

# Forest restitution in Eastern European countries

---

ING. ZUZANA SARVAŠOVÁ, PHD.

NATIONAL FOREST CENTRE, ZVOLEN

JUDR. MGR. ZUZANA DOBŠINSKÁ, PHD.

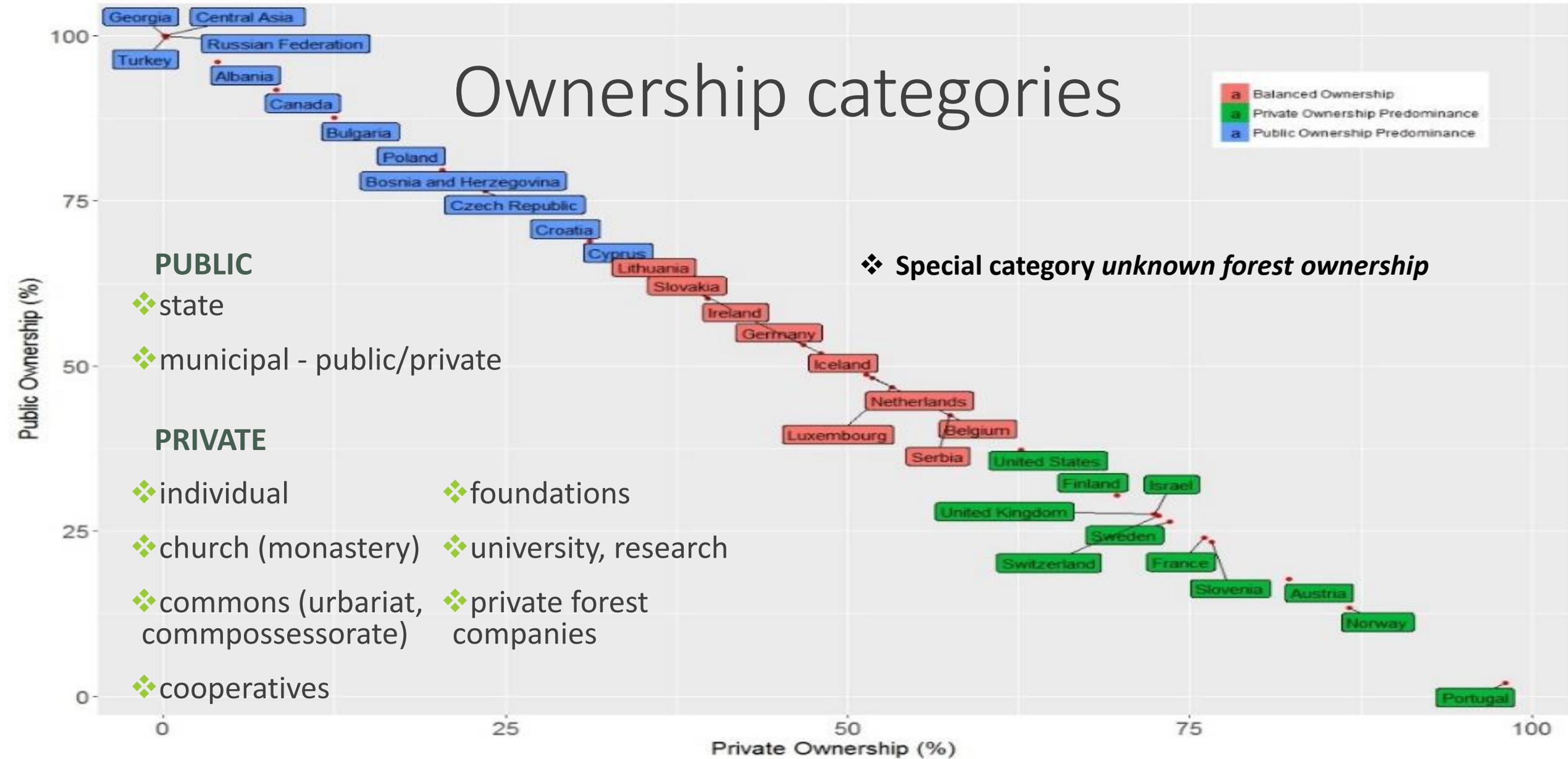
FACULTY OF FORESTRY, TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ZVOLEN

