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Forest Fire Net

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for Forest Fires (ECFF)



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Editor's Page

The Associate European Center for Forest Fires has its inaugurating meeting this month, in the shadow of the catastrophic forest fires of this summer in Europe.

The release of the first volume of the Forest Fires Net (FFNet), a publication of the European Center for Forest Fires (ECFF), comes together with the inaugurating meeting of the ECFF. It is released soon after the catastrophic forest fires in Europe and especially in Portugal, Spain and France. Thousands of acres of forests have been vanished and the human ecological, social and economic toll is high. The readers of this publication would certainly like to read more about these disasters. These forest fires will certainly not escape the agenda of the inaugurating meeting of the administrative and scientific committee of the ECFF which will take place on the thirteenth of October in Athens. A workshop on "European planning and policies for forest fires" will be also organized by ECFF on the fourteenth of October. About the result of this workshop in the next FFNet issue. In this volume, one can also read about the ECFF, its objectives and planned activities as well as some science and technology abstracts from an interesting workshop regarding forest fires.

Associate European Center for Forest Fires (ECFF)

A brief history

The Associate European Center for Forest Fires (ECFF) was decided on the occasion of the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the Eur-OPA (an European Council initiative for coping with physical catastrophes), held in Athens, Greece, in February 2000. The conclusions of the meeting, concerning an initiative for a European Center on Forest Fires were summarized as follows:

The ministers,

- Were convinced of the destructive effects of forest fires in the majority of member states of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement and in particular in the Mediterranean basin;
- Having taken into account the initiatives already undertaken in the EuroMediterranean region to strengthen cooperation between countries and professionals in preventing and fighting forest fires;

supported the proposal of Greece to establish a European Center at the general Secretariat for Civil Protection in Athens for coordination in the area of preventing and combating forest fires, to be a focal point of a network bringing together the main participants in the area, on both national and European level.

Using the new communication and information technologies, this focal point will collect useful data in order to facilitate cooperation in the area of preventing and combating fires.

ECFF

European Center for Forest Fires

Later, on the occasion of a Meeting held at the General Secretariat for Civil Protection, Ministry of Interior Greece on March 8th, 2002, the participants proposed the creation, in Athens of a European structure center on Forest Fires.

This structure will have the coordination function of a network of national structures officially in charge of management of forest fires, ensuring,

- Continuity in the partnership and programs,
- Strengthening the cooperation between EU and the other countries of Europe and the Mediterranean basin,
- Working on a decentralized way using new technologies of information and communication
- Facilitating the setting up and use of specialized databases concerning forest fire purposes
- Proposing training programs on forest fires issues organized:
 - Using existing national facilities
 - Using distance education systems
 - Playing a role of "mediation" in cooperation with JRC in the system of help for decision making for risk management (A.G.L.R.) in the framework of EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement

The final decision was taken in Paris, 4 June 2002 (AP/CAT(2002)27) in the meeting of the committee of the permanent correspondents which stated:

“On the basis of the conclusions of the Seminar held in Athens on 8 March 2002, the Committee agreed to the granting of associate European center status to the proposal to set up the European Center on Forest Fires in Athens and that, within two years at most, a report on the activities and operation of the center be presented to the Committee with a view to definitive status as European center of the Agreement.”

Objectives

The Center will focus on the chemical and civil protection issues of civilians and fire fighters. These issues will cover important problems, which are related to the chemical analysis of smoke and its effects to civilians, personal protective equipment for fire fighters and chemical field analysis with mobile instruments as a tool for early detection of a hazardous atmosphere.

In addition, it will process research projects and case studies for transferring knowledge and know-how from research groups to organizations.

Finally, the center will evaluate new technologies, means and methods for application in all phases of forest fire fighting (early detection, prediction, suppression, restoration).

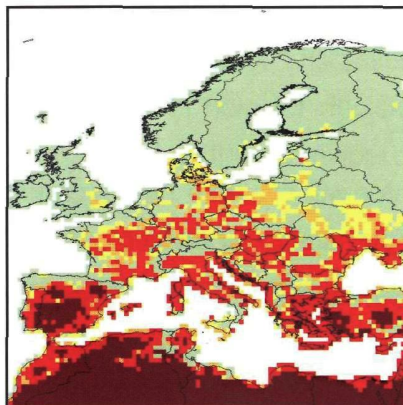
Systems such as GIS, satellite imaging, teleconferences and fast networks are among those that can be evaluated for further use.

