Ecological management of forest: a challenge of the future Proclamation of the 3rd International Congress of PRO SILVA Europe

The "Proclamation of Hanover": this is the result of the 3rd international congress of PRO SILVA, which was organized between June 2nd and June 7th, at Fallingbostel, Lower – Saxony. The proclamation was presented by the president of PRO SILVA, professor Hans-Jürgen Otto, as a contribution of forestry at the EXPO 2000, to the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry of Lower-Saxony, Uwe Bartels. The ceremony of presentation was held in presence of the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Forestry in Germany, Karl-Heinz Funke/Berlin, June 7th, in the German Pavillon of the world exhibition in Hanover.

PRO SILVA, the European association of foresters advocating close to nature forestry, appeals with this proclamation politics and the society, requiring the improvement of legislative, legal and fiscal conditions of close to nature forestry. Natural stability and the production of forest values should be increased by encouraging programs. The economic and ecological importance of timber should be better vulgarised, and its utilisation promoted. It will be necessary to improve public understanding of what close to nature forestry is and how forest ecosystems can be managed the ecological way. Furthermore, PRO SILVA is demanding a better collaboration between different forest ownerships.

" In politics and in the modern society, the forest matter does not experience the public attention which it should have, considering its tremendous importance for our all life quality", said professor Otto, when delivering the proclamation to the minister.

This resolution has been pronounced according to the conceptions of WeltForum Wald, an association which has been created in the county of Soltau-Falling-bostel as an external project of the world exhibition EXPO 2000. In this association are collaborating the Schutzgemeinschaft Deutscher Wald, the Lower Saxony Forest Administration, the Alfred-Toepfer-Academy

of Nature Protection and the county of Soltau-Falling-bostel.

"I see with many satisfaction the conceptional progress of forestry towards ecological forest management and harvesting timber following the principle of sustainability", stressed Minister Bartels, when receiving the proclamation. What this resolution is pronouncing, is not contestable: forests in cultivated landscapes are the compartment with the highest ecological importance. In the same time, it is the base of economic welfare of many forest owners, and of the rural space and timber industry as well.

"Considering the evolution of the world's population, and considering the importance of timber as a renewable and environmentally friendly raw material, it is a matter of fact, that forest management and ecosystem tending have to be sustained as far as possible", the minister said. The risks of global warming is emphasizing this aspect, the minister added: forest has a main role in equilibrating these risks, which cannot be neglected. And he also stressed the fact, that humans also need forest as space of recreation.

Minister Bartels showed to be much impressed by the objectives of PRO SILVA, implementing ecological principles in forest tending, and objecting against industrial production and harvesting methods, which still continue in many parts of the world. Continuous cover, close to nature forestry is strenthening the economic welfare of forest owners; and in the same time this sort of silviculture improves ecological stability and biological capacities of the forest: the minister is convinced of these facts.

"I am almost happy to constate, that the PRO SIL-VA principles and methods are nearly congruent with our Lower-Saxony silviculture, which we are practising since nearly 10 years with our governmental so-called "LÖWE"- program". With these words, the minister ended his commentary.

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ASSOCIATION OF EUROPEAN FORESTERS PRACTISING MANAGEMENT WHICH FOLLOWS NATURAL PROCESSES



UNION EUROPEENNE DE FORESTIERS AUX CONCEPTIONS DE GESTION PROCHE DE LA NATURE

VERBAND DER NATURNAH DENKENDEN FORSTLEUTE IN EUROPA

PROCLAMATION OF HANOVER

Basic principles

In contrast to many other parts of the world, only rarely did the systematic mangement of European forests commence in untouched virgin forest. Very few areas of virgin forest in Europe had escaped exploitation or destruction by Man over the past 3 000 years or more, these being mainly in Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. These few remaining virgin forests are a valuable nature heritage, which should be protected.

On the contrary, many of the forests which we see today have been systematically recreated over the last two centuries, on areas where forest had been largely removed or replaced by heathland, on former agricultural land, or where the forest had been overexploited and impoverished. This restoration has given these forests new life, with an increase in biomass, timber production, and (in some instances) biodiversity.

In spite of the increasing demands of civilisation on our land area, a relatively large proportion of many parts of Europe is currently covered by forest, and this provides a livelihood for numerous forest owners and others in related occupations. Forest is the main resource for timber industry. At the same time, these forests are the most important ecological element in many cultivated landscapes. The large area which they occupy, and their great importance in the landscape and in the ecology of the area contrast with their low profile in political and economic circles, the media, and society in general.

Proclamation

Considering the facts:

- that forests are still disappearing world wide, but their importance as a source of renewable environmentally friendly raw materials becomes more important as the world's population increases;
- that the sequestration of carbon becomes more important as a means of mitigating the trend towards global warming;
- that with increasing reduction in the environmental values of other types of land, the contribution of forest ecosystems becomes more crucial;
- that the physical and psychological benefits of recreation in the forest become more important as the stresses of modern civilisation become greater,

PRO SILVA, the European federation of foresters advocating forest management based on natural processes, at the end of its 3rd international congress in June 2000 (held under the general heading of "Man- Nature- Technology" at the Hanover EXPO 2000 exhibition) states that:

1. Successful afforestation can take place even after a long history of devastation. The pioneer planting which may be required in such circumstances will often be very simply structured, but PRO SILVA stresses that, by subsequent application of the principles of forestry based on natural processes, such plantations can be modified to produce forests with biodiversity typical of the site, large volumes of standing timber, and a high proportion of valuable trees, which will be both economically and biologically productive.

- 2. Forest management following PRO SILVA principles is economically favourable. The reduction in expensive inputs of energy and labour, the minimisation of risk, and the production of timber of increased average size and value result in increased income to the owner.
- 3. At the same time, these principles optimise the social and environmental values of the forest; and the owner is better able to take account of these matters if the forest is being managed profitably.
- 4. The economic advantages of PRO SILVA forestry can be obtained under all forms of ownership. The realisation of objectives and functions of the forest are complementary rather than being in opposition to each other under this type of forestry, which does not, therefore, favour any particular form of ownership.

PRO SILVA wishes to make the following points, for the attention of politicians, administrators, institutions, lobbyists, and the media:

- There is an urgent need to rationalise the relevant legislative, legal, administrative, and tax bases for forestry which uses natural processes. These matters need to be harmonised in all countries in order to enable this approach to forest management to be implemented.
- The transition from even-aged plantations, neglected coppice, scrub, or plantations of inappropriate species can sometimes be difficult and will need financial support.
- · Additional afforestation should continue. This should involve ecological improvement as far as possible.
- Collaboration between forest owners needs to be promoted, in order to strengthen their social, economic, and ecological objectives.
- The importance of timber as a renewable resource needs to be stressed. Comparisons are needed between the ecological effects, use of non- renewable resources, production of waste, and the scope for recycling of products under different production methods.
- There is a need to improve public understanding of forestry and the way in which the forester can work in an ecologically acceptable way of appropriate methods of silviculture are employed

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