# Data set

---

- ❖ COST action FP1201 FACESMAP
- ❖ APVV Project VYNALES
- ❖ UNECE/FAO Forest ownership study in UNECE region
- ❖ literature review

# Ownership categories

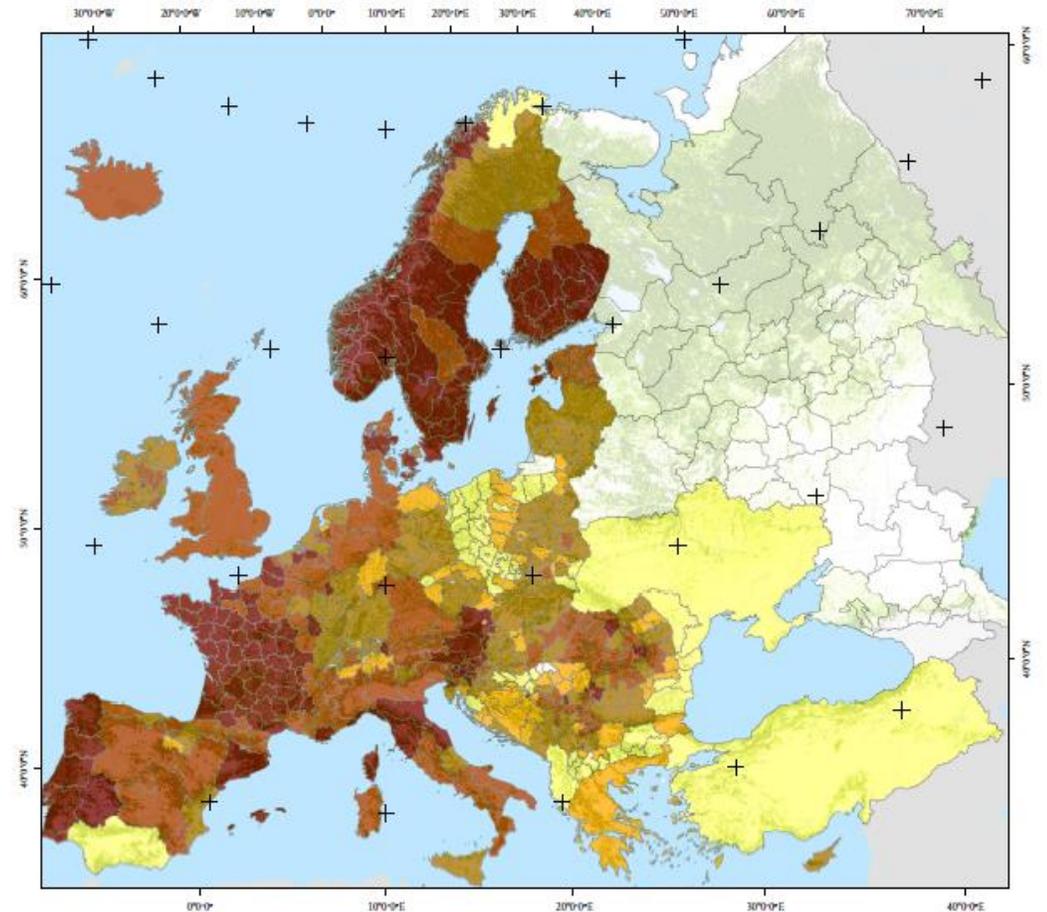


# Who owns European forests?

- ❖ *state X non-state property*
- ❖ *public X private forests*

## **New types of private forest ownership :**

- ❖ common/communal/collective
- ❖ third sector (foundations, NGOs)
- ❖ investment funds



