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**Non-native Tree Species for European Forests -
Experiences, Risks and Opportunities (FP1403)**

Non-native tree species in Croatia and Serbia - Strategic approach

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Non-native tree species have a long history in South-Eastern countries. In the beginning, the most NNTS in Croatia and Serbia have been introduced in parks and gardens to raise decorative value, but in the 17th and 18th century the need for settling huge demands for wood products emerged both in Croatia and Serbia. With the aim of finding an adequate species and its provenance, different provenance and comparative trials of NNTS were established in last 50 years in both countries. The management of Croatian and Serbian forests should be performed according to the principles of sustainable management but climatic disturbances and pest damages raised two questions recently: (i) can native species adapt quickly enough and (ii) to what extent they can adapt to new conditions? Introduction of NNTS is proposed in cases of significant tree mortality of native tree species (limited conditions due to CC), when they can serve as alternatives and could play a significant role in adaptation measures. Therefore, in the context of changing climate and raising social demands upon forest and forestry sector, it is necessary to analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, which non-native tree species in both neighboring countries. Comparative SWOT and AHP analysis of such criteria provided insight into similarities and differences of non-native tree species in both countries. Analysis pointed to the need for changing public perception and to disseminate the knowledge on NNTSs, to decision makers, harmonisation of production of NNTSs seedlings, and change of legislation underline basic problems for the active use of NNTS. Integrated and site-specific management is a strategy, which seems to be an appropriate approach for guidelines for the introduction and management of NNTS in South-East countries. Tolerated and actively used in selected areas, but strictly eradicated in others (e.g. valuable sites) is considered to be the best option.