



MEETING OF THE
EXPERT GROUP ON FOREST FIRES
European Commission

WORKSHOP OF THE
WORKING GROUP ON FOREST FIRES
Silva Mediterranea

Leon, Spain - 19-23 November 2018

SUBDIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE
POLÍTICA FORESTAL

ÁREA DE DEFENSA CONTRA
INCENDIOS FORESTALES

SECRETARÍA GENERAL
DE AGRICULTURA Y ALIMENTACIÓN

DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE
DESARROLLO RURAL INNOVACIÓN Y
POLÍTICA FORESTAL

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I. BACKGROUND

The Spanish Forest Fire Service (ADCIF) of the General Sub-Directorate of Forest Policy (SGPF) of the Ministry of Agriculture Fishery and Food (MAPA) leads at international level the Working Group I (WGI) of the Committee on Mediterranean Forestry Questions-Silva Mediterranea of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

This working group also serves as the Regional Mediterranean Wildland Fire Network of the Global Wildland Fire Network of the UNISDR (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction), led by ADCIF.

Spain, through the joint coordination of the WGI with FAO, has promoted and led the international strategy at Mediterranean level during several national, regional and international forum, by developing different actions based on the agreed objectives of the WGI Plan of Action (2017 - 2020).

In the same line, the ADCIF is a member of the International Liaison Committee (ILC) of the Wildfire Conferences that hosted the 4th International Wildland Fire Conference in Seville, Spain in 2007. In this context, Spain proposes and discusses at global level those areas of interest and guidelines that have been identified and recommended at Mediterranean level. At this conferences, the Regional Networks have a relevant role in highlighting proposals of action for the future challenges in each of the regions.

For the European Union, forest fires are one of the main risks our forest lands and biodiversity face, in particular, but not only, in Mediterranean basin countries. In recent years, forest fires have also been considered as one of the main emergency situations in the context of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), based on the threats and consequences on human lives and infrastructures. Among the different initiatives launched by the European Commission (EC), the Expert Group on Forest Fires (EGFF) of the General Directorate of Environment and the Joint Research Centre, is a well-established group that supports the EC on this subject. The EGFF meets periodically to address relevant forest fire issues.

In attempt to promote the exchange of knowledge and expertise at a joint approach, Spain will host two complementary meetings in November 2018: the meeting of the EGFF of the European Commission and the workshop of the WGI of Silva Mediterranea will take place between 19-23 November in Leon, Spain. With these meetings, the Mediterranean and Europe will take steps forward in coping with present and future challenges related to forest fires.

2. OBJECTIVES

Taking into consideration that both meetings share several aspects, regarding the geographical scope and participants, general common objectives have been established as well as specific objectives for each meeting.

General objectives

- Promote international collaboration on forest fires at different levels.
- Reinforce the exchange of knowledge and experience on forest fires at different levels.
- Explore new approaches to address forest fires related issues, ensuring the efficient use of resources invested in prevention and suppression.
- Reinforce the international position of both the working group on forest fires of Silva Mediterranea and the expert group on forest fires of the European Commission.

Specific objectives

1. Expert group on forest fires (European Commission)

- Involve member states in the search of solutions for the current and future problems related to forest fires at European level.
- Analyze the approach of preventive measures from the European perspective. Share best practices.
- Make progress on the development of a technical document on forest fire prevention recommendations to present to the European Commission and the member states.

2. Working group I on forest fires (Silva Mediterranea)

- Develop the position of the Mediterranean region for the 7th Wildfire Conference (Brazil, 2019).
- Establish synergies with the European approach on forest fires.
- Promote actions in the framework of the Plan of Action (2017-2020) with measurable and concrete objectives.

WGI OF SILVA MEDITERRANEA WORKSHOP

THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS AFFECTS ONLY MEMBERS OF THE WGI OF SILVA MEDITERRANEA

3.1. Contents

The main objective of this workshop is to agree on the position paper on forest fires in the Mediterranean region to be presented at the next Wildfire Conference, to be held in Brazil in 2019, and to serve as a reference document at national, regional and international level.

To develop a proposal for the position paper, an analysis of the general conclusions and the position of the Mediterranean region in the three previous Wildfire Conferences (Seville 2007, South Africa 2011 and South Korea 2015) and the Plan of Action of the WGI have been made. Other technical documents have been also taken into consideration for this proposal, such as the Voluntary Guidelines on Forest Fire Management (FAO 2007) and the Position Paper on Wildfire Prevention in the Mediterranean (FAO 2011), among others.

