

# EDITORIAL

## THE EDITORIAL MISSION

According to Article 2 of the Statute of the Croatian Forestry Association, the CFA gathers engineers and technicians of forestry, wood technology, chemical wood processing and wood product trade, as well as other experts with at least secondary school degree who are employed in the above mentioned fields, with the goal of advocating and protecting the interests of the profession and its membership, advancing the profession, promoting the careers of engineers and technicians, fostering technical development, research, education (secondary and higher level) and permanent specialisation. All these activities are geared towards achieving the optimal technological and economic development, welfare, health, environment protection and the quality of the society. One of the 15 fields listed in Article 12 that aims to achieve these goals is publishing activity. It is primarily accomplished through "Forestry Journal", a scientific-specialist and professional publication. In principle, the journal acquaints its members and the professional public with the current condition of forests and forestry and informs them of the results of the set goals through the minutes of the Managing Board and the CFA Assembly meetings. The column "Editorial", formerly known as "A Word from the Editor-in-Chief", sublimes the current conditions of forests and the forestry profession and highlights problems and the results of work of professional association. After a comprehensive analysis of the condition, the Editorial often expresses criticism (regrettably, compliments are far less frequent) of the current condition in forestry, in particular with regard to the status of forestry in the State and the management of the company Hrvatske Šume Ltd., which is entrusted with the management of almost 80 % of the forest area in Croatia.

Hence, the Editorial Board uses the column to voice the views of the forestry profession; the idea is to provide the heedful persons in politics and forestry management with an insight into the enormous wealth at our disposal and instil in them the need to manage this wealth according to scientific and professional principles. In order to remind our readers of the topics discussed in this column and direct them to where they can re-read about them in more detail, or perhaps enable some to read them for the first time so that they can publicly advocate the crystallized attitudes and not remain hypocritically silent, we shall briefly list the most important topics from this column.

Let us begin with the Forestry Strategy, which is non-existent to this very day (or exists only in traces). The topic was discussed in FJ 5-6/2011 and FJ 9-10/2013, where we have expressed our views and our almost complete agreement with the "New EU Forest Strategy". This strategy also advocates sustainable forest management and the multifunctional role of forests, with special emphasis on the support to rural communities and incentives to innovative forestry and value added products. However, the socio-economic importance and value of forests is constantly being undermined. We discussed adequate evaluation of forests and forestry, in relation to the restructuring of the company Hrvatske Šume d.o.o., in FJ 3-4/2014, where emphasis was placed on so-called "defensive restructuring" reflected in downsizing instead of "developmental restructuring" characterized by the retention of the existing work posts and searching for new ones. The "Evening News" of September 20th, 2014, published a message by the "young lions of Croatian economy". The phase of layoffs and cost cutting is behind us, the quest for new sources of income

is on". As the popular saying goes, "some have finally come to their senses", but the question is what can be remedied and to what extent after being so mercilessly destroyed instead of upgraded. Along with the headline question "Is the forest practice abandoning the principles of sustainable forest management?" in FJ 7-8/2013, there is another question: does the method of management today enable the use of all the benefits of forestry as an important factor of economic infrastructure? FJ 7-8/2012 also stresses that "the essence of restructuring in forestry is not in downsizing but in performing the prescribed jobs in a professional manner and broadening economic activities, if they form a constituent part of the general progress of the society".

All this is closely related to the current burning issue of employment and education, which we discussed in FJs 7-8/2011, 3-4/2012 and 9-10/2012. We wondered whether those in authority, which means politicians, are capable of viewing profit in forestry and the related needs for employment from a broad perspective and not from the perspective of worker layoff. According to the Evening News of September 22, the company Hrvatske Šume Ltd. achieved profit of 74.1 million kuna in 2013, which is good for the management but insufficient for the entire Croatian economy, because profit was achieved only by selling timber as raw material at non-market prices and at a loss of 1.187 work posts (from 2011 to 2014.). It would be disastrous if profit was achieved by cutting down on labour costs that directly influence sustainable forest management. FJ 3-4/2011 tackled the issue of the classical economic value of forests.

The importance of the forest and its impact on water and on potable water in particular, was discussed in FJs 3/1995 and 1-2/1996, where its role in purifying water and balancing runoff into sources and watercourses was highlighted. FJ 1-2/2006 contains Horsmann's summary of forest-water ratio (according to Weber, 2005), stating that "water is the blood of the landscape, and the forest is its heart". FJ 5-6/2008 particularly emphasises that the average rainfall quantity of 1.200 mm in the distribution range of Croatian forests and the area of 2 million ha of closed forests puts forth about 13 billion tons of potable water. During arid periods the forest lets out water, and during rainy periods it retains water and slows down its surface runoff. Related to the issues of climate change, carbon sequestration and global warming, explanations can be found in FJ 9-10/2004 and 1-2/2007, where, among others, it is stated that Croatian forests sequester more than 5 million tons of carbon (e.g. a pedunculate oak tree sequesters about 2-3 tons per ha). FJ 5-6/2012 deals with the relations between forestry and wood processing, while compensation for non-market forest functions was discussed in FJ 5-6/2013. FJ 9-10/2001 treated the status of forestry and the forestry profession in Croatia, while party-based cadre selection and non-market management were the topic of FJ 3-4/2013.

There is a lot of criticism concerning the condition of forestry, but we must ask ourselves the following: is what took place before and is taking place now, only the result of the work of those in charge or should we "dig" deeper into recent past? "Why are we surprised?" we asked ourselves in FJ 5-6/2014, while Branimir Prpić, PhD, late Emeritus Professor and the doyen of the Croatian forestry, who was then editor-in-chief of Forestry Journal, entitled the column in the distant issue of FJ 3-4/1998 with the following "Are we letting dilettantes manage our forestry?".

Editorial Board