

Hubert de Schorlemer, president of The Confederation of European Forest Owners (CEPF)

Predsjednik Konfederacije europskih šumovlasnika

SPEECH

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends of the private forestry of Europe.

I am very happy to be here today in your nice country and to speak about the difficult subject about freedom in private forestry, as we heard in the speeches before.

I do not really understand why the situation in your country is like that. There are certainly historical reasons, and following that, political reasons. Before communism in your country, if I am well informed, you had 70% of private owners in forestry, today you have around 26% of private forest owners. I will come to this on a technical side later on in my speech, but the political reason is difficult to explain. From my view, I can only speculate. The state has stolen the forests to his own people. And now the administration does not want to give it back... But perhaps someone here can give me a better explication?

Some months ago, I read an article in the Swiss newspaper Neue Züricher Zeitung, a comment from Mr. Horlegger about the tendencies in agriculture production, but I think we can adapt it private forestry also.

A man went in a zoo, and saw many people watching a cage.

So he came nearer in order to see which strange animal would be in the cage.

But he didn't anything, the cage was empty.

Only the state employee of the zoo was looking greasy next to the cage.

And so he asked him: "What is the name of that animal?"

And the employee answered: "That is the freedom". It is so rare in the world, that's way we put it in a cage for little money, so that people of the country can watch it.

The man responded: "I cannot see anything?????"

The employee said: "That's it. That is the gag: you enclose it, and immediately it is gone!"

Freedom is a strange animal. And some people fear it. But in a cage it is going down. Because only in freedom can freedom be freedom!

Before coming to my main presentation, I will take you from Switzerland to China.

I have been several times in the last years in this huge country.

And 6 years ago I was there as president of the CEPF, invited by the Chinese government in order to explain how private forest organisations are working.

And you know why? Because the communist government made an essay to give back to the people living on the countryside the forests.

I am not sure about the real reason, but I think they want to keep the people living on the countryside and they do not want that everyone is coming to the cities.

And on that way they can create more wealth for the poor people on the land.

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We have to be realistic that China is not the model to follow, because you have no political liberty, but giving back the forests to the people, is an interesting aspect. So, I will present you a study from Elsevier journal home page, Land Use Policy, "How private are Europe's private forests? A comparative property rights analysis. You can all see the document on www.elsevier.com where it is open to the public.

Private forests are widespread in Europe providing a range of ecosystem services of significant value to society, and there are calls for novel policies to enhance their provision and to face the challenges of environmental changes. Such policies need to acknowledge the importance of private forests, and importantly they need to be based on a deep understanding of how property rights held by private forest owners vary across Europe. We collected and analysed data on the content of property rights based on formal legal requirements existing in 31 European jurisdictions. To allow a comparison across jurisdictions, we constructed an original Property Rights Index for Forestry encompassing five rights domains (access, withdrawal, management, exclusion and alienation).

We documented substantial variation of the private forest owners' rights, and notably to i) make decisions in operational management and the formulation of management goals, ii) withdraw timber resources from their forest, and iii) exclude others from the use of forest resources. We identified broad relations between the scope for decision making of private forest owners and jurisdictions' former socio-political background and geographical distribution. The variation in the content of property rights has implications for the implementation of international environmental policies, and stresses the need for tailored policy instruments, when addressing European society's rural development, the bioeconomy, climate change mitigation measures and nature protection strategies. I will give you certain aspects of the study, which are related to our meeting today, so I insist that I do not represent the whole study to you.

Nationally or regionally-based regulatory frameworks influence the de jure property rights distribution and hence they impact on the economic and procedural aspects of forest management (Cubbage et al., 2007). A system of property rights is based on "the set of economic and social relations and norms defining the position of each individual with respect to the utilisation of scarce resources" (Furubotn and Pejovich, 1972) and thus depends on institutional decisions. The diversity of national, legal, cultural and historic contexts has led to different levels of restrictions on the management of private forestland, establishing the duties and responsibilities governing forest managers, owners and users.

Concerning the management rights, they say that the 13 indicators that constitute the management PRC, point to substantial differences across the jurisdictions with respect to the regulation of private forest management. The values of the management rights index vary from 12 degrees of freedom in FYR Macedonia to 84 degrees of freedom in Bavaria in Germany, with an average of 54 degrees of freedom and a standard deviation of 23. Here former socialist countries form a compact group with high levels of restriction while forest owners from Western and Nordic countries generally have more freedom to decide on operational matters.

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What can be learned from our assessment of PFOs' property rights in Europe? The most remarkable finding of this paper is the striking differences in the degree of freedom that PFOs experience in different European countries and regions. Owning a forest in FYR Macedonia obviously means something different from owning a forest in the Netherlands. These differences manifest themselves in a number of different ways ranging from the way PFOs are allowed to put forest products on to markets, to the imposition of environmental regulations and to the governance of forests in general.

Regarding the latter, the diversity in European forest owners' freedom to make decisions calls for an assessment of how international and EU policies are implemented and how they affect privately owned forests. In other words, the statutory provisions at the national level may strongly shape the efficacy of higher-level policies. This has implications for multi-level policy interrelationships where policy-makers and policy-programme designers have to take account of the differences in property rights across the regions where policies are supposed to operate.