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Exploiting the potentialities of solid biomasses in EU Parks

**D5.6.6 PROPOSITION OF LEGAL MEASURES AT NATIONAL LEVEL
Recommendations for Decision Makers**

Italy

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Introduction

Following the specifications of the 2012 Intelligent Energy Europe programme, BioEUParks project aims to propose a model of energy production from renewable sources. This model is developed through the creation of a short biomass supply chain (less than 50 km) that will supply a small cogeneration plant. The development and application of this method in five natural European parks in Italy, Slovenia, Greece, Hungary and Austria leads to the realisation of a good practice in the sustainable management of forests, with positive consequences in terms of economic development and the emergence of new productive alliances between public and private entities in order to promote the green economy of inland areas. Moreover, the experiences and the results reached in the European context will flow into a proposal for legal measures, as a result of the best practices acquired by the parks, in Italy by the Sila National Park, during the project. The information provided will be useful to improve the current regulatory system about the sustainability of biomass supply chains.

The situation in Italy and in Europe

Forests cover 1/3 of the European Union territory and represent an important resource because of their relevant ecological, economic and social functions. If managed in a sustainable way, with short, integrated and small scale supply chains, forests can contribute to the development of territories - otherwise subject to progressive decline – even throughout the use of biomass as a source of energy.

- Biomass obtained from plants is in fact a potentially important source of renewable energy, able to diminish the dependence from fossil fuels and - at the same time - to reduce the production of CO₂ emissions.
- The energetic exploitation of local biomass can also increase the care and maintenance of the territory, in particular of the woods, and optimize the use of the agricultural resources, through the management of the residuals, the pruning and ashes.

The use of renewable energies plays a central role in the strategies of the European Union and Italy. By 2020, according to the National Action Plan on renewables, they should guarantee about two thirds of the heat production and almost 90% of the Italian share of alternative fuels, as well as a percentage of electricity.

But according to the EU Schedule for renewable energies: *“The progresses made by the Member States were partial and very unequal; because of the absence of binding objectives, and due to the gaps of the European regulatory frame in the sector of renewable energies, real progresses were obtained only in few states where the determination was stronger than the changing political priorities ”.*

Actions for the implementation of legal measures in the chain wood/energy



1. The Regional Council of Calabria enacted the regional law n.45 of 12 October 2012 on the Management, protection and enhancement of regional forests.

The regulation defines the orientation principles to promote sustainable forest management, including forest certification of both process and product.

On the occasion of the meeting promoted by the National Sila Park Authority in the context of the BioEUParks project a series of political objectives/proposals were defined in a future perspective.

- To attract the interest of the municipalities in order to push them to present the forest management plans.
- To establish a permanent discussion table in order to promote supply chains and ongoing good practices realised not only by the Park Authority but also by some municipalities over the use of renewable resources.
- To establish a monitoring centre for biomass from forests that will evaluate the quality and suitability of biomass with the aim of meeting the requirements of the plants.
- To create, with the input of the Sila National Park, a SEAP (Sustainable Energy Action Plan) for the municipalities of the Park that will identify the priorities of intervention of the individual municipalities.

2. Regions can make the difference with the Energy Plans and the Guidelines for the authorisation of biomass plants. Guidelines should not only indicate where it is possible to create plants but also how much power the different territories can receive. It is fundamental that every Region firstly identifies the potentialities of biomass for energy purposes of its different territories - cuts and forest residuals, agricultural residuals, dedicated crops – and on this basis to plan and measure the entire energy power, the type and geographical location of the plants. Moreover, other kind of incentives (Rural Development Plans, POR CREO, Extraordinary Plans of investment) can support short supply chains and more efficient uses of heat energy.

3. The use of renewable energies gives a great contribution to the mitigation of climate change and the improvement of energy autonomy of the territories. On the other side we should not forget that this model is indissolubly tied to soil and local resources. Consequently a correct development should take into account:

- An appropriate use of the soil
- The sustainability of plants
- The implementation of local supply chains

In this context, BioEUParks has been a useful tool that promoted a model for the enhancement of the local economy. The regional and national regulatory frame should implement strategies of local development that should involve Parks, public administrations and businesses to cooperate in a balanced relationship. This should be made by bringing together the different ecological, economic, cultural, touristic and landscape value of the forests, in order to create a great opportunity for economic and social growth.

Among the instruments for a more advanced and sustainable policy, for instance, there is the development of incentives to heat energy that would at last reward cogeneration and an efficient use of heat to all the plants that meet specific sustainability criteria.