

Congreso de la PROPIEDAD FORESTAL

Valladolid, 18, 19 y 20 de octubre de 2022

SELVICULTORES PARA BOSQUES VIVOS

Conclusions of the First Congress on Forest Ownership, held in Valladolid in October

The three fundamental pillars of sustainable forest management will only be fulfilled if environmental services are paid for and forest operations are economically sustainable.

The National Congress of Forest Ownership, organized in Valladolid last October by the Federation of Forestry Associations of Castilla y León (FAFCYLE) left on the table very important challenges and necessary ways to protect and preserve the natural heritage of private ownership from the devastating effects of climate change. One of the main conclusions, on which the entire forestry sector agreed, is that the way to survival is sustainable forest management. And this can only be done if environmental services are paid for and forestry operations are economically sustainable. The alternative is the progressive abandonment of the forest and the rural environment. Experts insist that there is not much time left to change the management model. The benefits will be a reality in a few years from an environmental, economic, biodiversity and social point of view. The administrations hold the key.

The following were the most important conclusions of each of the sessions held:

SESSION 1 the forest manager's situation within the current legal framework

1. The current situation of foresters is **one of lack of social, administrative and fiscal understanding**; their products have a low economic value and there is a serious problem of generational replacement.
2. **Forestry has never been so important in policies**, and for the future of the economy and the new social model; but for it to become a reality, the conditions of the CAP (or of the funds to be received), institutional collaboration, taxation and legal certainty must be changed.
3. **There is an urgent need to have a land registry that can be revised and updated in an agile manner** and to create coordination mechanisms so that the administrations involved in the management of rural properties can organize themselves, as well as to implement spaces for dialogue between administrations and forest owners in order to unblock the current situation.
4. **Payments for environmental services**, the forest fund, incentives for externalities and mechanisms already recognized in the regulations, such as land contracts, must become a reality. The three fundamental pillars of Sustainable Forest Management will only be fulfilled if environmental services are paid for and forestry operations are economically sustainable.

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SESSION 2. Agricultural policy and green architecture, opportunities for forestry; The CAP Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and our forests.

1. The CAP is the **COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY** and **NOT the FORESTRY POLICY** and, consequently, the forestry aspects included in the CAP have a clear accessory and complementary character, if we want more funds we have to ask for a higher proportion of aid in the territorial development part, although there are no great possibilities in an increasingly restrictive context in terms of resources, or an express Common Forestry Policy.
2. The new programming should apply the figure of the territorial contract, as the embodiment of a **"new social pact" between the city and the rural area**, which could also be an effective instrument for implementing and developing the forestry interventions provided for in Pillar II as elements of reinforced conditionality.
3. The new CAP guidelines, upon adoption, may **provide some flexibility** for specific biodiversity and climate-related management commitments that go beyond the current level of support and may serve to trigger payments for environmental services.
4. Horizontal interventions such as knowledge **transfer and cooperation** (including PIA) will be important in the next programming period and represent the multifunctionality of forests and forestry.

SESSION 3 How to communicate the importance of forestry and sustainable forest management to society

Journalists specializing in forestry communication highlighted, among other ideas:

1. It is necessary to **present information about the forestry sector in a positive way**, telling about its strengths and great benefits for society and not only when there are serious fires or problems of depopulation and abandonment.
2. **Forestry information should be cross-cutting** and present in all sections: economy, environment, business, tourism, politics, etc.
3. **The focus must be brought closer** and the real situation of the forest owner must be conveyed.
4. **Improved forestry information** and the message about the need for sustainable forest management, which has become a core idea in environmental information discourse.
5. **Forestry training for journalists** on the issues and challenges facing forest ownership is important.

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SESSION 4 "Ownership structure: new perspectives for the advancement of active forest land management"

1. Barriers to the advancement of active forest land management are **common to most European regions**: lack of documentation of property rights and smallholdings, and rural abandonment, which best explains the high risk of forest fires.
2. In order to promote the grouped management of forest lands, it is necessary **to have an adequate accounting of ecosystem services** with both public and private financing to balance the accounts of the farms.
3. It is desirable that **public administrations**, forestry associations or entities promoting forest certification **work together** to further boost the management of millions of hectares in our country and throughout southwest Europe, and promote a new regulatory, fiscal and financial framework to accelerate changes and overcome the deficit in the formalization of property rights.

SESSION 5 Taxation as a possible incentive tool for forestry management

1. In order to overcome the obstacles posed by smallholdings for the enhancement of the value of the forests and to make sustainable management profitable from a social, environmental and economic point of view, **it is necessary the support of the administration** to initiatives that allow the grouping of areas to achieve a technically feasible and economically profitable unit, with a joint management under the same plan or guidelines to give coherence to the actions, to address large-scale treatments or works and to plan a supply of forest resources. Likewise, the persistence of the forest mass and its good state of conservation is ensured.
2. It is necessary **to seek ways to recognize and compensate the value of the goods and services provided by forests**, such as the adoption of improvements in the tax regime for forestry activities, taking into account their high productive cycles, the long term return on investment and positive externalities.

At the end of the Congress, **the Valladolid Charter** was read out with specific requests to the different administrations to find solutions to the main challenges facing private property in our country.

All the information generated by the Congress is available at www.propiedadforestal.es and whose work has only been the beginning of a great initiative of the foresters of our country represented by COSE and its organizations. In two years we will resume the activity and review the progress made in the II Congress, which has been taken over by the Consorci

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Forestal de Catalunya. We hope that during this time the objectives set by the Valladolid Charter will be achieved and that our forests and their owners will be able to overcome the inertia to which they are being subjected.

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