



**MINUTES OF THE FOREST FIRES COMMISSION
MEETING 21ST SEPTEMBER 2006, LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA**

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

The chair indicated that apologies had been received from:

Mr Tokle	(USA)
Mr Dudsfield	(New Zealand)
Mr Mateeva	(Bulgaria)
Mr Ivanic	(Slovakia)
Mr Ruuska	(Finland)
Mr Schmidli	(Switzerland)

He also welcomed guests: Mr Wagner (Statistics Centre) and two visitors from Finland

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING:

The minutes of the previous commission meeting were accepted as accurate.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

(a) There were no matters arising from the minutes. Mr Jones indicated that he awaited a response from Mr Egger regarding funding.

(b) Report to the Delegate's Assembly

The chair indicated the report that he had submitted to the delegate's assembly (Appendix 1)

4. Results of Questionnaire

The Commission studied the questionnaire results (Appendix 2) and the following was agreed:

Question 1

The proposed "Appropriate Rules" were accepted. The commission felt that some of the other, additional proposals were valid and worthwhile, and the chart indicated that, as the commission grows in strength, working groups could be established to undertake these other roles.

Question 2

From the statistics, two clear priorities emerged as priorities – firefighter safety and firefighter training. The chart proposed that these be adopted as the main focus for the next 12 months. This was agreed.



Question 3

The possible venues for meetings were noted and the Chair indicated the he would try to find the best venues for limiting travel and maximising value for delegates.

Question 4

The main challenges were discussed and the Chair undertook to be particularly sensitive to delegates concerns on:

Information sharing
Meeting arrangements and the costs of, and timing of, Commission Meetings

Question 5

The Chair indicated that the list, whilst not inclusive of all possible issues, was a good indicator of international concepts and should provide good points of guidance for the commission.

Mr Wagner proposed the addition of deliberate fires, which are a major cause of many large incidents.

Question 6 and 7

It was agreed that:

1. Agenda items would be sought no less than 2 months prior to meetings. (The Chair reminded the meeting that any CTIF member may submit proposals for discussion).
2. The finalised agenda would be circulated at least 3 weeks before the meeting (to allow delegates to discuss matters in their own countries).
3. All details will be stored on the CTIF website and will be updated after each commission meeting by the Chairman.
4. All information bulletins, minutes and other communications would be shared with all CTIF members.
5. The preferred method of distribution is by e-communication.



5. Leonardo Funding Bid by the Forest Fires Commission

The chair informed the meeting that the “initiation” meeting was due to take place in November and thereafter, an advisory panel would be convened.

6. Updates for the contact list of Forest Fires Commission Members

The updated list is attached as appendix 3.

7. Global Wildfire Conference, Seville, May 2007

www.wildfire07.es

The chairman highlighted the Wildfire conference that was taking place in Sevilla next year and indicated that he intended to hold the next CTIF Forest Fires Commission meeting there. This will take place on Wednesday 15th May at the conference venue.

8. Other business

After the meeting, the chair met and welcomed new commission members from both Croatia and Portugal.



Appendix 1

Report by **MARK JONES, FOREST FIRES COMMISSION**

For Meeting CTIF - Executive Committee and Chairmen of Commissions

Salzburg, Austria
22nd to 24th May 2006

Dear Friends in CTIF,

Please find below my report from the forest fires commission. We have had no meetings since last year but, as you will note, work has continued steadily in some areas.

Activities

When accepting the Chairmanship of the commission in Varazdin on 20th July 2005, I gave a presentation, which concentrated on my initial impressions and intentions:

Having only served on the commission for a couple of years, and having had limited involvement with CTIF in the past, I undertook to learn more about CTIF and to further raise awareness of the CTIF back in the United Kingdom.

Focussing on the forest fires commission's aims:

1. To identify the practices, organisations, structures, training regimes and equipment utilised by the operational firefighting forces in each country,
2. To seek co-operative opportunities to solve problems related to forest fires,
3. To encourage and further develop international collaboration so that lessons may be learned and built upon.

I highlighted that the commission had made limited progress over the last 2 years, and I stated that this was due mainly due to member apathy. For any one of our commissions to be effective, it requires:

- Member states to attend and contribute at meetings
- Members need to be empowered to speak with the voice of their own fire service organisations
- Pre-consultation is required if delegates are to be asked to state their country's position

This will require good meeting protocols and pre-meeting communications

I referred to my experience of groups and international associations, stating that there is a need for all member countries to be active partners who both contribute, and receive benefit, from that membership. I predicted that regular attendance of delegates at



meeting would also allow the personal friendship and fellowship that typifies our profession to grow. One immediate anomaly that struck me is that those countries who have had significant wildfire problems over recent years have not been active members of the commission. The need for delegates from Portugal, Spain, France, the USA and Greece is evident. Their vast experience would greatly inform the work of the commission, and they may be able to improve from each other's learning experiences.

