

REGIONAL IMPORTANCE OF FORESTS AND FORESTRY FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

V. Kupčák

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Abstract

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In the rural area represents forest management the significant and often the sole source of job opportunities, especially in border areas of the Czech Republic. As the sector is forestry such an important participant of regional development, incl. location factors relation in the face of traceable processing branches. All this increases the social role of forestry and it is a factual fulfilling of specific social functions of forest management in the sense of strategic development documents.

National forestry programs are considered as concepts for application of sustainable forest management in long-term improvement of competitiveness of forestry. They are part of the state forestry policy and at the same time they fulfill the EU Forestry Strategy. The paper focuses on the National Forest Programme of the Czech Republic for the period up to 2013 in relation to regional development and the importance of forestry in rural development area in the Czech Republic.

The paper focuses on the Programme LEADER too, aimed to engage in the rural areas more forestry bodies into the local action groups and into the elaboration of local development strategies.

forestry, forest management, social functions, employment, the national forestry programme

Rural areas represent 91% of the territory of the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU) and are home to more than 56% of its population, which makes from the rural development the policy of extraordinary importance. Agriculture and forestry are still essential for land use and management of natural resources in rural areas of the EU and as a platform for rural economic diversification. (Anonymus 2010a).

From the territorial perspective represents in the Czech Republic agricultural land around 54% of the territory and more than 33% of the territory are covered by forests. Currently in the Czech Republic are more than 5. 600 rural municipalities (89% of all municipalities), which administer the territory of more than 73% of the state area. In the context of the socio-economic problems of contemporary rural area for agriculture and forestry will open up new perspectives, supported by series of conceptual documents. In forestry, for example: from the Forestry Strategy the EU (1998) up to the EU Forest Action Plan (2006). These documents also include organically conclusions of the ministerial

conferences on the protection of European forests. At national level to these documents are accessed by the activities of the relevant ministries. For agriculture and forestry here include in particular the National Strategic Rural Development Plan of the Czech Republic for the years 2007–2013; namely for forestry is it a National Forestry Programme until 2013 on which in their way bundle up regional operational programmes for cohesion region (ROP NUTS II), programs of higher territorial authorities (regions) and the regional programmes of territorial self-governing authorities (towns and cities). (KUPČÁK, V., ŠMÍDA, Z., 2009).

From the perspective of regional development is necessary to mention the role of the processing industry, in relation to forestry, in particular then to wood processing industry. The wood processing industry in the Czech Republic belongs to the sectors with a long tradition. The emergence of wood processing companies, their frequency, capacity and dislocation historically has been linked with the territorial forest coverage, when the sufficiency of permanently renewable raw material basis of

domestic origin is still the crucial advantage for the processing and use of wood in the Czech Republic (JÁNSKÝ, J., KUPČÁK, V., ŽIVĚLOVÁ, I., 2008).

The report focuses in those respects primarily on forests and forest management of the Czech Republic and if we discuss about regional development, then on their importance for implementing social functions. Freely consists of three parts: the social function of forest management, Forest National Programme (NFP) and further acquaintance with the Programme LEADER, aimed to engage in the rural areas more forestry bodies into the local action groups (LAG) and into the elaboration of local development strategies.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

To the subject matter were primarily analyzed legislative and conceptual supporting documents, starting with the strategic approaches to the EU, through national and regional programmes.

In the national economy of the Czech Republic the Sector Forestry falls within the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic cognizance. According to the Classification of Economic Activities (CZ-NACE) is included into the section A – Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; subsection 02 – Forestry and wood harvesting.

In the next step followed an analysis of selected sectoral characteristics of Czech Forest Management. (FM). The specifications are based on statistical survey, further are information ensured by the Ministry of Agriculture (MZe), e.g. through annual statements on management. Complex, but in fact the only official collection of information about FM represent regularly issued “Reports on the status of Forest and Forestry management of the Czech Republic” for the current year (systematically issued since 1996) so called “Green messages”. From a database of these reports have been taken over the socio-economic data – in particular the development of employment, average wages, etc. (see Anonymus, 2010b). To the sources of information (although limited) on employment in the FM it is possible to mention about factual closing of books and annual reports of forest enterprises.

The decision point is the downstream analysis of the socio-economic aspects of FM, incl. assumptions arising from newly adopted National Forest Programme of the Czech Republic for the period until the year 2013 (NFP).