*Private ownership in Europe (EFI, 2013)*

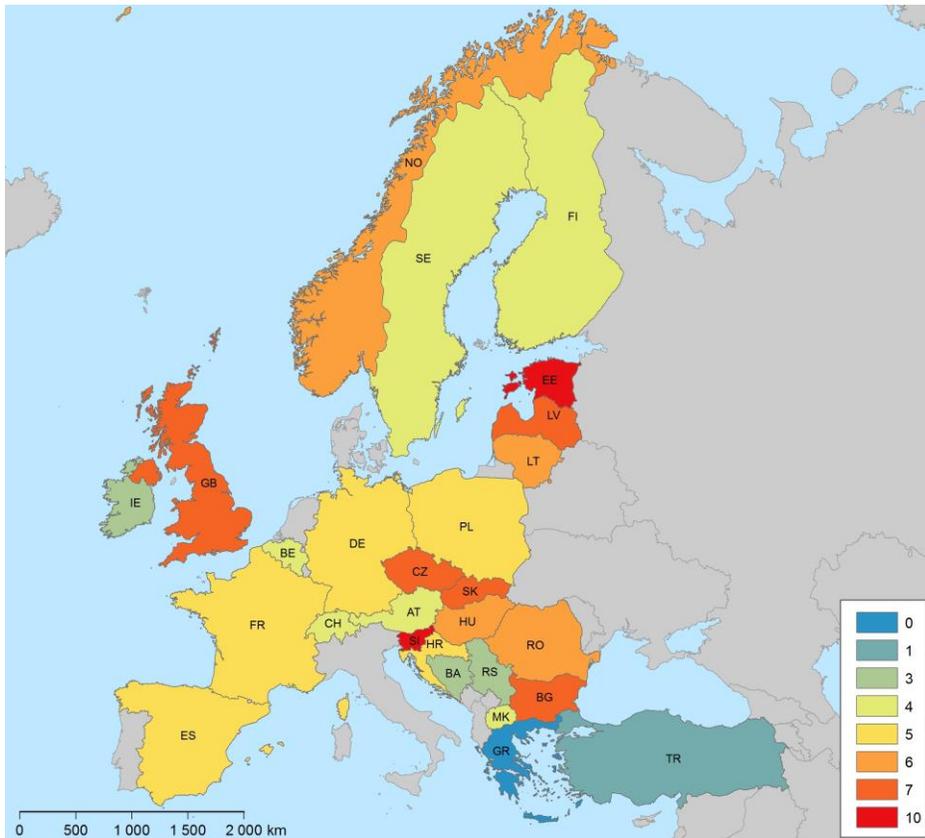
# Changes in forest ownership in last 100 years

---



- ❖ before communist regime private forest ownership existed (land reform 1920)
- ❖ private forest ownership was abolished by the communist regime (collectivization 1948)
- ❖ after the fall of communist regime the transformation process started included property return to former owners (velvet revolution 1989)
- ❖ restitution begun in early 1990 and is still not finished in many countries
- ❖ new ownership categories were created
- ❖ large number of small forest holdings which cause management problems

# Importance of ownership structure change since 1990



COST action Facesmap 2015

The most dynamic change in last 25 years – Estonia, Slovenia

## Factors:

- Restitution
- Selling forest land
- Change of lifestyle
- Afforestation

## Impacts:

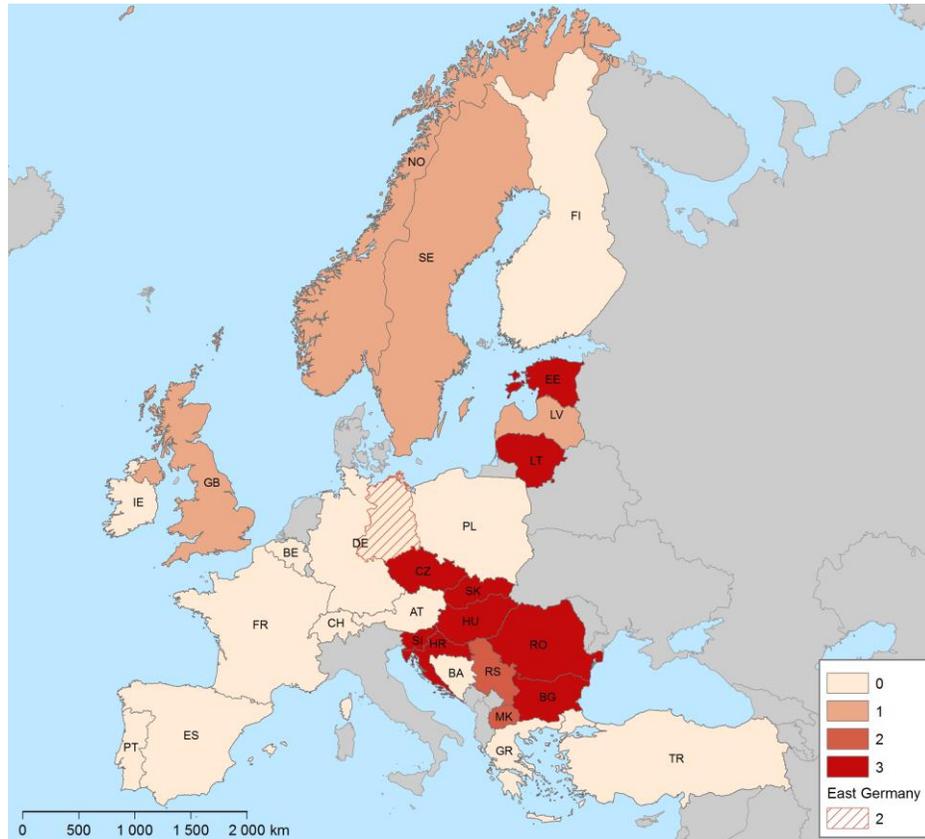
- Society development
- Political instruments
- Demography
- Forest management goals and forms

