

EDITORIAL

WHAT PERCENT OF THE POPULATION IS AWARE OF THE FORESTRY PROFESSION?

At the beginning of November, the Evening Paper (*Večernji list*) published a speech by the Prime Minister given at a meeting of the Rector's Collegium held to discuss the Government decision related to funding higher education programmes in the academic year 2018/2019 - 2021/2022. In one part of the text the Prime Minister observes that the academic community is "visible" to about 0.3 % of the population, which is devastating. Therefore, he calls for a greater social and public involvement, which can be 100 % critical to the Government. What is important is to be seen and heard by the society, but also to be presented by people "with a name" instead of by "no-name" persons, which is a typical occurrence. If transposed to the forestry profession, we are not far from a similar "visibility" percentage; therefore, this could also be an appeal to the forestry profession. In cases in which visibility is higher, it usually carries a negative prefix, while the profession is in the background. The profession is often presented by "no-name" foresters, or by journalists who are insufficiently educated in forestry matters and who are mainly interested in scandals and affairs. The same goes for volunteers in various "green associations", who are not prepared to listen to the profession and to change their deeply rooted opinions about the forestry profession. In vain are all attempts to inform them about professionally and expertly executed forestry operations. No heed is paid to the fact that the forestry profession has managed forests according to the principle of sustainable management for over two and a half centuries and that it meets all the criteria of special protection over a large area. Who then, if not foresters, should be in charge of the status and rang of protected areas and who should a forest be protected from?

There are no reasoned discussions about forestry and forests at the state level, nor is there any mention of its importance as the classical primary sector of economy and of its ecological-protective and social-health role. We have already mentioned several times that the word 'forestry' was omitted from the name of the sector ministry despite the fact that 47 % of the landed area of the Republic of Croatia is covered with forests, which should indicate the importance of the profession. In one of the articles in this column we criticized the fact that within the competent Ministry forestry has been reduced to the level of dairy production, fruit production

and similar. Regrettably, it has lost even this status now. We have also written about non-market sale of wood assortments and the already established term "distribution of wood assortments". Distribution of wood assortments and market management are two completely opposite notions. However, how can market management be applied in view of the fact that the previous management boards of Croatian Forests Ltd signed long-term agreements on the principle of distribution, which are hard to change without heavy consequences? How can the cost of silvicultural, management and protective operations be covered from such small profits and not be "skipped over"? As for the rational use of raw material and its quality, which ensures additional value and employment to highly educated people in particular, there is no data. For example, the promotional spot of the "Ambijenta" furniture fair showed mainly upholstered furniture without any wooden elements. When the wood sector brags about the production and export of furniture, there is no data about primary processing production (veneer, massive wood, panelling OPLATA and others) and its use in the domestic production of massive cabinets and other room and kitchen furniture, nor is there any data about which and how many of wood assortments have ended up in the domestic final processing.

Why have we and under whose coercion retracted from successful integral forest management which includes auxiliary and secondary activities in forestry and which contributes significantly to the profit of e.g. Austrian forests, as well as increases employment? It would be interesting to discuss how, why, to whom, for what period and at what price have concessions been granted on various facilities, such as, for example, workers' resorts, which workers themselves built from a part of their income so as to be able to use them? We like to talk about the care for workers and their families, but how much has this fact alone changed their social status? There are many more topics to discuss here. Our wish at the end of every year is for the status of forestry to change for the better in the year to come. As hope dies last, we again expect positive changes in the next year and wish our readers Merry Christmas and a Happy and Successful New Year 2019.

Editorial Board