Crucial methodological approach in this report is the analysis of NFP (Anonymus, 2008), mainly on forestry policy platform with a focus on socio-economic situation in the FM.

As mentioned the NFP was declared by the resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic from 1th October 2008, No 1221 about the National Forest Programme for the period until 2013. Among others in it the Government imposes:

- on Minister of agriculture, Vice-President of the Government and Minister of Environment to take

into account the intentions of National Forest Programme during preparations of draft measures of matter-of-fact intentions of the law on forests in the ownership of state,

- on the 1th Vice-President of the Government, Minister for Regional Development, Vice-President of the Government and the Minister of the Environment, on the Minister of Industry and Trade, Minister of Agriculture and Minister of Education, Youth and Sports and on Minister of Defense to take into account the intentions of National Forest Programme into the implementation of the medium-term policies within their resorts and in the preparation of the related legal enactments,
- on the Minister of Agriculture to make acquaintance Governors and the mayor of the Capital City of Prague with National Forest Programme.

Furthermore, the government recommends:

- on the Minister of Agriculture in cooperation with Vice-President of the Government and Minister of the Environment to update National Forest Programme after 2013 according to up-to-date development of the forests status and forest management,
- on Governors and upon the Mayor of the Capital City of Prague to take into account the intentions of National Forestry Programme in the implementation of the medium-term policies of the regions and to work out and handle regional programmes of forest sector development.

From the standpoint of the methodology is the above mentioned survey a principal delimitation of competences and steps in whose intentions the NFP should be elaborated and above all fulfilled.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social situation in the forestry resort in the Czech Republic

Forestry as a sector of nation economy in the Czech Republic shares in GDP between 0.6 and 0.7%, the number of persons in salaried employment varies around 20 thousand persons. If we add however to the forestry sector successive processing industry (e.g. wood processing industry with around 150 thousand employees), then the cumulative share of both sectors in GDP advances towards 6%.

A specific feature of forestry sector in the Czech Republic is the relationship between forests owners and entrepreneurial subjects, which occurred during the process of transformation and privatization after the year 1990. The biggest forest owner in the Czech Republic is stat and these forests are administrated by Forests of the Czech Republic – state enterprise, for which almost 90% of the forestry activities is worked out by contracts by so called business entities in the outsourcing regime. These businesses subjects include a variety of legal

forms – from entrepreneurial natural persons (on the basis of the trade permission or in some case on registration of agricultural entrepreneurs) up to corporate enterprises (according to the Commercial Code), in the total number of around 38 thousand.

Among the largest forestry enterprises by number of employees belong Forests of the Czech Republic, state enterprise with 3 550 employees (of which over 1 000 workers), then Military Forests and Farms of Czech Republic, state enterprise, which employs around 2 800 employees, of which more than 2 300 workers).

Number of employees in forestry activities in the Czech Republic (or if you like in forestry and related activities) in physical persons has got down permanently since 1989, in spite of the fact, that the volume of works has increased (in the years 2007 and 2008 mainly as a result of processing wind thrown woods). To a certain extent here takes effect the using of harvester technologies, but on the territory of over 60% of the forests area still remain classic assortment wood technologies. When compared to the first half of the 90ties of the last century is yet

