

National Forestry Programme of the Czech Republic in brief

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ABSTRACT: The basic principle from which the Czech National Forestry Programme proceeds is the management of forests in a permanently sustainable manner whilst limiting the administrative interference of the state to the unavoidable minimum under the circumstances of the motivating operation of state forestry policy for the support of public interests and whilst increasing the responsibility of forest owners for their property. The National Forestry Programme is supposed to be an interdepartmental and intersectoral programme respecting not only the needs for the branch development of forest management, but also emphasising the place of forests in the environment and landscape creation, non-production functions of forests, the importance of the forest as a renewable source of ecologically advantageous raw material and the significance of the use and processing of wood for the economy of the country and thus for the society as such. The first idea of National Forestry Programme has been presented in 1993. The current version of the Programme has been conceived for the period 2003–2006. In addition to the basic information about the current state of forests and forestry management in the Czech Republic, it contains chapters with themes focussing on forestry problem issues.

Keywords: Czech Republic; state forest policy; National Forestry Programme; interdepartmental and intersectoral programme

A very first attempt for the National Forestry Programme (here-in-after NFP) in the Czech Republic goes into the beginning of the '90s. Mr. Jan Kubík, the former employee of Forestry and Game Management Research and Forestry Management Institutes, who was also on behind of the National Forestry Committee (NFC)¹ creation, offered this idea as a response of foresters to the Pan-European process started by the 1st Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forests in Europe in Strasbourg 1990 (VANČURA et al. 1999).

An official publication prepared for the 2nd Ministerial Conference in Helsinki 1993 contained the proclamation for creation of the programme: *National Forestry Programme as a professional response of foresters to the ideas from Rio, Strasbourg and Helsinki*. There were stated that current state of forests was unsatisfactory on many localities and foresters were likely not quite innocent in this respect. So called “ecological groups” stressed that our forests were not considered to be close to nature and growth conditions of forests were distant from the state of natural forests. Thus, foresters harvested bitter fruits of previous preferential political (“economical”) management of forestry sector and on the other hand, approaches of some fundamentalists were not only unrealistic but included paradoxically also the threat of further destruction of destabilised forest ecosystems.

The overall changes and transformation of economic conditions significantly complicated also the situation of forestry. It seemed that tendencies to the state influence reduction (motivated by forest conservation in harmony with the principle of sustainable management) by means of the unconditional preference of market economy brought great risks for further development of forests. The fact that the country on the one hand had well elaborated forest management basis for forestry practice and, at the same time, showed examples of totally destroyed forests made all documents of Pan-European and global processes an express challenge for Czech foresters. In order to become real professionals and public servants, they had, and still have, to address problems of forest restoration in broader, environmentally defined areas and to determine mandatory maximally permissible or minimally required parameters of decisive management measures. Among other tasks another one was to gain understanding and attract interest from the whole society which they are bound to serve.

There were mentioned main forestry problems of the beginning of '90s and activities listed that should be focused on. Foresters had been called for joining all resources in order to formulate the problem of forestry as a strategic problem important for the whole society. It was recommended that foresters had to assume the vast task

¹ NFC – NGO founded in December 1993 as a voluntary organisation aimed i.a. to the abolition of discrepancies between “foresters” and “nature protectionists”. Non-profit alliance of professionals related to multilateral destination of woodlands and linked with diverse branches of forestry and nature protection. Elaboration of NFP is one of main aims of the Committee.

of elaborating a concise National Forestry Programme as a general project with unified coordination and aiming at unified clearly defined funding.

The programme would have been directed at the solution of carefully selected high-priority problems of contemporary forestry as a newly conceived branch based on the principle of sustainable, functionally integrated management in all forests irrespective of proprietorship boundaries. It should include at least the following sub-programmes:

- forest ecosystems monitoring,
- forestry research,
- national forest management service, preservation and reproduction of forest tree species genetic resources,
- forest protection,
- active development and support to forest environmental functions in localities of increased public interest,
- regional revitalisation projects,
- forestry education and improvement of public awareness.

