

## Decentralisation process: the Italian experience

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## Paper organisation

1. Italy: the socio-economic context of forest policies and legislation
2. Development of forest legislation
3. Final remarks: risks and challenges of the new scenario of forest legislation

## 1. Forestry in Italy: the socio-economic context

### Forests = mountains

95% of the forests in hilly and mountain regions:

= less developed areas  
(income = tourism and some quality farm product)



→ multi-functional forests (soil protection, water cycle regulation, fuelwood and timber production, recreation, ...)

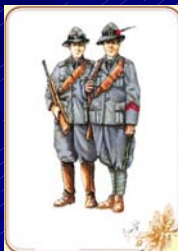
## Local & small owners

forestland ownership:

- 60% private (former farmers): 3 ha/firm
- 40% public
  - Local municipalities
  - Local communities

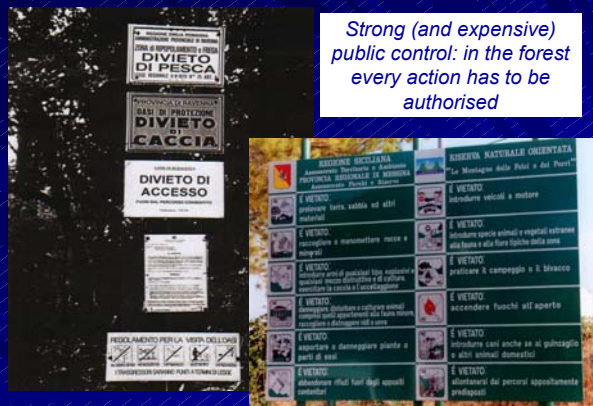
→ No owners' associations  
→ Low productive forests  
→ Very important role of public, non commercial services  
→ Strong public "command and control" instruments

Basic assumption of forest legislation in the past: public non-market functions must be defended with instruments of command and control



to use these instruments you need strong public institutions

Strong (and expensive) public control: in the forest every action has to be authorised



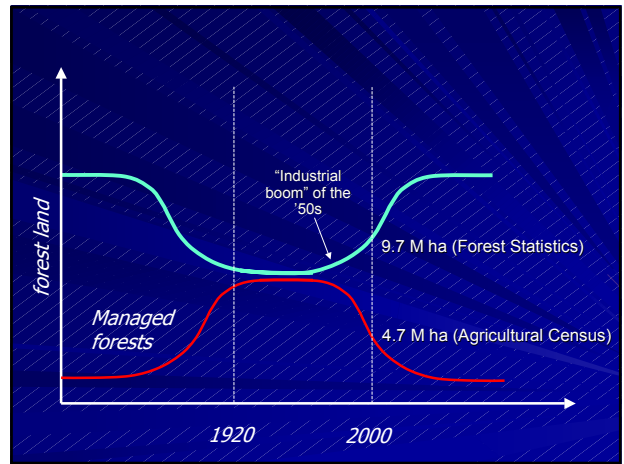
Low commercial interest in forest management → abandonment → expansion of forest cover

2-3 million hectares under natural conversion to forests (mainly in mountain areas)

1950 = 5.5 M hectares  
2000 = 9.7 M hectares



Pink areas = mountain  
Black spots = land under conversion



## Decreasing active management

### Positive impacts:

- increased stock
- Biodiversity
- Soil erosion protection and water cycle regulations

### Negative impacts (mainly in Mediterranean areas):

- fires
- un-controlled grazing
- loss of cultural heritage
- homogeneous landscape (→ problems for tourism)
- loss of employment opportunities

## 2. Development of forest legislation

Till the '70s:

National Agricultural Policies

Nat.For.Policies

Main goal: to protect soil stability and to increase forest stocks and forestland

Forest activities (i.e. wood harvesting) as a component of mountain development

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Gen.Dir. Forests and Mountain Economy

In the '70s the the process towards a federal State started

A final stage: Constitutional Law no. 3 of 2001 to amend Title V of the second part of the Constitution



New article 117: the Regions have:

- **exclusive jurisdiction** over forest matters
- **shared jurisdiction** with the State over environmental matters

## Decentralisation

- A federal administrative structure in the forest sector: the 20 Regions have all the competences in the sector
- ... but still the State maintain a forest police (*Corpo Forestale dello Stato*)
- No much is changed in the instruments and mentality of public forest authorities



# A common frame based on 2 forest laws

- **State Decree 227/2001** for the modernisation of the forestry sector: definition of forest land, general principles for SFM, compensatory investments, ...
  - Forest measures in **Rural Development Programmes** (EC Reg. 1257/1999, 1750/99 and 445/2002)
- = Only very limited interventions outside the RDPs

