

Wood production and potentials for production of energy

Statement by the Cyprus Department of Forests

Cyprus forests cover an area equal to 174 400 ha. More than 60 percent of the forest area is publicly owned. Private forestry is characterized by passive ownership, and there is often no forest management.

Coniferous species predominate in the forests, the most important of which are pines as well as cedar and cypress.

Less than one fourth of the forest is available for wood supply (43 173 ha). About 12 percent (20 528 ha) of the total forest area is not available for wood supply since are managed for protection / conservation reasons; most of the rest is not available for economic reasons.

Cyprus is a small producer of forest products and it relies mainly on imports. Approximately 135 000 m³ of sawnwood is imported annually into the island. The local roundwood production is based on softwood species, and is processed into sawnwood for domestic consumption.

The volume of annual timber removals is prescribed by the Department of Forests based on estimations from a system of Continuous Forests Inventories. Information such as average growing stock (71,55 m³ / ha) and annual increment (0,98 m³ / ha) are derived from tree measurement taken every ten years on permanent sample plots, located in the productive *Pinus brutia* State forest of the island.

The Department of Forests, after the execution and the analysis of the results of the last forest inventory (2001) and in order to be in line with the objectives set in the National Forest Program (emphasis is given to the environmental and social values of forests rather than on wood production) decided to reduce substantially the volume of timber to be harvested during the current decade to around 8 000 m³ annually. This decision will facilitate the sustained yield production.

The exploitation of biomass from the forests of Cyprus for the production of renewable energy is uneconomical mainly because of the low productivity. The most important factor limiting the production of biomass and negatively affecting the costs of its

production are the adverse soil and climatic conditions that exist in Cyprus. Therefore, the biomass production of the Cyprus forests cannot support any serious investment. According to their productive potential, Cyprus forests can only occasionally support any biomass processing industry.