It was on the beginning of 1993. Later, the first version of the National Forestry Programme has been presented during the CSCE Seminar of Experts on Sustainable Management of Boreal and Temperate Forests in Montreal 1993.

Unfortunately this idea was not developed in spite of the fact that later on international level (e.g. COFO meetings) the need for such a programme not only in the developing countries was declared.

In the middle of the '90s it has been opened in the national level again thanks to Jaromír Vašíček, a director of Forestry Section of the Czech Ministry of Agriculture. Forestry and Game Management Research Institute has been involved in preparation of NFP in between 1997/1998. Unfortunately, the material collected in a participatory manner under the involvement of various players was not completed, probably because of political reasons and different opinions on particular items.

Then international activities in this field renewed the process on the national level again, Czech experts participated in several meetings organised by MCPFE – but unfortunately not in the COST E19 programme.

Finally the NFP received an official statute in the Concept of State Forestry Policy in the Pre-accession Period to the EU adopted by the Government of the Czech Republic in the beginning of 2000. The Chapter 5 of this document speaks on *The National Forestry Programme as a System of Implementing Projects of the National Forestry Policy*. A target should be to analyse selected problems of the national forest policy and to propose alternatives of specific solutions. Present situation and the relevant problems are described as follows:

The targets of the national forest policy as drafted are generally considered to be dynamic targets (desired long-term trends). The necessary measures to be taken are formulated as conceptional intents, by means of which the targets are to be accomplished. Further to the conception of the national forest policy, a coordinated “project prepa-

ration” for the implementation of the conceptional intents will, therefore be in progress parallel within the framework of the NFP. The task of the projects assigned for solution within the framework of the NFP shall be to analyse the selected problems identified in the course of the working out of the conception of the national forestry policy and to propose solutions. Depending upon the nature of the problems to be solved, the output of the projects of the NFP will present fully specific proposals.

The forest policy considers those following necessary measures to be taken:

- to commission the Forestry Research Institute with the preparation, coordination of the NFP and with the conducting of the documentation centre of the programme,
- to further the participation of all the parties concerned in the discussion on the purport of the national forestry policy and means of its accomplishment,
- to provide conditions for a qualified discussion, to ensure an atmosphere of trust and full knowledge of all participants,
- to evaluate regularly the expert forestry opinions with the attitudes of other subjects and the accomplishments of the national forestry programme.

After the Decision of the Government No. 666 of July 3, 2000, also the Ministry of Environment started to be active in this field in comparison with the previous years. (Unfortunately the item “forest” was not mentioned in the “state environmental policy” too many times and overall collaboration of Agricultural and Environmental Ministries, as bodies responsible for forests and forestry, has slowly gone.)

General information on the NFP of the Czech Republic

As mentioned above, problem areas of the Czech forestry are covered by particular chapters which are as follows:

- Managing forests according to the principals of sustainable management,
- Development of the productive and non-productive functions of the forest,
- Maintenance and development of the forest ecosystems biodiversity,
- Ensuring the production and use of timber as a renewable and nature friendly material,
- Managing forests in specially protected areas,
- The protection of forest ecosystems against harmful agents,
- The implementation of the National Forestry Programme in the regions (cf. MZe ČR 1994; PONDĚLÍČKOVÁ et al. 2003).