Fire Danger Prediction Map

Forest Fire Risk Forecasting System

Forest fires is one of the most important dangers faced by citizens of the EU countries, especially those of the Mediterranean region. All affected nations try to improve their capability on firefighting.

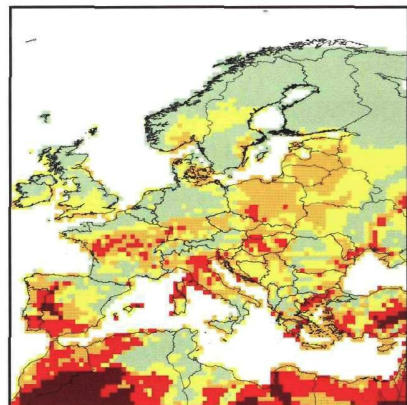
The use of a Fire Danger Prediction Map that specifies the probability of a fire occurring over time and space is necessary for any well organized fire prevention and suppression organization.



European Forest Fire Risk Forecasting System
Index: Portugal
Date: 2003-09-28 (Forecast +3)

Levels of Risk
Very Low
Low
Moderate
High
Very High

Meteorological Data from MétéoFrance
Administrative Boundaries from EUROSTAT - GISCO
Application by JRC - INFREST Action



European Forest Fire Risk Forecasting System
Index: Terna (probabilità)
Date: 2003-09-28 (Forecast +3)

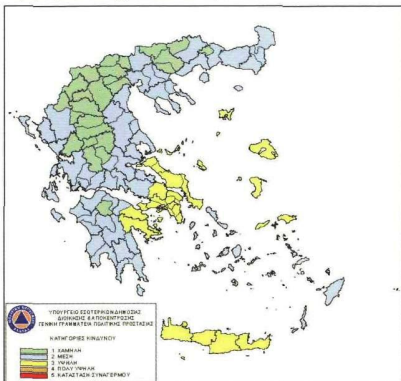
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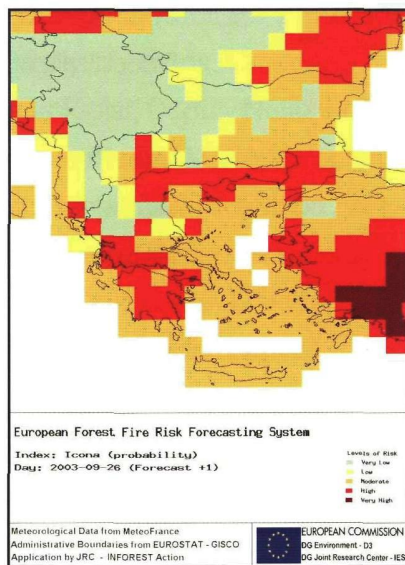
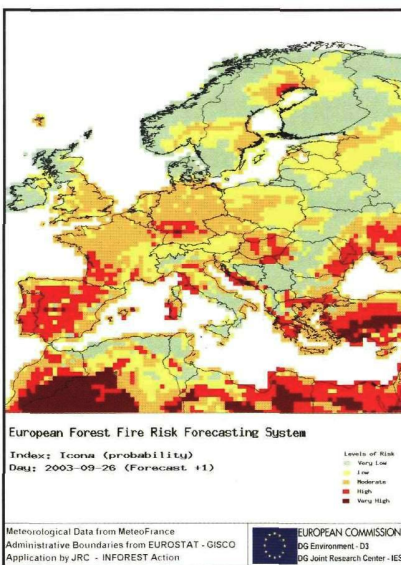
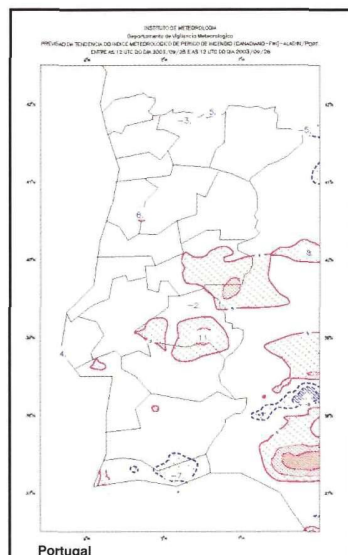
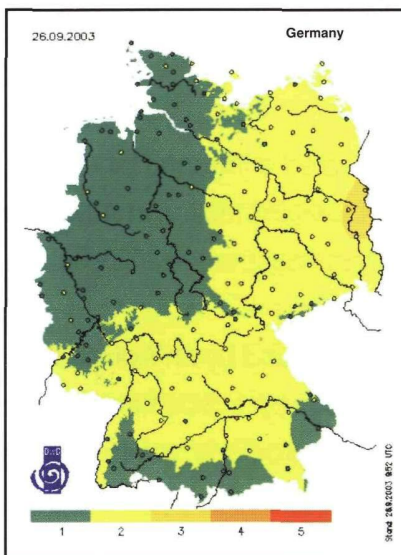
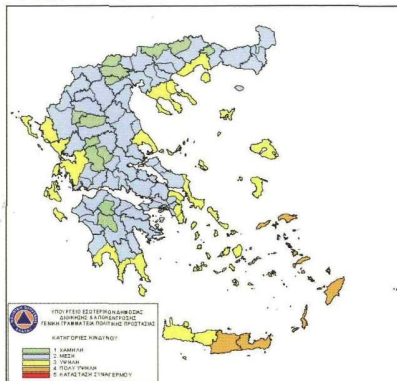
ΧΑΡΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΒΛΕΨΗΣ ΚΙΝΔΥΝΟΥ ΠΥΡΚΑΓΙΑΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ 26/09/2003