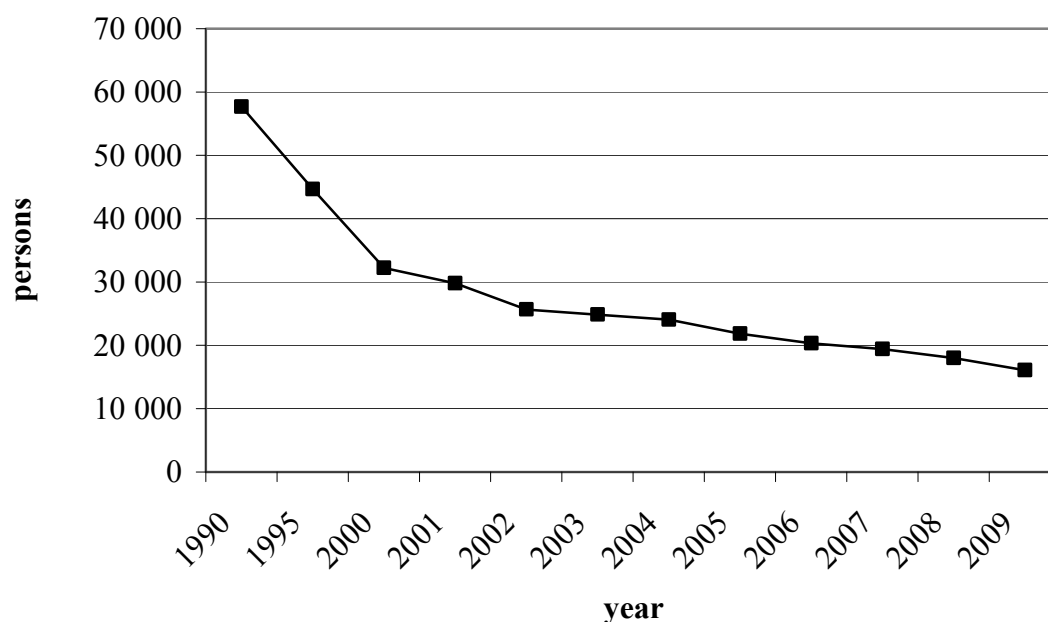
to be taken into account the substitution, when the former employees carry out now the work in the forests as sole traders (27 900 subjects). Despite the changes in the statistics, the nature and category of their socio-economic position remained however essentially unchanged. (KUPČÁK, V., 2010a).

Basic overview over the changes in the number of employees in the forestry activities over the period 1990–2009 provides Tab. I, and also the Fig. 1. (Source: Anonymus, 2010a).

The situation of the forestry resort in the Czech Republic reminds for the long term uncertain especially in the sphere of average wages (around 85% of the average wage in the Czech Republic). An overview of the evolution of the average earnings in the forestry sector in comparison with the average wage in the national economy of the Czech Republic serves the Tab. II. A positive offset in the year 2007 was influenced by the processing of the wind, with a higher share of labor input and personal costs.

I: Number of employees in forestry activities

Year	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Persons	57 700	44 616	32 264	21 835	20 342	19 398	17 959	16 041



1: The number of employees in forestry activities (development in time)

II: Evolution of the average in forestry (in CZK)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Average monthly wage in the Czech Republic	17 864	19 003	20 333	21 957	22 724
Average monthly wage in forestry	14 908	16 196	18 020	18 779	19 856
%	83.5	85.2	88.6	85.5	87.4

Source: Anonymus, 2010a

National Forest Programme

National Forestry Programmes are considered as concepts for enforcing of permanent sustainable forest management in relation to the long-term improvement competitiveness ability of the forest management. National Forest Programmes are governmental documents and part of a national forestry policy, and at the same time it is in them completed the EU Forestry Strategy.

In the year 2008 was by resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic adopted The National Forest Programme of the Czech Republic for the period until 2013 (NFP). Already in the introduction it is here quoted a motto: *“Strong economic performance must go hand in hand with sustainable use of natural resources”* (see the Guiding principles for the Common Agricultural policy, market and rural development policies. The European Council, Goteborg, 2001).

The targeting of NFP suggests and also underlines its basic structure, which consists of four parts or objectives-pillars. These are based on groups of forest functions:

- Economic functions – the strategic objectives are a long-term improvement of the competitiveness of the forest sector and the increased use of forestry products, goods and services in the life of society,
- Ecological functions – strategic objectives are the preservation and improvement of biological diversity; integrity, health and resilience of forest ecosystems on a local scale with a view to a possible scenario of global and landscape changes,
- Social functions – strategic objective is to contribute to the quality of life through conservation and improvement of social and cultural dimensions of forests and forestry.

Content structuring of NFP determine:

- Improving long-term competitiveness – the pillar of economic;
- Improving and protection of the environment – the ecological pillar;
- Improving the quality of life – the social pillar;
- Strengthening of coordination and communication – the communication pillar.

From the mentioned structure of NFP explicitly results its significant socio-economic nature and function:

Objective (III) Improving the quality of life – in the social pillar are included: Key action 12 – Support the improvement of the social situation of workers in the Forest sector, and Key action 13 – Increasing the contribution of forests and forestry (forestry goods, services) for rural development.

From measures for key actions 12 here are here for example:

- To organize the administration and management of the forest property, in particular, of the state property so as to contribute to increasing the employment of local resources, for the purpose of strengthening the wages level and social status

of workers in the forestry resort and also to the development of regions.