In the individual chapters, after a brief analysis of the current state and a description of the persisting problems, there is always a specification of the measures required to improve the current situation. From the aspect of the tools available to forestry and ecological policy, these measures can be summed up in the following overview:

In the economic area the following will be dealt with:

- Addition of tools to the grant system of forest management
 - which motivate forest owners to the continuous and long-term improvement of forestry assets, with regard given to public interest, in the development of the beneficial functions of the forest,
 - which support continuous sustainable forestry management in cases where forestry assets cannot demonstrably create sufficient requisite resources,
 - ensuring the financial rights of forestry owners for compensation of the consequences of restrictions which Act No. 289/1995 Coll. (the Forestry Act), and Act No. 114/1992 Coll. (the Nature and Countryside Protection Act), including newly drafted and passed amendments, impose on them,
 - ensuring measures associated with the biodiversity maintenance and improvement,
 - significantly increasing support for forestation of marginal agricultural land (LFAs),
 - supporting functionally integrated and functionally differentiated forestry management,
 - supporting the use of felling waste for fertilisation,
 - supporting the application of natural regeneration of genetically suitable stands.
- Detailing of the quantification for the economic consequences of optimising the network of small-area specially protected areas, national parks and protected countryside areas and the creation of the NATURA 2000 system. For the NATURA 2000 system, including proposal for dealing with any compensation of harm to owners.
- The processing of the draft for support of the non-production forests functions as part of the preparation of programme documents for gaining support from EU structural funds.
- Stressing the legal responsibility of all subjects for threatening forest stands with harmful substances polluting the air, water and soil; this to be in compliance with the prepared legislation of the EU; final solution to system for compensation of damages to forest owners caused by emissions.
- Participation of State Environmental Fund in support of permanently sustainable forestry management.

The priorities in the area of legislation are considered to be:

- The initiation of preparation for draft amendments of Act No. 289/1995 Coll. and its implementing regulations with regard to the resolution of the following problems:
 - Specifying the status of regional plans for forestry development from the aspect of their relation to the forestry management plan,
 - More efficient support for the consolidation of forest lands,
 - Designating professional qualifications for employees in forestry management, including state forestry management,

- Making concrete the rights, duties and responsibilities of specialist forest managers, including cases where the costs of their activities are paid for by the state,
- Declaring forest stands in key areas from the aspect of biodiversity to be forests of special designation necessary for preserving biological diversity (whilst respecting the requirements of owners for compensation for harm),
- Examining suggestions for removing forests from the category of commercial forests with regard to the increasing environmental and economic significance of wood.
- Processing a draft for the amendment of the Nature and Countryside Protection Act (Act No. 114/1992 Coll.) and the relevant implementing notices which more precisely defines and zones the geographically non-native species whilst taking into account their significance.
- Amending Act No. 114/1992 Coll. and the relevant implementing decrees from the aspect of achieving conformity with the legislation of the EU, unifying legislation for planning of care in all categories of specially protected areas and on the territories incorporated into the system NATURA 2000.
- Finally resolve the issue of so-called “strict reservations” in the relevant legal regulations, including designating conditions allowing the spontaneous development of stands and responsibility for threats to the existence of a forest as a result of not carrying out protective measures against the operation of harm factors.
- To accept and implement the Concept of Hunting Policy of the Czech Republic, which will resolve the issue of reducing the damage caused by game as the basic starting point for the development of permanently sustainable forestry management.
- To amend and simplify regulations according to which the forestation of marginal agricultural land is implemented.
- To prepare a draft for arguing the Concept of Industrial Policy of the Czech Republic and its sub-programmes in support of the building and modernisation of the capacity for the effective finalisation of the production of timber processing.
- To initiate the preparation of a state programme of Raw Material Policy in the field of renewable resources this deals with timber and certain agricultural products.
- To ensure the application of priorities and programme measures of the National Forestry Programme in the Regional Programmes of Forestry Management Development.
- To process a draft for the new system of categorising forests.
- To prepare and gradually apply alternative methods for the economic arrangement of a forest in forests with a significantly differentiated stand structure.
- To deal with the issue of damage caused to forests and their owners by the implementation and operation of power lines and other linear constructions.

