



## Podcast Script 8: European and Slovenian Legislation on Forest Reproductive Material

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### Eighth episode

Voice: Camilla Stefanelli

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Preparation of requirements for ChatGPT 4 by: Boris Rantaša and Hojka Kraigher

Preparation of drafts: Hojka Kraigher

Postproduction: Camilla Stefanelli, Hojka Kraigher, Donatella Paffetti, Patrizia Rossi, Cristina Vettori

### Introduction

Welcome to the eighth episode of our podcast series, where we delve into the critical legal frameworks that govern the management of our forests. Today, we will be exploring the European and Slovenian legislation on forest reproductive material (FRM). These laws are fundamental in ensuring that the production, trade, and use of seeds and seedlings for forestry are conducted in a way that maintains genetic diversity, promotes sustainable forest management, and supports the resilience of forest ecosystems across Europe and Slovenia.

### The Importance of Regulating Forest Reproductive Material

Forest reproductive material, which includes seeds, seedlings, and other propagative materials, is the foundation of forest regeneration and sustainability. The quality and genetic diversity of FRM are crucial for the health, resilience, and adaptability of forests, particularly in the face of challenges such as climate change, pests, and diseases. To ensure that these materials meet high standards, comprehensive legal frameworks have been established at both the European and national levels.

The regulation of FRM is vital because it ensures that only high-quality, genetically diverse materials are used in forest regeneration. This helps to maintain the genetic integrity of forest species, supports biodiversity, and contributes to the long-term sustainability of forests. Additionally, these regulations help to prevent the spread of invasive species and diseases, which can have devastating effects on forest ecosystems.

### European Legislation on Forest Reproductive Material

At the European level, the main legal framework governing FRM is the Council Directive 1999/105/EC on the marketing of forest reproductive material. This directive sets out the rules for the production, certification, and marketing of FRM within the European Union. It aims to ensure that all FRM placed on the market meets strict quality standards and is properly documented to trace its origin.

The directive requires that FRM be derived from approved seed sources, such as seed stands, seed orchards, or parents of family trees, that have been selected for their desirable genetic traits. These sources must be registered and approved by the competent authorities in each member state.



Additionally, the directive mandates that FRM be classified into four categories based on the level of genetic selection: source-identified, selected, qualified, and tested.

The "source-identified" category refers to FRM collected from a known seed source, but with no specific selection for genetic traits. "Selected" FRM comes from seed sources that have been evaluated and selected for their superior qualities at the population level. "Qualified" FRM is produced from seed orchards or parents of families that have been specifically chosen for breeding purposes. Finally, "tested" FRM has been subjected to trials to confirm its genetic superiority in terms of growth, quality, or adaptability.

To ensure transparency and traceability, the directive requires that all FRM be accompanied by a master certificate, which provides detailed information about the origin, genetic quality, and handling of the material. This certificate is crucial for forest managers and other stakeholders, as it allows them to make informed decisions about which FRM to use in their reforestation projects.

### **Slovenian Legislation on Forest Reproductive Material**

Slovenia, as an EU member state, has aligned its national legislation with the requirements of the Council Directive 1999/105/EC. The primary legal framework governing FRM in Slovenia is the "Zakon o gozdnem reprodukcijskem materialu" (Forest Reproductive Material Act), which was adopted in 2002. This act sets out the rules for the production, certification, and marketing of FRM in Slovenia, in line with EU directives.

In Slovenia, the process of approving forest seed objects involves close collaboration between the Slovenia Forest Service and the Slovenian Forestry Institute. The process begins with the Slovenia Forest Service approaching the land (stand) owners, as the approval process can only start upon the receipt of an application from the forest owner. Once the forest owner files the application, the Slovenia Forest Service proposes the seed objects for approval.

The Slovenian Forestry Institute then takes over, conducting field inspections with support from the Slovenia Forest Service and their databases. If the seed stand meets the necessary criteria, the Slovenian Forestry Institute approves the seed stand, designates it with a unique identification number, and includes it in the Register (including the National List) of forest seed objects. A Decree on approval is then sent to the forest parcel owner, formalising the approval and allowing the seed stand to be used for the production of FRM.

The Slovenian Forestry Institute is also the competent authority responsible for the certification of FRM in Slovenia, ensuring that all FRM meets the necessary quality standards and is properly documented before it is placed on the market. This certification process includes the inspection of seed sources, the testing of genetic quality, and the issuance of master certificates for all FRM that is marketed.

The Slovenia Forest Service plays an important role throughout this process, including making annual checks of approved stands and providing FRM from nurseries to end users. This collaborative



approach ensures that both the approval and certification processes are thorough and effective, contributing to the overall quality and genetic diversity of the FRM produced in Slovenia.

### **Implementation and Enforcement**

The effective implementation and enforcement of legislation on FRM are essential for ensuring that these legal frameworks achieve their intended goals. In both the European Union and Slovenia, the enforcement of FRM regulations is carried out by national forestry authorities, which conduct regular inspections, audits, and monitoring activities to ensure compliance with the law.

In Slovenia, the Slovenian Forestry Institute plays a key role in enforcing the FRM legislation through its certification and approval responsibilities. Meanwhile, the Slovenia Forest Service oversees the practical aspects of FRM production, from proposing and checking seed stands to distributing FRM to end users. Together, these organisations ensure that the legislation is not only enforced but also integrated into the daily practices of forest management and reforestation.

Enforcement efforts are also supported by public awareness campaigns and educational programmes, which aim to inform forest managers and other stakeholders about the importance of using high-quality, certified FRM. These initiatives help to ensure that the legislation is not only followed but also understood and valued by those involved in forest management.

### **Challenges and Future Directions**

While the legal frameworks governing FRM in Europe and Slovenia are robust, there are ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. One of the key challenges is the impact of climate change, which is altering the growing conditions for forests and may affect the suitability of certain FRM for future reforestation efforts. This has led to increased interest in the development of climate-resilient FRM, which can better withstand the changing environmental conditions.

Another challenge is the need to enhance the genetic diversity of FRM to ensure the long-term resilience of forests. This requires continued efforts to conserve forest genetic resources and to integrate these considerations into the production and certification of FRM. Additionally, there is a growing need for cross-border cooperation in the management of FRM, particularly in the context of EU legislation, to ensure that forest ecosystems are protected across the entire region.

Looking ahead, the European Union and Slovenia are likely to continue refining their legislation on FRM to address these challenges. This may involve updates to the existing legal frameworks, increased investment in research and development, and the promotion of innovative approaches to forest management that take into account the evolving needs of our forests.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the legislation governing forest reproductive material in Europe and Slovenia is essential for ensuring the quality, genetic diversity, and sustainability of our forests. These legal frameworks play a critical role in supporting forest regeneration, protecting biodiversity, and



promoting sustainable forest management. As we face the challenges of climate change and other environmental pressures, the continued development and enforcement of these laws will be crucial for the future of our forests.

Thank you for joining us in this eighth episode. We hope you've gained a deeper understanding of the importance of legislation in managing forest reproductive material and ensuring the long-term health of our forests. In our next ninth episode, we will illustrate the forest seed facilities—a critical component in the production of high-quality forest reproductive material (FRM). Forest seed facilities are essential for maintaining the genetic diversity, health, and resilience of forests.