

Capacity Building for the Environment: Forest Policy and Management in Southeastern Europe

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Abstract:

The article analyses the building of environmental governance in two post-socialist countries of Southeastern Europe, Albania and Croatia, with a focus on forest policy reforms. After the end of the socialist era the countries have rapidly adopted new policies and legislation directed at sustainable forest management. The main driver of policy reform is the European and international influence. Yet the developments in the countries cannot be adequately described as a mere adoption of Western-style methods and solutions, as suggested in arguments on the catch-up development of transition states. The capacities needed in post-socialist countries to deal with environmental issues differ from those in industrial societies. On the other hand, there is no essentialistic link between environmental problems and solutions to these problems in post-socialist countries. The outline of the policy reforms in Croatia and Albania reveals very different approaches to sustainable forest management and different paths in the post-socialist transition process. It is argued that capacity development in forestry in transition states needs to be based on country-specific socio-political, economic and cultural features in order to be successful.

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