These problem areas have been defined in the field of research:

- Resolution of the system of criteria and indicators of the polyfunctional (functionally integrated and functionally differentiated) management of forests.
- Completing processing of system for the forest functions evaluation on the basis of proposed methodologies adversarial evaluation.
- Creation of recommended optimised system of polyfunctional forestry management.
- Processing of quantification of potential of the individual functions in the concrete conditions of various types of forests.
- Research verification of genetic structure of autochthonic and other significant sub-populations of forest timber.
- Processing of draft for optimisation of network of small-area specially protected areas and perspective optimisation of forestry protected countryside areas in compliance with the State Programme for Protection of Nature and the Landscape.
- Establishment of National Databank of Natural Forests in the Czech Republic, its linking to the European databank, and the processing of parameterisation for the evaluation of the naturalness of forest stands in specially protected areas.
- Carrying out an analysis of potential dangers in the protection of forests, impacts of stress factors and the designation of a so-called threshold of economic harmfulness of damage to a forest and the environment caused by the most significant pests.

The following are priority organisational measures:

- Carrying out a survey and genetic verification of autochthonous forest stands and stands intended for seed collection and selected trees.
- Updating the current lists of protected species of animals and plants in the implementary notice for the updated Act No. 114/1992 Coll., with regard given to the protection of biotopes.
- Carrying out a calculation of the critical burden and zoning of territories from the aspect of current and potential acidification of forest soils.
- Supporting proposals for the use of free capital resources of the larger forestry assets for the building of modern wood-processing capacities.

- Coordinating and supporting the cooperation of forestry and wood processing interest organisations when popularising the use of wood and products made of it.
- Supporting internationally acknowledged and economically acceptable procedures for the certification of timber which do not create discriminatory barriers to free trade and which respect the demanding legal standards of the Czech Republic, adherence to which guarantees the sustainable forest management.
- The intensification of education work with the public with emphasis on information procedures of sustainable forest management under the conditions of the enormous impact of anthropogenic factors on the state of forests.

CONCLUSION

In closing it is possible to underline that the Czech NFP is prepared in the time in which the world community, inclusive forestry one, is preparing the WSSD Implementing Programme. At the same time we are staying in front of the 4th Ministerial Conference on Protection of Forests in Europe which is going to underline multifunctional importance of forests, their benefits and our common responsibility for them. Thus foresters have a unique opportunity in making forestry more visible in order to improve overall awareness and involvement in forestry issues. National Forestry Programme should be considered as an appropriate tool for doing so.

If the NFP is supposed to be a programme emphasising i.a. the place of forests in the environment and landscape creation and the significance of their sustainable use for the whole society is hopefully quite obvious, subsequently in both, NPF and WSSD Implementation Programme in particular the inter-sectoral approach has to be underlined. Various sectors of national economy have to have a responsibility for forest condition and maintenance of sustainable supply of benefits that they offer.

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Národní lesnický program České republiky ve zkratce

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ABSTRAKT: Základními principy, ze kterých vychází český Národní lesnický program, jsou obhospodařování lesů trvale udržitelným způsobem, omezení administrativních vstupů státu na nezbytné minimum podle zaměření motivačních cílů státní

lesnické politiky na podporu veřejného zájmu a dále zvyšování odpovědnosti vlastníků lesa za jejich majetek. Národní lesnický program usiluje o to být mezirezortním a mezisektorovým programem respektujícím nejen potřeby rozvoje odvětví lesního hospodářství, ale také vyzdvihujícím postavení lesů v životním prostředí a tvorbě krajiny, zdůrazňujícím mimoprodukční funkce lesů, důležitost lesa jako obnovitelného zdroje ekologicky příznivého surového materiálu a význam využití a zpracování dřeva pro ekonomiku země, tedy i pro společnost jako takovou. První plán Národního lesnického programu byl představen v roce 1993. Aktuální verze programu je koncipována na období let 2003–2006. V návaznosti na základní informace o nynějším stavu lesů a lesního hospodářství v České republice obsahuje kapitoly s tematikou zaměřenou na otázky lesnické problematiky.

Klíčová slova: Česká republika; státní lesnická politika; Národní lesnický program; mezirezortní a mezisektorový program

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