After this analysis, five general thematic areas have been identified of interest in the documents analyzed in the last years:

1. International cooperation	2. Prevention and preparedness	3. Knowledge and Research	4. Finance	5. Information systems
Technical exchange programs	Dissemination and use of Voluntary Guidelines on Fire Management	Dissemination	Not forest fire related sources: REDD+, development cooperation	Availability of data
Bilateral agreements	Consolidated legal framework	Effects on human health	Costs study	Support through remote systems
Extension to other Mediterranean related regions in the world	Incident command system (ICS)	Mediterranean research	Investments in prevention vs suppression	Synergies with other programs related to natural resources
East-West cooperation in the Mediterranean	Education and awareness	Common Terminology		
Armed conflicts	Use of fire			
	Wildland Urban Interface			

The proposal for the Mediterranean position on forest fires will be sent shortly.

The WG I Plan of action (2017-2020) can be found in Annex I.

3.2. Workshop dynamic

The work dynamic related to the WG I of Silva Mediterranea workshop will be based in two main aspects: the previous work and the dynamic working sessions during the workshop.

The draft proposal on the position of the Mediterranean Region on forest fires will be shared in advance of the workshop between the 22 and 23 of November. A deadline will be set for WG I of Silva Mediterranea members to reply with comments. Comments and proposals will be gathered and a new version will be circulated highlighting the main sections of discussion.

During the workshop:

- A first plenary session will take place, to introduce the document and the work dynamic.
- Work sessions will take place, where the group will be divided with specific tasks to address in relation to the position document.
- A final session will take place, to present the workshop conclusions and the final version of the position document. Next steps to be taken will be also presented.

3.3. Work program

With the aim of address the established objectives, the following steps and dates have been identified for the WG I of Silva Mediterranea workshop:

Previous to the workshop

Week 01-05 October

- Announcement of the event to WG I of Silva Mediterranea members.
- Inform on the objectives and work methodology.
- SAVE THE DATE.

Week 08- 12 October

- Send draft proposal on the Position of the Mediterranean region on forest fires to WG I of Silva Mediterranea members.
- Send registration template, logistic information and cultural information to WG I of Silva Mediterranea members.
- Set deadline to confirm attendance and send comments on the document: 26th October.

Week 29 Octubre - 2 November

- Send new proposal on the Position of the Mediterranean region on forest fires considering all previous comments to WGI of Silva Mediterranea members.



3. AGENDA

Expert Group on Forest Fires (European Commission) - WG1 of Silva Mediterranea					
19 - 23 NOVEMBER 2018 Leon, Spain					
	MONDAY 19	TUESDAY 20	WEDNESDAY 21	THURSDAY 22	FRIDAY 23
	Arrival of participants	Expert group on forest fires (DG ENV -EC)	Joint field trip (European Commission + WG1 of Silva Mediterranea workshop)	WG1 of Silva Mediterranea workshop	WG1 of Silva Mediterranea workshop
8:30			Participants pick-up		
9:00 - 11:00		Working session	Field visit	Working session	Workshop conclusions
11:00 - 11:30		Coffee break		Coffee break	Coffee break
11:30 - 13:30		Working session	Lunch	Working session	Departure of participants
13:30 - 14:30		Lunch		Lunch	
14:30 - 18:00		Working session	Field visit	Working session	
			Participants arrival	Guided visit to Leon	
18:30 - 20:00					
20:00 - 22:00			Joint welcome dinner (European Commission + WG1 of Silva Mediterranea workshop)		

SILVAMEDITERRANEA

WORKING GROUP I

FOREST FIRES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION

WORK PLAN FOR 2017-2020

Background

The reference documents of the working plan 2017-2020 are the Assessment of Forest Fire Risk and Innovative Strategies for Fire Prevention (Rhodes, 2010), the Position Paper on Wildfire Prevention in the Mediterranean (Avignon, 2011), the Strategic Framework on Mediterranean Forests (Tlemcen, 2013), the State of Mediterranean Forests (2013), and the previous Working Group I (WGI) work plans (2009-2012; 2013-2016).

The work plan for 2017-2020, is divided in 5 main objectives and 10 actions. These elements are presented in this document, setting the areas of work in the coming years.

Objectives and actions

I. Enhance international cooperation

- a) *Strengthen cooperation between Forest Fires Working Group (FFWG) members and with other Mediterranean regions in the world. Share information and promote knowledge exchanges.*

The exchange of information and best practices is one of the main activities within the working group to ensure a joint understanding and approach on forest fire related issues in the Mediterranean. FFWG members will share information during meetings and will use *Silva Mediterranea* website and newsletter and email as some of the tools to support the strengthening of cooperation among them.

As part of a network, FFWG members will exchange national experiences and knowledge on forest fires with the rest of the FFWG. This exchange could be done as a request of one or more members to the rest of the network, coordinated by the WGI coordinator or as a part of the several meetings where FFWG members meet during the duration of the present working plan.

