



Forest recreation in policy and legislation - a European comparison

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- 1 Introduction & Background information**
- 2 Study objectives**
- 3 Methodological approach**
- 4 Reflection of outdoor recreation**
- 5 Discussion & Conclusions**





Changes in the recreational situation

- **Outdoor recreation gained societal importance**
 - rapid social changes &
 - changes in EU land-use policy
- **High & diverse visitor demands**
- **Limited area (*resource*)**
- **Challenge recreation management**
- ➔ **Reflected & concretised in policy?**



To analyse...

1. What is the status of recreation demand & supply inventories as well as monitoring in policy & legislation?
2. What are differences & commonalities (*EU comparison*)?
3. Is there a need for harmonisation & standardisation?

To provide...

- ➔ Insights into various national policy setting & legislation
- ➔ Arguments for recreation inventories & monitoring



- **COST Action E33 consortium**
 - 18 participating countries
 - e-mail questionnaire (*type & extend of recognition*)
- **Literature review: EU & national policy documents**
 - Forest/Forestry-related
 - other domains (*e.g. nature protection; landscape*)
 - best knowledge of country representatives
- **Analysis & synthesis by working group 2**
 - geographic levels (*EU, national*)
 - type & domain (*policy - legislation, forestry - others*)

1. (Pan-) European documents

▪ Forest / Forestry-related

- *Report of MCPFE, related SFM-Criteria + Indicators*
 - *EC 'Council regulation 1257/199' (Improvement of ecological and social values of public forests)*
 - *EU Forest Action Plan*
- ➔ recreation = forest function, for societal 'well-being'

▪ Landscape-related

- *European Landscape Convention, Florence*
- ➔ recreation = driving force for landscape transformation
- ➔ adaptation of national measures for landscape planning

1. (Pan-) European documents

- ▶ Forestry-related documents are homogeneous
 - **common aims**
 - ▶ measure & improve Sustainable Forest Management
 - ▶ strengthen Europe wide cooperation & coordination
 - **'outdoor recreation' as content**
 - ▶ all address importance of social function
 - ▶ MCPFE: *most concrete for measures*
 - ▶ Forest Action Plan: *need for monitoring*
 - ➔ need for recreation inventories & -monitoring not stated

2. National policy documents

- **National Forest Programs** (*MCPFE*)
 - 14/18 have implemented NFP / in progress
 - 11/14 outdoor recreation as one objective
 - need to provide recreation opportunities
 - need for participatory planning methods

- **State Forestry Programs**
 - 2/18 have 'State Forestry Programs' (*Sweden, Norway*)
 - cover recreation & social well-being

2. National policy documents

- ▶ NFP assign different priorities & obligations for recreation
- **Northern European countries**
 - ▶ low forest cover; large distance to urban areas
 - ▶ relatively higher priority
 - ▶ including objectives & regulations
(*e.g. DK, the Netherlands, UK*)
- **Central & Southern European countries**
 - ▶ general statements
 - ▶ stay vague in proposing actions

3. National legislation documents

- ▶ mission to provide services for the public
- ▶ regulation of access
- **Forest legislation**
 - ▶ all 18 countries implemented a forest law
 - ▶ 12 refer to provide recreation possibilities (*public task*)
 - ▶ 9/12 include access regulations (*mainly free access*)
 - ▶ planning = prerequisite for recreation management
 - ▶ 6 do not mention recreation (*Northern countries*)

3. National legislation documents

- ▶ 11 countries further legislative covering recreation
 - **Nature Protection/Conservation Legislation**
 - ▶ sustainable provision of recreation opportunities
 - ▶ limitations of access (*activities, ownership, protection*)
 - **‘Everyman’s right’, ‘Allmende’**
 - ▶ to experience nature & outdoors (*e.g. Finland, Sweden*)
- ➔ a need for recreation inventories & -monitoring not stated

4. Other national policy documents

- heterogeneous in type and country
- **broader context** of environment & economy
 - development of rural areas
 - landscape spatial policy (e.g. *Netherlands, Belgium*)
- **woodlands/urban areas**
 - social benefits for communities
 - countries with fewer forests (e.g. *UK, Ireland*)

5. Monitoring of outdoor recreation

- **EU-level**

- need for general forest monitoring
- harmonising monitoring activities
(*IPF & IFF + MCPFE work on adaptation*)

- **National-level**

- Implementation of forest monitoring varies strongly
- 5 countries mention 'recreation monitoring' needs
(*Northern & Central nations: DK, F, FIN, GER, CH*)
- no standardised ways to measure recreation

► Discussion & Conclusions

- The importance of outdoor recreation (access & quality) for societal well being & SFM is stated in several European policies, serving as guide-lines for national forest policy formulation.
- Most countries recognize & express the denotation of outdoor recreation in a political / legislative way, but contradictions exist between expressed importance and non-binding commitments.
- Hampering might be less national (real) political willingness and / or a lack of (financial) resources.
- A lack of visitor information and management methodology are among the main hindering factors for effective recreation policy, planning and management in the light of rapid social changes.

There is a need to...

- Identify key topics for recreation information, which support sustainable forest use and which secure equal recreation opportunities, to improve the status of forest recreation.
- Produce consistent and comparable recreation information to detect use/user changes over time. Standardized contents & harmonized methods could then provide a sound decision basis for recreation resource allocation & achieve good quality of life.
- ➔ Launching a European research project & forming a working group seem a consequent step to develop a common information basis and a standardized EU recreation monitoring program.

Thank you!