- To promote the introduction of new, especially information and communications technologies that enable people to increase skills and to find new employment opportunities.
- From the measures of the key action 13.
- To promote the creation and development of micro-enterprises in rural areas, including the creation of an information and advisory system.
- To allow the availability of wood raw material for local businesses and citizens, in particular in the link to the state ownership of forests, while respecting market principles and the limits of nature preservation.
- To improve awareness of the program LEADER, in order to engage in the countryside more forestry bodies into the local action groups, in the elaboration of local development strategies, etc. (KUPČÁK, V., 2010b).

Representation of the forestry sector in the programmes LEADER and in local action groups

Programme LEADER (abbreviation for „Liaison Entre Actions de Développement e’Économie Rurale“, meaning “Links between the rural economy and development actions“) is an initiation of the European Union which has helped with the development of rural areas since 1991. LEADER and its methods were first used in the Czech Republic in 2003, first as pilot projects within the Village Renewal Programme under Ministry for Regional Development and lately in the framework of LEADER for the Czech Republic on the Ministry of Agriculture and Operational Programme for Rural Development and Multifunctional Agriculture.

Next to the rural aids from the EU budget is one of the essential objectives of the initiative LEADER

- To activate the rural communities “from bottom-up method” (“bottom-up“).
- The main principles of the LEADER (see European Commission Regulation No 1698/2005 of 20. September 2005 on support for rural development from the European agricultural fund for rural development, section 61) include:
- The local development strategy pursuant to particular areas, intended for properly-demarcated sub-regional rural territories;
- Multi-sectored proposing and implementation a strategy based on interaction between actors and projects of different sectors of the local economy;
- Partnerships between the public and private sector at the local level – so called – local action groups (LAG).

LAG are based on the principle of partnership and cooperation of public, private and non-profit sector at a local level. From the perspective of legal status they are non-profit organizations, mainly

civic associations (c. a.) and generally beneficial organization (g. b. o.).

Members of the LAG generally are:

- The representatives of the micro regions, municipalities and cities.
- State Administration (e.g. the administration of the Protected Landscape Areas).
- Representatives of non-profit organizations, associations, corporations and foundations (e.g. Hunting associations).
- Business entities.

To this subject matter a testing of the participation forestry bodies (or close to and related branches of activities, e.g. nature protection, wood processing industry was carried out - see Forest and Wood processing sector within the meaning of regional processing) within the scope of regions with the above-average forest cover, namely Liberec Region (44.3% forest coverage), Plzeň Region (39.5%), Moravian-Silesian Region (35.6%), with the following results:

LAG regions of Liberec Region consist of: LAG Brána do Českého ráje, LAG Český ráj, LAG Pojizeří, LAG Českokamenicko, c. a., LAG Podralsko, LAG Kozákov, LAG Microregion Frýdlantsko, MASiF, LAG "Přidte pobejt", c. a., LAG Turnovsko, LAG Podještědí, c. a.

Within LAG regions of the Liberec Region has been identified only 1 forestry body in LAG Podještědí, c. a. – TAXUS, Ltd. (a consulting in the field of forestry and horticulture).

LAG regions of the Plzeň Region consist of: LAG Aktivios, LAG Český les, LAG Český Západ, LAG Ekoregion Úhlava, LAG Náš region, LAG Pošumaví, LAG Sv. Jana z Nepomuku, LAG Světovina, o. p. s., LAG Vladař, LAG Zlatá cesta, o. p. s.

Within LAG region in the Plzeň Region have been identified the involvement of 8 subjects acting in forestry and related activities:

- LAG Náš region: Forest company Bečov, Ltd., Administration of the Protected Landscape area Slavkovský les,
- LAG Světovina: Ing. Jerome Colloredo-Mansfeld, Forest and Pond fisheries management Zbiroh,
- LAG Vladař: Woods Žlutice, s. r. o., Protected Landscape area Slavkovský les,
- LAG Zlatá stezka, o.p.s.: Forest company Přimda, a.s., The administration of the Protected Landscape Area Český les, Czech Association of conservationists Tachov.

LAG regions of the Moravian-Silesian Region consist of: LAG Hlučínsko, LAG Hrubý Jeseník, LAG Nízký Jeseník, LAG Opavsko, LAG Region Poodří, LAG Pobeskydí, LAG Rozvoj Krnovska, LAG Rýmařovsko.

