

EDITORIAL

NEWS FROM THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

On behalf of the Faculty of Forestry of the University of Zagreb, the Croatian Forest Research Institute, the Academy of Forestry Sciences, the Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers and on its own behalf, the Croatian Forestry Association congratulated the new Minister of Agriculture Professor Davor Romić, Ph.D., on his appointment to the post of Minister of Agriculture at the beginning of February 2016. On this occasion, the Association asked the Minister to set a date for a meeting with the representatives of the above forestry institutions. This request was accompanied by the jointly agreed attitudes on future activities to be undertaken in Croatian forestry.

The CFA also extended their congratulations to Ivica Francetić, M.Sc., the new Assistant Minister of Forestry, Hunting and Wood Industry.

On May 2016, Minister Davor Romić, Prof. Ph.D., and Assistant Minister Ivica Francetić, M.Sc., received a delegation of forestry institutions consisting of Professor Vladimir Jambreković, Ph.D., Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, Dijana Vuletić, Ph.D., Director of the Croatian Forest Research Institute, Professor Jura Čavlović, Ph.D., Chief Secretary of the Academy of Forestry Sciences, Professor Tomislav Poršinsky, Ph.D., President of the Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers, Silvija Zec, B.Sc., Secretary of the Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers, Oliver Vlainić, B.Sc., President of the Croatian Forestry Association, and Damir Delač, M.Sc., Secretary of the Croatian Forestry Association.

There was a joint discussion on 11 items from the notification sent to the Minister. The majority of the items had already been initiated by the Ministry and are currently in different stages of progress.

An initiative was put forward to reinstate the term 'forestry' in the name of the Ministry at the earliest occasion. The Ministry has already consulted the Croatian Forestry Association about the return of the name. Materials are being prepared to change the current name into the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

A Commission was appointed for developing a strategy of forestry of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2016 - 2030 (17 members: 2 representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, 3 representatives of the Faculty of Forestry, 1 representative of the Advisory Service, 3 representatives of the Croatian Forest Research Institute, 1 representative of the company Croatian Forests, 1 representative of the Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers, 1 representative of the Croatian Union of Private Forest Owners, 2 representatives of the

Croatian Employers' Association, and 3 representative of the Croatian Chamber of Economy). By September 1, 2016, a draft proposal of the strategy should be completed and submitted to the Ministry, which will open a public debate on the issue.

A Commission was also formed for the development of a new Forest Law, in which the Croatian Forestry Association has its representative, and so was a Commission for the creation of a developmental strategy of timber processing and furniture manufacture 2016 - 2020. The intention was to increase the finalisation and improve the control of contract fulfilment for wood industry. All the strategies should be passed by the end of 2016, and all the documents will be available for public discussion and debate.

The primary goal of the Ministerial strategies is to retain the population in rural areas, whereas the profit of the company which manages state forests should be kept in the second place.

The attitude of the Ministry on crucial issues is as follows: a) retain a tax on non-market forest functions (with possible reduction from 0.0265 % to 0.025 % of annual income or exemption from tax for economic subjects with up to one million annual income), b) establish a single forest-management area, and c) solve a dilemma of whether to keep Croatian Forests in the status of a company or organize it as a public institution for the purpose of better protection of forests as goods of general benefit.

The forestry profession will be given an open hand to act in common interest. There is a need for a Law on Timber Use and Processing, but it will probably not be passed due to the attitude of the European Commission. The problem will be solved by including wood industry into the Forest Law, which will be analyzed in more detail by a regulation.

Of particular interest is the condition in private forests, where property-legal relationships are unsolved and there is considerable illegal felling. By 2019, management programmes should be completed for all private forests in the Republic of Croatia. Long-term contracts for forestry contractors should also be developed for the purpose of enabling their easier development, and particularly for drawing the means from the Rural Development Programme (purchase of machinery).

The second national forest inventory will be made and agricultural and forest land will be delineated.

During May and June, forestry operations 8.5.1, 8.5.2, 8.6.1 and 8.6.2 from the Croatian Rural Development Programme will be announced for the period 2014-2020, while the operation 4.3.3 was announced previously.