# Definitions

---

- ❖ **Privatization** is the incidence or process of transferring ownership of a business, enterprise, agency or public service from the public sector to the private sector
  - ❖ Sale of state property
  - ❖ Mass or voucher privatization
  - ❖ From below – start-ups
  - ❖ Restitution (land)
- ❖ **Restitution** of forests acknowledges the continuity of private ownership rights on forestland in rendering them to the former owners or their heirs and/or to local communities and institutions

# Privatization and Restitution



COST action Facesmap 2015

## Privatization – in Western Europe

Effects:

- ❖ Small detached parcels are privatized
- ❖ Local communities have priority
- ❖ Increase rural employment

## Restitution – significant in **region Central and Eastern Europe**

Exception Poland

Implications:

- ❖ Small and fragmented forest parcels
- ❖ Unwillingness to associate
- ❖ Parcels with unclear ownership
- ❖ Illegal logging

# Approaches to restitution

---

## Forms:

- ❖ Property transfer to former owners (claims)
- ❖ Substitute property
- ❖ Monetary compensations
- ❖ Vouchers/coupons
- ❖ Auctions

## Limits:

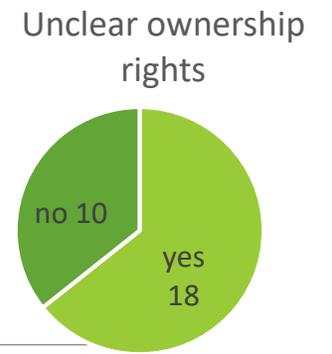
- ❖ Historical property boundaries
- ❖ Area non/restrictions
- ❖ Ownership categories
- ❖ Citizenships
- ❖ Legal documents

# Focus on CZ and SK

---

- ❖ The legal basis for the restitution process were the changes adopted after 1989
- ❖ Same legislation Federal Act No. 229/1991 Coll., on the regulation of ownership relations to land and other agricultural property
- ❖ Restoration of confiscated property to the condition prior to 1948
- ❖ State property remained rather high
- ❖ Only citizens were eligible
- ❖ Differences
  - ❖ Commons in SK, forest municipal cooperatives in CZ
  - ❖ Church property

# Focus on CZ and SK



COST action Facesmap 2015

Owner (%)	1947		1990		2015	
	CZ	SK	CZ	SK	CZ	SK
State	60,1	32	95,8	92	58,7	39,8
Private	12,2	23	-	-	22,3	10,3
Municipalities	17,4	12	-	-	17,0	8,4
Co-operatives	3,2	2	4,2	8	1,2	0,3
Churches	7,1	5	-	-	0,9	2,6
Commons	-	26	-	-	0	20,1
Unknown	-	-	-	-	0	18,5

Jarsky et al. 2018

# Conclusions and future challenges

---

- ❖ Restitution of forest land ownership has been a major undertaking influencing the forestry sector in EEC
- ❖ Small and fragmented private properties are a common result
- ❖ Private family-based forest ownership has increased
- ❖ Lack of the knowledge, skills and capacity for efficient and sustainable forest management
- ❖ Forest policy lacks the strength to provide FO with sufficient extension services and financial incentives
- ❖ Unwillingness to associate in FOAs

Thank you for  
your attention

[zuzana.sarvasova@nlcsk.org](mailto:zuzana.sarvasova@nlcsk.org)

[zuzana.dobsinska@tuzvo.sk](mailto:zuzana.dobsinska@tuzvo.sk)