In the framework of the analyzed LAG region in Moravian-Silesian region were identified only 4 forestry and nature protection bodies, of which 3 are from the wood processing resort. For the LAG Region Poodří: Protected Landscape Area Poodří. For the LAG Rýmařovsko: Katr a. s. Stará Ves, RD

Rýmařov s.r.o., Production of furniture David Kopeček Rýmařov.

In identifying the involved entities was somewhat of a problem in the case of natural persons with introducing activities such "economic activity" or "agriculture" (see agricultural entrepreneur according to the law No. 252/1997 Coll. of laws on agriculture - § 2e, article 3. letter g). Other methodological problem may be the identification of forest properties of towns and cities when the membership in the LAG (and also inclusion into forest sector) may exist through membership of the municipality.

In the resolution of regional issues, there are series of questions and problems. For example, in the agriculture sector, it is the gradual loss of agricultural land (normally irreversible), due mainly to construction activity, but also the issues of the intensity and efficiency of the management in marginal areas, including alternative afforestation of unused agricultural land. Together with forestry it is an important phenomenon enlarging of territories with the special regimes (eggs. Natura 2000) and generally increasing pressure on the protection of nature and on limitation of economic activities. Because of the nature and tendency to aid public finance (subsidies), but also during the global worldwide financial recession can be expected of their decrement. To the subject matter approaches also the knowledge that the current foreign investment, leading to employment in the regions, not always meets expectations-especially in the longtime frames.

In the field of entrepreneurship and the knowledge economy is for forest management desirable an analysis of regional business sector, sequences of processing chains, incl. the supporting infrastructure. Example: accompanying infrastructure creates additional conditions for the implementation of services for tourist business or recreation, when in recent time the rapid development in cycling tourism has been achieved.

In regions have already been constructed and marked for hundreds kilometers of bike tracks-majority held after public roads of III. Class and rural roads or-forest roads.

To the draft measures here may be include:

- from the part of state institutions and public corporations (in particular of the counties) markedly increase activities aimed at informing and educating the rural population in relation to the sector of forestry in the relevant regional framework;
- to analyze the implementation of resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic to National Forest Programme for nominated resorts (except Ministry for Agriculture) and counties (regions);
- To address the forest owners, forestry companies and self employers in the region in case – starting with the regional operational programmes for cohesion in the region after the sectoral strategy for the given territory of the LAG.

SUMMARY

Forestry sector constitutes in the rural area an important source of employment opportunities and is an important participant of regional development, especially in border areas, incl. regional aspects and location factors relation to successive processing industries. In some papers could we meet with the modern term – social capital of the countryside.

The development of socio-economic characteristics in the solitary forestry sector of the Czech Republic seems not to be positive. Next to the actual fall in employment rate, the low level of wages, increasing accident rate, etc. occurred also after the year 1990 a significant vituperation of workers qualification (with exception of operating harvester technologies), and the overall decline of quality life indicators (formerly known as so called standard of living). In addition to the mentioned harvesting activities is necessary to emphasize the problem of depreciation skills of workers in the silvicultural activities, which does not show immediately, but due to the betokened principles of sustainability can become a significant phenomenon in the future, with difficult remedying committed errors.

National Forest Programme of the Czech Republic for the period until 2013 contains a series of measures to solve the above mentioned problems. However, it depends on this, how and when it will be gripped, and in particular implemented. In any case everything here mentioned that enhances the role of the regions and for forestry will be here open new perspectives.

In the matter of the forestry sector representation in the LEADER programmes and LAG, notes however the minimum commitment. From a regional perspective in particular is associated with the current outsourcing model of forests management on the Forests of the Czech Republic, state enterprise, which is absolutely dominant (and also discussed) phenomenon. From previous experience, it is clear that the forest owners and foresters (managers) have concentrated on direct measures of rural development programmes (in particular on the purchase of forestry techniques).

Decision point of awareness about program LEADER and the involvement of forestry bodies into LAG or elaboration of local development strategies does not consist in substandard legislation, but in the way as it should be possible at the current state of the forestry sector (according to some authors critical) to improve regional engagement, and that at present public awareness of forestry sector and its administration, but also the other way round.

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Address

doc. Ing. Václav Kupčák, CSc., Ústav regionální a podnikové ekonomiky, Mendelova univerzita v Brně, Zemědělská 1, 613 00 Brno, Česká republika, e-mail: kupcak@mendelu.cz