

ProSilva Declaration of Apeldoorn 1997



CORK OAK FOREST, PORTUGAL

Introduction

PROSILVA is a federation of foresters who advocate forest management strategies which optimise the maintenance, conservation and utilisation of forest ecosystems in such a way that ecological and socio-economic functions are sustainable and profitable.

PROSILVA derives its approach from the fact that originally most of Europe was covered by highly complex forest ecosystems with many plant and animal species. Over more than 2000 years of civilisation, man has seriously reduced forest cover: in many areas forests were destroyed completely, while in others the remaining forests were seriously modified.

The remaining natural and ancient semi-natural forests, as well as old afforestations managed over centuries and now showing high production potential and life conserving functions, are of

greatest importance. These must now provide many functions for the entire land. The importance of this must be seriously considered in relation to the maintenance and use of existing forests and the creation of new forests.

The second International PRO SILVA congress, held on May 29-31 1997 in APELDOORN, The Netherlands declared the following:

I. Sustainability

Sustainability in forest management must not only be directed at timber and other marketable commodities, but at the full range of functions of forest ecosystems.

Such a broad approach to sustainability includes:

- The maintenance of biodiversity as referred to in Agenda 21 of the Rio Conference: species diversity, genetic diversity, spatial and temporal diversity in structure;
- The maintenance of protection of hydrology, soil and climate;
- The maintenance of the natural fertility, health and productivity of the forest, and where applicable their restoration;
- The ability of forests to meet people's physical and spiritual demands.

II. Combining or separation forest functions

1. All forest functions are of importance to society. They should therefore be combined as far as possible at the level of each management unit. PRO SILVA thus promotes multifunctional, ecosystem maintaining, and biodiversity enhancing, forest management
2. There can be specific conditions of the forest, or in society's circumstances. which demand priority for some forest functions. However, the priority given to any particular function should not cause a breakdown in the potential of other functions.
3. Natural forests are indispensable laboratories for research. The few remaining natural forest relics in Europe should be saved from timber exploitation, and new areas should be set aside in all kinds of forest vegetation types to develop without human intervention.

III. Ecological forest management

1. PROSILVA determines that the use and adaptation of ecological processes in forest management are essential means for rational and profitable management. Forest treatment should reflect natural forest processes. This holds also for afforestation of arable lands, and far restoration of degraded forests. The structure and dynamics of natural

forests should be imitated, as far as is possible, to ensure sustainable and profitable production.

2. Treatment of forests as crops, and concepts common to agriculture must be rejected in forestry.
3. PROSILVA determines that close-to-nature management is applicable to all tree species and can start at all stages of stand development.
4. PROSILVA determines that sustainability of all functions, including timber production and extraction from close-to-nature forests, can be well planned and controlled by the use of appropriate forest management techniques.

IV. Promotion of close-to-nature forestry

In conclusion PROSILVA appeals:

to those responsible in governments and administrations:

to accept and promote the above statements, to support the change to close-to-nature forestry and its further development by tax and other financial incentives and by legal and administrative measures

to those responsible for research and education:

to create an interdisciplinary approach for the development of close-to-nature forestry to improve the scientific basis of close-to-nature forestry

to all forest owners and foresters:

to make themselves familiar with the principles of close-to-nature forestry, and to apply and further develop these in their daily forest management