

EDITORIAL

THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF LICENCED FORESTRY AND WOOD TECHNOLOGY ENGINEERS

In the year of great forestry anniversaries, one of the newer forestry institutions in the Republic of Croatia, **the Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers**, marked the 10th anniversary of its existence in mid October by organizing the **First Conference of Licensed Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers**. An entire decade had to elapse before licensed engineers got together, and the events at the conference clearly showed that such a gathering should have been organized much earlier.

You can read more on the conference itself on the Chamber website and in the text on the pages of this issue of Forestry Journal. The Editorial will focus on the diagnosis of the current state of the Chamber and on questions concerning the future. These questions were raised by Professor Tomislav Poršinsky, PhD, Chamber President, and Professor Tibor Pentek, PhD, President of the Department of Forestry Engineers, in their presentation “CCFWTE (Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers) – what next?” The first decade of the Chamber’s activity naturally asks the basic question of whether the Croatian Chamber of Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers fulfilled the expectations set at its foundation. Probably nobody could then foresee that the ratio between the two professional classes, which are equally represented in the Chamber Assembly, would be so disproportionate in terms of the number of licensed engineers. According to the ratio, licensed forestry engineers are 30 times more represented in relation to wood technology engineers.

The next question concerns the signet of the licensed engineer, its use and, finally, the need for it. Has the introduction of the signet without any recognizable features protected the profession in practice, which was the intention at the foundation of the Chamber? The rules of the profession are often mentioned; one of the questions asked was whether we have them and whether they are defined by some guidelines. The discordance of different laws (on forests and construction), as well as the ambiguous and undefined nature of certain legal provisions (“do-it-yourself” system), the indistinctness of the master /engineer of urban forestry, nature conservation and environment degree, the organisation of special training and learning outcomes, ways of taking professional exams, licensing the executors, field work control, the invisibility of the profession (engineers and technicians) in forests with licensed work performers and the participation of licensed engineers coming from mainly one company in commissions are issues that have been acute for years, and whose solution would advance the

sector and justify the expectations set at the foundation of the Chamber.

The jurisdiction of the Chamber equally relates to all licenses engineers employed in the state and private sector, in the same way in which the Forest Law and other legal and by-legal acts equally treat forests regardless of ownership type. Despite this, however, the overall condition of private forests has never been worse than in recent times. Evidently, protection of forests as a resource and good of general benefit has been lacking, and this should be rectified by the regulation of the forestry profession.

The general conclusion of the conference was that the meticulously prepared round tables, the whole-day stay in one place and the desire of the profession to exchange opinions, showed that this way of professional training has its quality and advantage over shorter, one-hour lectures, which are the most common form of professional training. True, the former requires much more financial and human resources and for this reason such conferences cannot be organized more often, but holding one in two or three years is absolutely necessary.

The success of the conference was further enhanced by the time spent in informal socializing and discussions on sector topics. One of the most valid features of the conference was that it provided an opportunity for licensed engineers from different institutions and in different positions to get together in one place and give opinions from their standpoints. In general, this helps to better understand problems occurring in the field. The views expressed at the conference provide a solid basis for joint action of numerous members of the Chamber geared towards improving legal regulations and implementing them in practice. The participation of conference attendees in discussions showed that all Chamber members should be more actively involved in the work of the Chamber for the purpose of solving current problems in the field, which was also the conclusion of the Chamber President, Professor Tomislav Poršinsky, PhD.

We congratulate the Croatian Chamber of Licensed Forestry and Wood Technology Engineers on their tenth anniversary and we wish them success in future promulgation of the profession.

To all members of the Croatian Forestry Association and to the readers of Forestry Journal we wish Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, with all the success in personal and business achievements in the year 2017.

Editorial Board