National Report of Greece

Forest policy.

The main body for protecting and managing the country's state forests as well as for supervising and keeping under control the private forests, is the Forest Service. This body operates under the name General Secretariat of Forests and Natural Environment (GSF&NE) and constitutes an integral part of the Ministry of Agriculture. GSF&NE consists of the Central Service and the Regional Services. The Central Service, which is the inspecting instrument of the whole administrative structure of the GSF&NE, comprises 6 Directorates. These are responsible for formulating forest policy, drawing up long-term programmes of forest development, monitoring scientific and technological development in managing forests, supervising and strengthening research programmes and finally promoting the country’s co-operation with EU, third countries and International Organisations (Presidential Decree 352/7-8-91).

The Regional Services are the instruments for executing the instructions and forest policy in general formulated by the Central Service, but also for applying local programmes and studies. They are divided into Intraprefectural and Prefectural Services. The Intraprefectural Services are composed of 13 Forest Inspectorates for each of the 13 administrative regions of the country. The Prefectural Services consist of 31 Forest Directorates with 80 Forest District Offices and 24 Directorates without Forest District Offices, while 2 Directorates of Reforestation in Attici and Thessaloniki Prefectures are in operation (Presidential Decree 1213/14-10-81). Also, within the framework of GSF&NE collective instruments such as the Revisional Council for the Property of Forests, the Forest Technical Council, the Forest Property Council and the Regional Councils and Committees (Law 300/1981) operate.

The economy of mountainous and semi-mountainous areas, depends mainly on the activities of the primary sector and to a lesser extent to the secondary and tertiary sectors.

Besides forestry, the wood-using industry is being developed. Sawmills' units of wood-using industry are small, equipped with obsolete technological equipment, do not utilise their capacity fully, do not apply fully standardisation and quality control and have a low degree of integration. On the contrary, the units of the wood composite panels are characterised by advanced technology, full use of their capacity as well as full application of standardisation and quality control. Wood-using industry development is restrained in general by the lack of quantitative and qualitative home grown raw material, the high cost of roundwood production and the shortage of skilled personnel.

In the wood-based industry 680 sawmills, 44 units producing parquets, 153 palettes, 173 wooden boxes, 9 veneers, 2 plywood, 6 blockboard, 7 particleboard, 1 fibreboard, 1 wood pulp, 12 paper and 6 resin industries are in operation.

The forest sector employs a work-force which -especially in the case of forestry- comes from the same areas where forests grow. Manpower employed in forestry is divided into permanent and seasonal personnel. Permanent personnel employment is legislatively regulated by the Code of Officials (Presidential Decree 611/1977) which determines the relations between state and officials, Law 2470/1997 which is concerned with the payroll of employees and Law 2084/1992 which determines the insurance status of employees.
Christmas trees, resin production and livestock raising, contribute significantly to the employment and income of people living in the mountainous communities of the country.

63% of Christmas trees are grown in private plantations, 30% in chestnut orchards and the remaining in state and non-state forests. 500,000 Christmas trees are produced annually and it is estimated that the Greek market can consume 1 million Christmas trees per year and that on semi-mountainous and mountainous regions there are areas available for such production.

Resin cultivation was a significant source of income for the inhabitants in many regions of Greece until 1975. Resin-tapping is carried out by peeling (wounding) a small section of the tree and greasing it with sulphur acid paste. The resin produced is processed in the country's 6 specialised industrial units.

A continuous reduction in resin production has been observed since 1975, from 20,313 tons in 1975 was 5,965 tons in 1996. There is a 5.7% annual production reduction due to the increased supply of low price imported resin, the turn of resin collectors to other professions less tiring and better paid e.g. tourism and to the resin industry's restricted fund to modernise its equipment.

Resin is exclusively produced by the resin-tapping of 25% of the Pinus halepensis forests. Pinus brutia resin-tapping stopped few years before second World War II.

Livestock raising in mountainous areas is practised in the traditional manner, i.e. livestock is mostly pastoral (in flocks and nomadic) and contributes significantly to the income of the mountainous population, taken into account that a major part of it is employed in livestock raising. Livestock grazing within forests, causes serious damages. Thus, a target of forest policy is the harmonious coexistence of forest and livestock, so that this productive activity is maintained for the mountainous populations and the national economy in general, causing the least damage to the forest.

National Forest Programme.

Programming projects and works constitutes a basic condition for the development of the forest sector at the regional and the national level. The GSF&NE adopted development programmes of a 5-year duration for the forest sector. Such programmes had been planned and implemented in the 1973-1977, 1978-1982, 1982-1987 periods. By the implementation of these programmes, road construction, watershed management, reforestation, harvesting and cultivation of forests, was accelerated. This in turn aided forestry to develop and maintain an efficient physical infrastructure to facilitate the supply and disposal of forest products.

