roland Koek, University BoKu of Natural Resources and Life Science of Vienna, it's essential to keep a high safeguard level of the function of water protection performed by Alpine forests to guarantee the sustainable supply of ecosystem services to the mountain environment. The protection of water guarantees good conditions of rainwater seepage (forest ground) and good levels of snow management, prevention and mitigation of erosion process.

In Austria institutions and local authorities have showed great interest for the application of the concept of drinking water protection. In this regard they are working on the elaboration of payment systems for ecosystem services provided by forests: the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Environment and Water Management will launch the financing for the implementation of measures aimed at forest ecosystem water protection (flooding prevention and drinking water), while the municipality of Vienna already envisages payment systems for the supply of ecosystem services from Vienna Water to the Municipal Forest Department.

Then Giorgio Matteucci, Institute of Agro-Environmental and Forest Biology of the National Research Council, presented the multiannual project (2010-2015) *Managing forests for multiple uses: carbon, biodiversity and socio-economic well-being: examples from the ManFor C.BD project*. Launched by the National Research Council with the support of the State Forestry Corps, the Slovenian Forestry service, Veneto Region and Abruzzo Region and cofinanced by LIFE+ programme, the project intends to test the efficacy of forest management options in achieving the multiple objectives (production,





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protection, biodiversity), providing data, instructions, suggesting best practices and gathering data concerning the main paneuropean indicators for sustainable forest management (MCPFE, 2002), with particular focus on the indicators concerning carbon cycle and biodiversity. Moreover it aims at developing and testing additional indicators.

The Federal administration of Bavaria as well has activated several measures for the safeguard of the mountain forest ecosystem in the German Alpine area. In the occasion of the workshop, *Stefan Tretter, Bavarian Ministry for Nutrition, Agriculture and Forests*, delivered a report on mountain forests in Germany dwelling on measures for their safeguard.

Mountain forests only represent a very small percentage of the total timber area of Germany (2%) and they are all in Bavaria which has in 250.000 ha in total. Their main function is protection from avalanches, falling stones, floods and landslides. About 57% belongs to the Bavarian State and is managed by the forestry firm of the Bavarian State; 9% belongs to local communities and 34% is private property. Bavaria has developed long ago a legal framework for mountain forest management: the law on forests of Bavaria has included, since more than 30 years, some particularly important rules for mountain woods. One of the main goals of the law is the conservation of the forest area growth; over the last years indeed the wood area has considerably increased. Furthermore the law on forests compels owners to a sustainable use of forests in order to guarantee the preservation of all their ecosystem functions. Bavaria invests about 3 million per year in total for forest mountain management.



Finally, *Daniele Zovi, Regional Commander of the State Forestry Corp for Veneto*, presented a picture of the presence of forests and other woodland areas in Italy. Woods cover over 30% of the Italian territory and play the important function of carbon sink, accumulating by photosynthesis. In Italy, the quantity of organic carbon kept in the tissue, vegetal residue and forest ground (excluding root systems) is about 1.2 billion tons, that is 4.4 billion tons of CO₂. Carbon mainly accumulates in the soil (58%) and among trees and shrub (38%). 2% of carbon is found in the form of vegetal residue and 2% in the form of dead wood.