Ημερομηνία έκδοσης : 25/09/2003 Ώρα : 11:45



ΧΑΡΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΒΛΕΨΗΣ ΚΙΝΔΥΝΟΥ ΠΥΡΚΑΓΙΑΣ ΓΙΑ ΤΗΝ 17/07/2003

Ημερομηνία έκδοσης : 16/07/2003 Ώρα : 12:30



People

ECFF operates within the framework of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement of Council of Europe, ratified by the Greek Law 2031/92. The Center is Associated to the Network of European Centers of the Agreement with a view to definitive status as European Center of the Agreement within a period of two years commenced on July 2002.

ECFF is accommodated and run at the headquarters of the General Secretariat for Civil Protection in Athens, which provides the Center with secretarial support.

The Center is administrated by an Administration Committee and supported scientifically by a Scientific Committee. Both the Administration and Scientific Committees are appointed by the Government of the Hellenic Republic on the basis of proposals put forward by the Council of Europe. The present Committees were appointed by the Minister of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization (Ministerial Decision 1324/9-4-2003).

The President of the Administration Committee is Dr M. Statheropoulos, Chemical Engineer, Associate Professor in the National Technical University of Athens.

The members of the Administration Committee are:

- Dr Galanopoulos, D., Physicist-Geophysicist, National Permanent Correspondent of Greece to the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, General Secretariat for Civil Protection / Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization
- Brigadier Honianakis, A., Direction of Forest Fires, Fire Brigade, Greece
- Mr Kuvshinov, V., First Deputy Director, EMERCOM of Russia, Russian Federation
- Dr Massue, J.P., Nuclear Physicist, Executive Secretary of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, Council of Europe
- M. Michaut, P., Charge de mission a la Direction de la Difense et de la Securiti Civiles, Ministere de l'Intirieur, de la Securiti Intirieur et des Libertis Locales, France
- Mr Vardakis, G. Forester, Ministry of Agriculture, Greece

The members of the Scientific Committee are:

- Dr Arianoutsou-Faragitaki, M., Biologist, Associate Professor, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
- Dr Alexandris, D., Physicist-Meteorologist, Deputy National Permanent Correspondent of Greece to the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, General Secretariat for Civil Protection / Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization
- Dr Balatsos, P., Forester, Ministry of Agriculture, Greece
- Colonel Bodino, P., Etat-major de zone sud, CIRCOSC de Valabre, France
- Mr Chrysiliou, C., Forest Fires Specialist, Civil Defense, Cyprus
- Dr Dimitrakopoulos, A., Forester, Assistant Professor, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Greece

