

Forestry

Slovenian Economic Mirror

IMAD

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	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	growth rates, %	
						2003/ 2002	2003/ 1999
Forest area, thousands hectares	1,116	1,134	1,143	1,150	1,158	0.7	3.8
Growing stock, thousands m ³	237,276	262,795	267,912	276,574	285,735	3.3	20.4
Gross annual increment, thousand m ³	6,248	6,872	6,925	7,102	7,290	2.6	16.7
Annual removal, thousands m ³	2,396	2,609	2,614	2,646	3,007	13.6	25.5
of which: tending	1,535	1,849	1,920	1,885	1,866	-1.0	21.5
regeneration	17	19	19	18	17	-6.8	1.3
sanitation	657	553	205	566	976	72.5	48.5
for infrastructure	31	39	48	45	45	1.0	43.6
deforestation	57	53	52	66	47	-28.2	-17.6
illicit	95	90	68	63	54	-14.8	-43.8
other	4	3	3	4	3	-24.3	-6.9
Removal intensity ¹ , %	38.3	38.0	37.7	37.3	41.2		

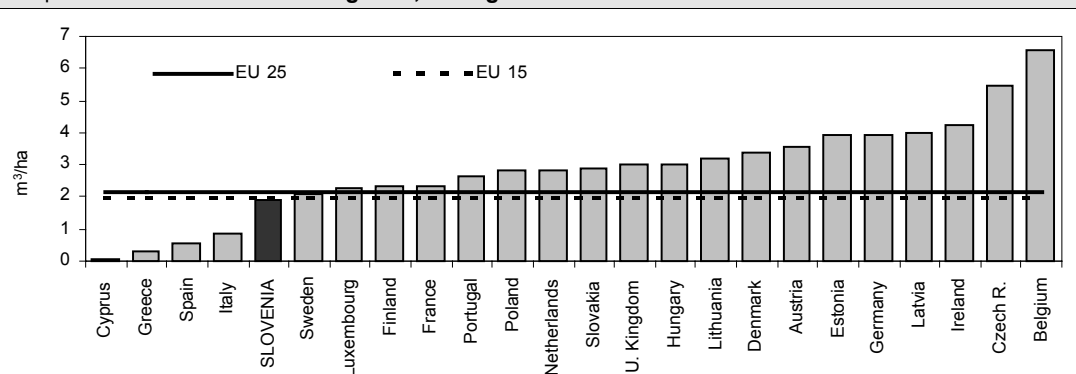
Sources of data: SORS, Slovenian Forest Service (Forest Report for 2003); calculations by the IMAD.

Note: ¹removal intensity is the ratio of annual removal levels to the annual wood increment.

Slovenia's abundant forest stock is increasing from year to year. As the overgrowing of remote areas and areas unsuitable for agricultural production is faster than deforestation in suburban areas, the total **forest cover** increased by 0.7% in 2003 and by 3.8% in the last five years (see table). The gross **wood increment** climbed by 2.6% and total **growing stock** by 3.3%. The structure of growing stock has improved over the last few years: the share of conifers (mainly fir trees) is falling and the share of strong and sturdy non-conifers (mainly oak trees) is increasing. The exploitation of forests fails to follow these favourable trends. While the **tree removal intensity** rose in 2003 from 37.3% and 41.2%, it is still very low. **Tree removal** has increased relatively slowly and continues to lag behind the levels envisaged in the forest management plans. In 2003 over 3 million m³ of wood was removed (61% being conifers and 39% non-conifers), 13.6% more than the year before, but this only achieved 75% of the planned levels (72% in 2002). Removal mainly involved sanitation after summer's high temperatures, drought and significant damages caused by insects attacking weakened trees in such weather conditions. Infrastructure-related removal also increased slightly, while removal for other reasons dropped, including tending, which is very important for the development of forests. Foresters have noticed this problem only in privately-owned forests, especially when tending requires high levels of professional and physical skills or when thinning entails danger.

The **inadequate tree removal levels** are reducing the amount of wood, its quality and the level of income because the wood of old trees is lower quality and in lower price ranges. The main reason is the insufficient profitability of extracting wood because, without substantial government subsidies, the proceeds do not cover the cost of tree-felling and transport. Forest management may be improved by making forestry one of the **priorities of the Single Programming Document (SPD) 2004-2006**, which provides the foundations for implementing long-term development policy and long-term budgeting. The SPD allocates EUR 4.7 million for forestry, two and a half times the amount appropriated in the national budget for tending and protecting forests in 2003. Development policy's objective is to restructure forests in order to increase their ecological stability and commercial value, while enhancing the exploitation of the economic potential of forests. According to the structure of raw wood categories (logs, pulpwood and other industrial wood, and fuelwood) per unit of forest area, Slovenia is below the EU-15 and EU-25 averages (see graph).

Graph: **Production of wood categories, average levels in 1998-2002**



Source of data: Eurostat, Newcronos; calculations by the IMAD. Note: the calculation is based on the forest area seen in the 1998; production in Luxembourg, Belgium and EU 25 refers to 1999-2002; Malta has no forests.