

EDITORIAL

AT THE END OF THE YEAR

At the end of a year we always ask ourselves in wonder – how did it "fly by" so quickly? We then go on to analyze whether the set programmes have been accomplished and prepare programmes for the upcoming year. Since this column addresses current forestry topics, let us remind ourselves briefly which topics stimulated the thoughts of our readership and drove them to action.

In the double issue 1–2/2013 we reviewed the successful completion of the 45th European Foresters' Competition in Nordic Skiing (EFNS). The event, held from February 17 to 23 in the area of Delnice and Mrkopalj, was hosted by Croatia. A detailed presentation of the biggest ever meeting of European foresters in Croatia was given in the double issue 3–4/2013. Let us cite the official report of Mr Kaltenbach, the EFNS technical delegate: **The 45th EFNS in Delnice, Croatia, was a superbly organized competition that required enormous effort and dedication. There was not one weak point in the technical area. The 45th EFNS 2013 was executed faultlessly and with hearty enthusiasm. All the participants are full of praise.**

The double issue 3–4/2013 dealing with the topic "Where did politically biased personnel recruitment and non-market management lead us?" explores a shift from a relatively acceptable political-professional personnel recruitment in forestry to the completely politically based recruitment. This was reflected primarily in the omission of the term "forestry" from the name of the relevant Ministry, in the selection of party-based but insufficiently professional staff and, worst of all, in the appointment of non-forestry staff. For a profession which will mark the 250th anniversary of organized work in forestry in 2015, and whose Faculty marked the 115th anniversary in the year 2013, this is certainly demeaning, to say the least.

The central topic of the double issue 5–6/2013 was "Forestry with and without a tax on non-market forest functions". It was initiated by the announcement of total abolishment of the tax levied for non-market forest functions. We pointed out that the Croatian Forestry Association held a number of meetings devoted to this topic and provided some concrete suggestions regarding the tax. It was interesting to analyze the purposes and the ratios in which the tax was used, and who the biggest tax payers were who would be exempt from paying the tax.

The double issue 7–8/2013 searched for an answer to the question "Do forestry practices disregard the principles of sustainable forest management?" Of the 10 principles of close-to-nature forest management summarized by the Academy Member Dušan Klepac, we highlighted the fo-

llowing (accompanied by comments on the adherence and non-adherence to these principles): managing a forest as a renewable natural resource by safeguarding the forest ecosystem; adequate forest management as sustainable management that maintains the commercial, ecological and social forest functions, and the selection of the optimal organisational form in forestry. The last sentence says: "*There is no progress in forestry without science and culture*", which is often forgotten.

The double issue 9–10/2013 deals with a document by the European Commission Secretary General that was sent to the EU Council and the EU member states for acceptance. The report relates to the "The new EU forest strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector". We concluded that we almost completely agree with the principles contained in the proposed Strategy, since it reflects precisely the issued we have been advocating for years. We expect the Croatian Forest Strategy to finally see the light of day. It should be pointed out that the Strategy regards forestry as a particularly important axis of regional development

The last double issue of this year deals with the question: "Who will draw up this Strategy (or under whose guidance it will be drawn up), considering that the relevant Minister, Deputy Minister and the managing director of the company Hrvatske Šume Ltd are not forestry experts? At the same time, the Faculty of Forestry, the Academy of Forestry Sciences and the Croatian Forestry Association have no say in forestry-related issues. Forestry issues have not been discussed at any meetings of the relevant Ministry. Moreover, the Minister of Economy has never even mentioned forestry as an economic branch, and neither has the Minister of Regional Development, although the EU Forestry Strategy stresses that forestry is the main axis of regional development. In fact, not one single politician in Croatia has made an attempt to meritoriously discuss forests and forestry, unlike Dr Danilo Turk, President of the Republic of Slovenia, for example, who read a well received paper on this topic at the Forest Week in Slovenia in May 2009. The paper was published in "*Gozdarski Vestnik*" (Journal of Forestry), and we published a summary in the Forestry Journal. We advise our readers to read it once again and draw a parallel with our current situation. Forestry features in the media only when an affair is disclosed, whereas expert discussions to which the media is invited arouse no interest.

Hoping that things will change for the better in the upcoming year, we wish Merry Christmas and a Very Happy and Successful Year 2014 to all the readers of our Forestry Journal.

Editorial Board