Resolution 700 (1979)[1]

Situation of forestry in Europe

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report of its Committee on Agriculture concerning the situation of forestry in Europe (Doc. 4363) ;

2. Recalling its Recommendations 579 (1970), on the state of forestry in Europe, and 691 (1973), on the situation of Mediterranean forestry, and its Resolution 609 (1976), on the timber industry in Europe ;

3. Welcoming the efforts relating to forestry and forest industries which are being made by a special Committee on Agriculture of EEC, the FAO European Forestry Commission, and the Timber Committee of the UN Economic Commission for Europe ;

4. Noting that production of wood, while remaining the prime function of forests, is no longer the only criterion which guides forest planning, but is often complementary to the economic and social functions, such as environmental, recreational, hunting, protection, etc. ;

5. Noting that demand for wood is continuing to rise without the existence of adequate supplies for all countries, and that in this situation Europe may seriously be affected by the changes in the export strategies of countries with extensive indigenous supplies of wood ;

6. Noting that for the time being the wood industry is of low profitability and lacks sufficient investment, while consumption of wood is increasing for a wide variety of purposes ;

7. Considering that forestry can be a valuable instrument for maintaining employment and raising living standards in rural areas ;

8. Considering that forest owners in Europe are faced with serious difficulties and problems by the constant increases in costs of sylviculture, harvesting and transport, often aggravated by the growing non-commercial considerations they have to comply with,

9. Invites the governments of the member states of the Council of Europe :

a. to pursue the forestry objectives by multiple use management, taking into account the relative importance of different objectives ;

b. to review forest policies with regard to the utilisation and expansion of their indigenous resources, as well as to their trade with overseas and overland suppliers ;

c. to seek the optimum degree of self-sufficiency in Europe by improving productivity in existing forests through the establishment of long-term programmes designed to put European sylviculture and harvesting on a competitive basis, and to increase the availability of forest products in Europe from indigenous sources ;

d. to take steps to avoid losses of wood, and to reduce wastage in sylviculture, harvesting and processing, by increasing recycling of waste paper, use of residues and more rational use of forest products ;

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1. See Doc. 4363, report of the Committee on Agriculture. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 28 June 1979.

e. to seek legislative ways and means to prevent undue fragmentation of private forests ;

f. to encourage technological and economic co-operation between forest owners and concentration of small and medium-sized holdings, by providing free technical and commercial advice to improve their management and marketing ;

g. to encourage the establishment of owners' and/or forest management associations, particularly to promote the mechanisation of sylviculture and harvesting operations ;

h. to provide aid to forest owners by direct and/or indirect subsidies, especially in certain regions and for special purposes ;

i. to ensure that the purposes of nature conservation as well as access to and maintenance of recreational opportunity are increasingly served in both public and private forestry enterprise ;

j. to consider the ecological functions of forests more systematically, first as water regulators and reservoirs, but also as windbreaks and, in mountain regions, as a protection against landslides and avalanches ;

k. to exploit with prudence the potentialities of forests as an energy resource through timber combustion and other uses of wood.