

In Catalonia one finds an unusual combination of a high degree of urban and infrastructural development, a high level of touristic use, and the persistence of a rich and diverse mosaic of ecosystems that is nonetheless quite fragile and vulnerable. Despite this very exceptional situation, however, Catalonia has not endowed itself with the necessary institutional and financial resources to apply an effective policy and to carry out an efficient management of its natural heritage and its biodiversity. The budgetary restrictions in recent years, the changes that have occurred of late in the social use of natural spaces, and the precarious situation in which the agroforestry sector is found entail new challenges which make it ineluctable to implement a comprehensive reappraisal of the management model and the policies for protection of the natural heritage in order to enhance their effectiveness.