Collaborative actions and sharing of information and experiences with other Mediterranean regions globally will enrich the knowledge of *Silva Mediterranea* members too.

b) *Promote FAO voluntary guidelines on fire management and Fire Aviation Guidelines (UNISDR).*

In 2006, FAO Forestry Department developed the “Fire management, Voluntary Guidelines: Principles and strategic actions”¹, a strategic document that serves as a reference to forest fire management internationally. FFWG aims at reviewing this guidelines and adapt them to Mediterranean conditions during the work plan period.

FFWG will also continue the support and dissemination of the Fire Aviation Guidelines of the UNISDR.

2. Integration of fire prevention in forest management programs and in adaptation strategies to climate change

a) *Promote Position Paper on Wildfire Prevention in the Mediterranean actions.*

The Position Paper on Wildfire Prevention in the Mediterranean² established in 2011 five recommendations and several actions. These recommendations and actions are still valid for the current work plan period, and they will serve as a reference for wildfire prevention measures carried out by the FFWG members in the Mediterranean. WGI coordinator will also promote this position paper at international level when representing Silva Mediterranea network.

b) *Promote integrated approaches on forest fire prevention including causes investigation and use of prescribed burning. Develop prescribed burning guidelines at Mediterranean level.*

Causes investigation is the basis to understand why forest fires occur in the Mediterranean basin. The results of fire causes investigations should be take into account when defining wildfire prevention plans and actions. The promotion of fire causes investigation under an integrated approach will continue to be one of the main focus of this period among Mediterranean countries.

On the other hand, the increased use of prescribe burning as a tool for wildfire prevention with the objective of conciliation of interests and fuel reduction needs to rely on specific guidelines in the Mediterranean based on national experiences. FFWG will work on this subject during the work plan period.

c) *Share local, national and regional experiences on forest fire prevention. Facilitate knowledge exchanges.*

In relation of actions a) from objective I and in addition to it, a special focus will be given to wildfire prevention measures, best practices and initiatives in the context of the

¹ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/009/j9255e/J9255E00.htm#TopOfPage>

² <http://www.fao.org/forestry/40319-06791969d1427714a896b8faeee2aa501.pdf>

Mediterranean basin. Special attention will be given to community based fire prevention actions and adaptation measures to climate change.

3. Promoting knowledge and training on wildfires

a) Adaptation and dissemination of the Incident Command System (ICS) in the Mediterranean.

WGI will continue to promote knowledge and understanding of the Incident Command System as the internationally recommended wildfire organisational system. An adaptation to the Mediterranean reality is needed and the dissemination of the different initiatives in different countries will support this objective. A common and standard operational system in the Mediterranean will enhance both suppression and prevention operations (prescribed burnings) and joint operations when sharing resources among countries. National initiatives and training actions will be shared between FFWG members.

b) Activities related with education and awareness.

As a FAO Committee, *SilvaMediterranea*, its webpage and newsletter are good platforms to spread relevant awareness's messages that could reach all Mediterranean countries. FFWG members will work in identifying best practices on education and awareness taking into consideration several target groups such as scholars, rural population and citizens.

Additionally FFWG members will share specific actions taken in this regard in their countries.

4. Enhance harmonized information systems to deal with new wildfire risks

a) Continue promoting the use of EFFIS and other related developments/capabilities.

During this work plan period, WGI will work on supporting, maintaining, improving and enlarging the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) by providing standardized data using the established procedures for data collection.

FFWG members will be updated on EFFIS and other related developments and capabilities such as those within COPERNICUS (European Union's Earth Observation Program) and on the other hand, they will contribute to identify and share with EFFIS any aspect that could be improved.

*b) Promote *Silva Mediterranea* web page as the main tool to spread and share updated information about forest fires.*

As stated in several previous actions, WGI will promote with the support of the *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat the use of *Silva Mediterranea* webpage as a main tool to spread and share knowledge, giving special emphasis to all forest fire prevention related

documents and actions in the Mediterranean basin. This webpage would need to be updated and highlighted as an important regional initiative within FAO.

5. Cooperation with other working groups within *Silva Mediterranea*.

The implementation of this work plan would benefit from interactions with other working groups of *Silva Mediterranea*, such as:

- WG3 Forest Management and sustainable development
- WG5 Urban and Peri-urban Forestry
- WG6 Desertification and restoration

In order to ensure a fluent cooperation and the identification of synergies with other working groups, WG1 coordinator will share all relevant documents in the context of forest fires with the previous groups and with *Silva Mediterranea* Secretariat.

Madrid, July 2018