

THIRD NATIONAL CONGRESS OF SILVICULTURE

for the improvement and conservation of Italian forests

Taormina 16-19 October 2008

FINAL STATEMENT

WHEREAS

1. Italian forests cover approximately one third of the national land area and are largely subject to binding environmental – hydrogeologic, landscape, nature – protection laws;
2. the forest is an ecosystem that provides both goods and services for the community including: soil protection, water conservation, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, wood and biofuel production and help in the fight against desertification;
3. the forest is an important carbon sink and a fundamental component in global climate balance; it can contribute to reducing greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, according to Kyoto Protocol, which was signed by Italy;
4. the forest is an entity with intrinsic value, a subject with rights that has to be protected, conserved and defended like all other biotic communities, in accordance with the «right to a safe and healthy environment» to guarantee better quality of life to future generations;
5. systemic silviculture, whose application pursues natural forest dynamics and forest planning ensure sustainable forest management from the ecologic, economic and social standpoints, protect genetic resources and mitigate the risks of biologic contaminations;
6. productive use of the forest is consistent with sustainable forest management and involves long-term policies for the overall valorisation of Italian forest resources;
7. the protection of forest ecosystems is essential for the conservation of their cultural, naturalistic, productive, landscape and recreational value, even within urban environments;
8. the critical situation caused by the increasing number of forest fires is being aggravated by the abandonment of about half of Italy's forests and by the spread of pathogens such as funguses and insects;

9. uncontrolled and irrational grazing inside forests, triggered by the pressing social needs of mountain communities, has caused forest degradation and, in some areas has also exacerbated the problem of forest fires;
10. forest products and related activities have positive impact on the development of important industries (construction, panels, paper, recycling, energy, and commerce in general), they provide approximately 300.000 jobs and represent 0.9% of the gross domestic product.

THE CONGRESS DELEGATES TRUST THAT

- ✓ university *education* will be supported, also in a network logic, through the establishment of centres of excellence and specialization schools; Regional and Autonomous Province governments promote technical-professional training, environmental education and offer incentives and/or support to young entrepreneurs in forest-related industries;
- ✓ *innovative research* will be financed, by integrating university research with that of other national and European institutions, also taking into account the EU *Forest-based Sector Technology Platform*;
- ✓ national and local coordination for the *conservation of water resources* will be promoted, through silvicultural interventions in catchment basin areas;
- ✓ the “emergency culture” in dealing with *forest fires* fight will be abandoned in favour of silvicultural prevention, by increasing the use of innovative technologies in risk forecasting (remote sensing, environmental modelling), and monitoring the impact of the effects of fires from the ecologic, economic and social standpoints;
- ✓ job security will be guaranteed to *forestry workers*, along with specific legal recognition of their professional status and dignity, adequate training and education, and job safety, with the, involvement of professional associations;
- ✓ *forest associations* will be promoted and strengthened to overcome problems related to the small sizes of forest properties and issues regarding work organization;
- ✓ the *forest-wood chain* will be supported in every phase, with particular reference to «short» chains, including the certification of forest products and processes;
- ✓ *tax reduction* on silvicultural interventions will be promoted and that there will be financial support and incentives for programmes to improve forests, including other forms of payments to forest owners because of the role forests play in producing public environmental services;

- ✓ *silviculture* and *forest protection* will be encouraged through the implementation of systemic silviculture, aimed at conserving biodiversity, adopting measures to prevent biotic and abiotic damage, with particular reference to invasive alien species, and strengthening research in forest protection;
- ✓ there will be full compliance with the regulations related to the establishment and operation of *protected areas* and the *Nature 2000 Network*, with the involvement of all stakeholders and the acknowledgement of the importance of traditional knowledge;
- ✓ integrated fauna-forest management will be promoted, with the awareness that wildlife is an essential element of forest ecosystems;
- ✓ rational grazing systems will be supported and stimulated to ensure harmony among interacting ecologic and socioeconomic processes in order to protect the forests.

THEREFORE, THE CONGRESS DELEGATES FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE NEED

1. to promote a *forest policy* capable of sustaining forests, with particular reference to mountain and underprivileged areas, systemic silviculture, sustainable management, the wood chain and the creation of tree plantations - also for biofuel production, through the implementation of territorial plans;
2. that the national and regional governments and the Autonomous Provinces commit to having the importance of *Italy's forest resources* with their, economic, social, historical and cultural values typical of Mediterranean basin, recognized at the European level;
3. to recognize the importance of forests in *environmental, public health and tourism policies*, with particular reference to soil conservation, climate change mitigation and desertification processes;
4. to implement and finance the *National Framework Programme for the Forest Sector* (PQSF), drafted on the basis of existing international forest agreements, with specific reference to the *Forest Action Plan* and containing guidelines and requirements for forest planning;
5. to strengthen *European and international forestry organizations* and to ensure constant and qualified presence of Italian representatives in these organization;
6. to establish, a permanent, central organization for *monitoring Italian forest resources* in line with the principles and methods defined on the European level;
7. to promote *silvicultural activity* for sustainable forest management, defence of forests subject to nature protection laws, the conservation of

biodiversity and genetic resources, the production of timber and non-timber goods, the valorisation of features characterizing the multifunctional nature of forests, landscape conservation and support for forest owners;

8. to fully implement the National Register of forest carbon sinks as set forth in the *Kyoto Protocol*, and to include privately owned forests in the emission trading accounting, without imposing additional management restrictions;
9. to strengthen the *National Observatory on the Market of Forest Products and Services* created by the legislative decree no. 227/2001, to valorise the public services provided by forests, to coordinate the regulatory framework with emphasis on related to environmental and forest competences, thereby facilitating the relationships between supply and demand;
10. to strengthen and implement the coordination instruments among the central and regional government authorities and the autonomous provinces to improve legislation, as well as planning and programming the development of silviculture, with the involvement of professional associations in drafting operational strategies.