People

members

- Fire Lieutenant Labris, C., Forester, Direction of Forest Fires Fighting, Fire Brigade, Greece
- Dr Gitas, I., Forester, Remote Sensing and Space Applications, Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania, Greece*
- Dr Kalabokidis, C., Forester, Assistant Professor, University of the Aegean, Greece
- Mr Lahore, J.P., Director of International Relations, Permanent Correspondent of Spain to the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, Civil protection, Spain
- Dr Lourenco, L.F., Natural hazards and forest fires expert, Associate Professor, University of Coimbra, Portugal
- Dr San Miguel-Ayanz, J., Forester, Remote Sensing and Space Applications, Institute for Environment and Sustainability, DG JRC, European Commission
- Dr Statheropoulos, M., Chemical Engineer, Associate Professor, National Technical University of Athens
- Mr Stoimenov, A., Head of Department Training of Management Bodies, Forces and Public, State Agency for Civil Protection, Bulgaria
- Mr Theodorou, F., Forester, General Secretariat for Civil Protection / Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization
- Mr Veselov, I., Deputy Head of the Department for Emergencies Prevention and Liquidation, EMERCOM of Russia, Russian Federation
- Dr Xanthopoulos, G., Forester, Researcher, National Agricultural Research Foundation, Greece

E CFF: Inaugurating Meetings of the Administrative and Scientific Committees & Workshop on "European Planning and Policy for Forest Fires"

Athens, 13 & 14 of October 2003
PROGRAM

Monday 13/10/2003

- 9 - 9³⁰: Registration
- 9³⁰ - 10: Opening Address by
- The Minister of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization
 - The Executive Secretary of the EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement
 - The General Secretary for Civil Protection
- 10 - 10³⁰: Coffee Break
- 10³⁰ - 13³⁰: Meeting of the Administrative Committee

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Activities and priorities of the center (information, training, mediation, consultation, reviewing)
3. Data banks (Specialists, Equipment, Technologies, Procedures etc.)
4. Web page of ECFF. Links with other services and centers.
5. Preparation of an exercise with MIC (Monitoring Information Center of EC)
6. Financial support of Technical Reports prepared by ECFF.
7. Draft Budget
8. Other Business

News

program

13³⁰ - 15³⁰: Lunch Break

15³⁰ - 16³⁰: Meeting of the Scientific Committee

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda
2. Health effects of forest fires on operational crew and population (Potential studies and financial support)
3. Evaluation of new technologies, means and methods in all phases of forest fires: early detection, prediction, suppression, restoration (Potential financial support)
4. Training courses and seminars (Possible projects)
5. Other business

16³⁰ - 17: Coffee Break

17 - 18³⁰: Meeting of the Scientific Committee (continued)

20³⁰: Official Dinner

Tuesday 14/10/2003

Workshop on "European Planning and Policies for Forest Fires" organized by the Associated European Center for Forest Fires

9 - 10³⁰: Issues from the recent forest fires in south Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Greece etc)

10³⁰ - 11: Coffee Break

11 - 12³⁰: Issues from the recent forest fires in south Europe (Portugal, Spain, France, Greece etc) (continued)

12³⁰: Closing session

Science & Technology abstracts

An International Workshop for Improving Dispatching for Forest Fire Control (IDFFC) was organized in Chania, Crete, Greece, Dec. 2001. Ernst U. Schulte, European Commission, Directorate General Environment, Unit 'Civil Protection and environmental accidents' <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/civil/>, presented the work **Forest fires and the Civil Protection and Environmental Accidents Unit of the European Commission**, e-mail: ernst.schulte@cec.eu.int

Philippe Michaut, Ministere de l'Interieur, Direction de la defense et de la securite civiles, e-mail : philippe.michaut@interieur.gouv.fr presented the work "Le dispositif de lutte contre les feux de forets en France".

Also Dionysios Vorisis, Greek Firecorps presented the work "The role of the coordination centers in forest firefighting. The Greek reality" and D. Caballero, D.X. Viegas, G. Xanthopoulos presented the work "E-FIS: An Electronic On-line Decision Support System for Forest Fires". In the same workshop specialists lectured on important specialized issues of forest fires.

Comments

Health effects of forest fires

By M. Statheropoulos, Assoc. Professor, School of Chemical Engineering, National Technical University of Athens, Greece.

The gases, as well as, volatile organic compounds which are evolved during a forest fire are, usually, quantitatively significant and characterized by their diversity. Compounds such formaldehyde, acetaldehyde, benzene, toluene, phenol, naphthalene, ethyl benzene, xylene and nitrogen dioxide have been detected, as reported in literature, in distances as much as 3,5 km from the flame front. Numerous other compounds have also been reported in laboratory studies of forest fuel combustion and pyrolysis. For all those compounds various organisations such as OSHA have established short term exposure limits, time waited average limits for 8 hours and various other threshold limits which are quite important for health issues of operational people and civilians. It appears that the close examination of the type and quantity of those emissions during severe forest fires should attract the research interest of various multidisciplinary scientific groups.



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