**Strong budget restrictions**

# RDPs (2000-2006) = 1632 MEuro

16.0% new forests  
41.5% payments for 2080

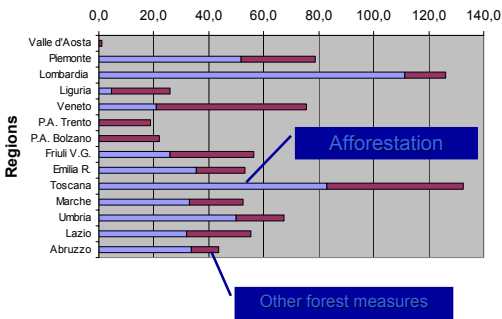
Afforestation: 57.5%  
Other forest measures: 42.5%

A "shadow" forest policy = a CAP-dependent policy with funds mainly used in plain area

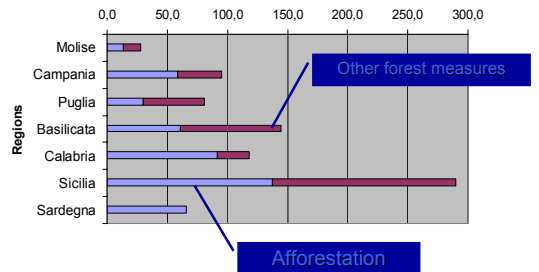
Central and Northern Regions: 20.0% (new forests)  
39.4% (old forest)  
40.6% (other measures)

Southern Regions 12.1% (new forests)  
43.6% (old forests)  
44.2% (other measures)

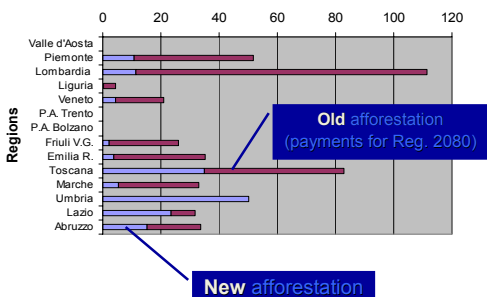
Forest measures 2000-2006 - Objective 2 Regions  
M Euro



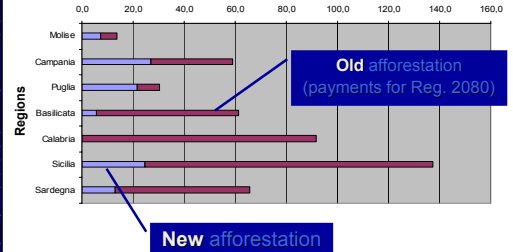
Forest measures 2000-2006 - Objective 1 Regions  
M Euro



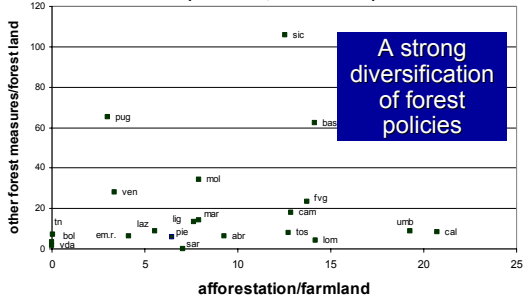
Afforestation 2000-2006 - Objective 2 Regions  
M Euro



Afforestation 2000-2006 - Objective 1 Regions  
M Euro



**Planned public investments/forest land (Euro/ha; 2000-2006)**



### 3. Final remarks: risks and challenges of the new scenario of forest legislation

With the process of decentralisation forest policies are more influenced by external than by internal factors/policies/legislation:

A shift of funding from mountain to the plain area

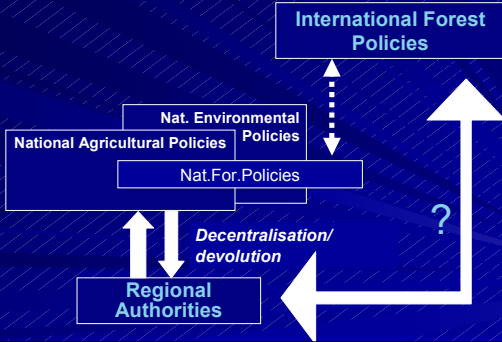
Regional forest public institutions and forest policies are exposed to the risk to be **dominated by other institutions/policies**

Many Regions lack a **forest strategy** (← lack of forest vision)



A very weak link between the local (regional) dimension and the global one

*"We think locally, and act locally"*



Low financial interests of private operators in forest management

Increased involvement of public institutions in direct management of forest resources

Public control, land acquisition, strong bureaucracy, direct management of forest operations, unfair competition, ...

Privatization, outsourcing, internalisation and new forms of income generation, concession of public land, ...