After 1987 development programmes of a six-year duration at the central and regional level, were drawn up for the carrying out of forest technical works funded by the Investment Budget and the EU. As far as the management, exploitation and production of forests is concerned, these are clearly defined in management plans which are drawn up for a ten-year duration. The application of long-term programmes by the GSF&NE, such as the national inventory of forests, land resource survey of forest land, inventory of wood-based industry, national cadastre and cartography of forest land.

Forestry funding are credits coming from the Ordinary Budget, the Investment Budget, the Central Fund of Agriculture, Livestock and Forests (C.F.A.L. and Forests), the European Union and other sources.

The level of investments in non-state forestry is very low. Expenditure for carrying out all kinds of forestry works in non-state forestry is covered by capital coming from forest owners and subsidies from national and Community sources.

The State subsidises about 60% of the expenditure paid in non-state forestry for various forestry works. To be eligible for subsidy must present a study approved by the Forestry Service for the forestry work to be carried out, while beneficiaries receive the funding after the work has been
finished. Non-state forestry is also funded by resources provided for by implementing EEC Regulations No 2157/92, 2158/92, 2080/92, 867/90.

The forest sector, benefited by adhering to EEC Regulations Nos 2158/1992, 2080/1992, 867/1990 and 1973/1992 and 3528/1986. The same activities of Regulations 2080/1992, 867/1990 are included in the new Regulation 1257/99 of the EU. The forest sector has also significantly benefited from the application of the following programmes:

- Interreg I carried out on behalf of Community Support Framework II entitled "Pilotic game breeding and tourist development of game breeding stations". For the carrying out of the programme works 375 million GRD were spent between 1989 and 1993. 50% of the funding came from EU, 30% from the investors themselves and 20% from the Ministry of Agriculture.
- Communal Initiative Interreg II external borders and in particular subprogramme 3 on the transboundary collaboration between Greece and Bulgaria for the prefectures of the country, namely of Evros, Rodopi, Xanthi, Drama and Kavala. The programme aims at managing and protecting forests against fires, protecting soil and developing the forest of Fractos at the prefecture of Drama. The total budget of these works amounts to 1.6 billion GRD and 400 million GRD were invested in 1997.
- Regional Operation Programmes concerning regional development projects. Within the framework of these programmes forest projects within the forests and other wooded land are funded, aiming at protecting and developing the forests. The total budget of these projects amounts to 45 billion GRD and 60% is covered by the EU.
- The funding of Greece's economy by the Cohesion Fund for the convergence of its economy with the economies of the rest of the EU countries (implementing the criteria of the Maastricht's Treaty). Projects for the protection of forests and soils and reforestation works were funded by this Fund. The total budget of these works amounts to 4 billion GRD and 85% is covered by the EU.

**Forest legal framework**


For the first time in the history of the country forest and other wooded land are protected by articles 24 and 117 of the Constitution.

Law 86/1969 codified almost all the laws that had been issued since 1928 and had been amended and completed by Law 4173/1929. This law constitutes the Forest Code of the country and regulates matters concerning the protection, management, real property rights on forest land, taxation, exploitation of state and privately-owned forests, forest improvement works etc. This code continues up to now to constitute the basic body of forestry legislation, although a lot of its provisions were amended and substituted by other laws such as Laws 886/1971, 996/1971, 248/1976 and 998/1979.

Law 998/1979 "On the protection of the country's forest and other wooded land" determines the specific protection measures for maintaining, developing and improving forest and other forest land of the country. This in turn aims at maintaining and improving the whole natural environment by direct reference to the legal status governing their ownership and use.

Law 1650/1986 "On the Protection of the Environment" includes a specific chapter "On the Protection of Nature and Landscape" which proposes new categories of protected areas and introduces changes in the administration and management of protected areas.

The above-mentioned laws for protecting and managing forests were supplemented by Presidential decrees and Ministerial decisions. They will be separately mentioned in each Criterion.
The Presidential Decree of 19-11-1928 "On Forest management, felling regulations, Forest taxation and rent, disposal of products, resin collection and resin cultivation etc.", regulates legislatively sustainable forest management. With this decree, incorporated into the Forest Code, the principle of sustainability is adopted in its simple form, i.e. sustained yield. However, the management of Greek forests based on sustained yield started after the Ministry of Agriculture issued Circular No 120094/499/1937.

Forest law regulations secure theoretically at least forest protection from excessive interventions of owners and third persons as well as from natural factors. For land use changes and forest and other wooded land expropriation, actions which can considerably affect their protection, provisions were made in the 1975 Constitution and in the laws mentioned above. Article 24 of the Constitution prohibits forest land use changes, unless it is enforced by public interest. State and private forest and other wooded land areas destroyed by fires and other causes are obligatorily under reforestation regime and their disposal for other purposes is prohibited (par.3, article 117 of the Constitution). Expropriation of forest and other wooded land that belong to natural or legal persons governed by public law is permitted only in favour of the state, but without changing their forest character (par.4 of the same article). Law 998/17979 designates per case or category of cases the terms under which the forests or their segments can change their use or serve other uses for reasons enforced by public interest (indicative articles 46,47 and 51-57).

Institutions

Forest education at the university level is provided by the Department of Forestry and Natural Environment of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which is divided in five "Sectors":
- Forest Production - Forest Protection - Natural Environment
- Range - Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries
- Planning and Development of Natural Resources
- Forest Techniques and Torrent Control Works
- Harvesting and Technology of Forestry Works

Students' training in practice and part of forest research, is carried out in the two university forests, one 33 000 ha in the area Pertouli of the Pindos mountain range and the other 14 500 ha in the area Taxiarchis of the Chalkidiki.

Forest education at the technical level is provided by the Technological Educational Institutes (T.E.I.) of Forestry, which offer theoretical and practical education to Forest Technicians. There are 3 T.E.I. of Forestry which are located at the prefectures of Drama, Karditsa and Karpenissi, respectively.

Forest research in the country, besides Forestry Schools at the university and technical level, is carried out by two Research Institutes. The Institute of Mediterranean Forest Ecosystems and Forest Products Technology in Athens and the Forest Research Institute of Thessaloniki, which belong to the National Agricultural Research Foundation (N.AG.RE.F). N.AG.RE.F is in charge of undertaking agricultural research for the development of techniques and know-how and forwarding recommendations to the Minister of Agriculture, regarding solutions to concrete problems in farming. 57 researchers are working in these Institutes who carry out and develop research programmes and technological activities in all forest disciplines.

Responsible for the raising of public awareness and the development of a friendly attitude of people towards the forest, is the Section of Forest Applications of the Directorate of Forest Resources Development of the GSF&NE.

According to article 5 of Law 998/1979, the care of the protection and development of forests, public gardens, groves within archaeological sites and for a 3.000 m radius from their centre,
belongs to the services of the Ministry of Culture (Archaeological Service). These services, if there is a need, ask for the GSF&NE's assistance.

Besides the GSF&NE, other bodies that contribute to forest protection and development are the following:

- **Panhellenic Confederation Union of Agricultural Co-operation (PASEGES)** is the highest Agricultural Co-operative Organisation in the country, which represents among others, the Co-operative Movement in collaboration with the state and the other organisations. It negotiates and signs collective labour agreements, gives counsel about the cultivation and processing of agricultural products and elaborates agricultural development studies. The Forest Co-operatives are supervised by PASEGES.

- **Forest Owners Association of Greece (F.O.A.)** founded in 1926, aims at safeguarding private forest ownership, orientating production to market, and promoting domestic tree species and traditional forest cultivation methods according to the principle of sustainability. F.O.A. has 100 members with only 20 employed exclusively in forestry.

- **The Geotechnical Chamber of Greece (GEO.C.G.)** is a legal person governed by public law founded in 1971 and is under the inspection of the Ministry of Agriculture. GEO.C.G. is a scientific council of the state on matters concerning the sectors of agriculture, livestock, fisheries, forestry and mineral resources. It gives opinion for each Bill, Presidential Decree and any general measure concerning agricultural, forest and livestock policy, geotechnical education and research, environmental protection and rehabilitation. It collaborates with the Chambers of other professional groups in the country, in matters related with environmental protection and the economic, social and cultural development of the countryside. GEO.C.G. has 17,156 members including 2,374 foresters (1997 data).

- **The Hellenic Forestry Society (H.F.S.)** was founded in 1988 and has 525 members. It aims at promoting the Forest Science in Greece. It specifically seeks to investigate, diffuse and apply the knowledge related to the maintenance, protection, management and development of forests and forest resources, to recognise the social role of forests, to collaborate with corresponding scientific organisations home and abroad. These targets are implemented by organising lectures, expert meetings, national and international congresses as well as by publishing forest research works.

- **Non-Governmental Organisations** (NGOs) for Environmental protection such as the Hellenic Society for the Protection of Nature, the Hellenic Ornithological Society, the World Wide Fund for Nature Hellas, the Greek Biotope/Wetland Centre and the Arctouros Society.