Jokingly, I said that many of the Europeans present must have been wondering why that "wet" little island called Britain has a potential wildfire problem. The problem is one of many causes, each of which compounds the others:

The climate is changing – wetter, warmer autumns and winters (leading to better growing conditions and therefore higher fuel loadings).

- Even the most moderate climate change predictions also indicate much drier and warmer springs and summers.
- Access to the countryside has been enhanced by recent legislation, allowing open access, and by economic trends towards more leisure time.
- In keeping with all public sector reform agendas, pressure to make savings is placed upon fire authorities to fire services.
- Changes in the rural economies, such as the EU's common agricultural policy.

These factors lead to a strong likelihood that wildfire will become a gradually worsening problems and I stressed that I am keen to ensure that those who follow us into the fire fighting profession are not unduly exposed to risks due the negligence of their predecessors.

Whilst the work of the Forest Fires commission is important, it would be foolish not to recognise the effect that "competing priorities" can have on political support for our plans. As well as having a keen interest in the natural environment, I indicated that I am also a City Fire Commander who has to prepare a workforce for terrorist events, large fire and rescue situations and many other man-made and natural disasters that can occur.

To further complicate matters, most Fire Services have to compete for limited resources with other, more politically attractive agendas such as health, law and order and education. In recognising these competing agendas, we can establish both opportunities and limitations for the Forest Fires Commission and also that its relevance can vary according to events.

To truly make a difference, I contested that we must work beyond the tradition of developing more and better ways to attack and extinguish fires. I shared my belief that a comprehensive, integrated strategy that addresses land management practices, fire



prevention, control of building construction, access to high risk areas, and better, more effective deployment of fire fighters will give the best long-term results.

Projects

2.1 Questionnaire for policy development

Aim

As an incoming chair, I wanted to establish what is, and what is not, within the remit of the Forest Fires Commission. To this end, I proposed to distribute a questionnaire around all member states, with the outcomes intended to guide the work of the commission and giving it a mandate and legitimacy for its work. I hope that we can develop terms of reference that are jointly owned by all members from that process.

Discussion

I feel that a real need exists for member states to encourage their people to complete the questionnaire so that the commission can more effectively meet the needs of its members. IN ascertaining what exactly the members expect of the commission and then attempting to deliver it, it is hoped that there will be growing interest and “ownership” by member states.

Action to Date

Questionnaire distributed November 2005 (only 2 responses by April 2006)
Reminder circulated to all member states May 2006

Completion Date

The re-circulated questionnaire findings will form part of my presentation to the delegate’s assembly in Slovenia in September. This will drive the work of the commission for the foreseeable future.

2.2 EU LEONARDO project funding bid

Aim

As I indicated when accepting the chairman’s position, I am keen to investigate the development of a firefighting handbook.

Discussion

Firefighter safety is of paramount importance to the commission and, whilst it is recognised that the principles of safe working and risk assessment are very familiar to most firefighters, we must also recognise those volunteers who receive very limited preparation. Building upon a proposal for a “firefighter safety handbook” by my



predecessor, Mr Trond Rane, I have initiated a partnership for the purposes of raising a bid for funding support to the EU.

Action to Date

In partnership with a Scottish company, Rural Development Initiatives, a bid has been placed with the LEONARDO funding stream. This bid has been underwritten to an extent of 20,000 Euros by my own service in England and if successful, will result in the production of a handbook in all 3 CTIF business languages.

Completion Date

The outcome of the bidding process will be known in June and I will make all CTIF aware of the outcome. If successful, a further briefing will be given to the delegate's assembly in September.

2.3 Partnership with other strategic agencies on wildfire issues

Aim

To further aims of CTIF, and the Forest Fires Commission, by making organisational links with strategic partners with similar aims.

Discussion

Partnerships with agencies with similar goals will strengthen the position of the commission and assist us, as CTIF becomes a truly global organisation.

Action to Date

I made contact with the European Forest Owners Association, having identified that, in terms of wildfire, their aims are not that different to ours as fire fighters.

They are currently considering proposals to:

- Pressure the EU into making regulations of forest fire protection,
- Produce and manage better data,
- Introduce the principle of "Risk Zones", and
- Devise Forest Fire Protection Plans.

I have received only a tentative response so far, but will progress this further in the hope that they will find common interest.



An important partner, and potential future member of CTIF, is the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC). I am forging stronger links with them and hope to be able to recommend that we adopt them as an associate member of CTIF.

The UN “Committee of Experts” for Wildfire has adopted me onto its “panel of experts”. One of the main developments in this field is a Global Wildfire Conference that is to take place in Sevilla in May 2007, at which I will be presenting and also intend to host a Forest Fires Commission meeting.

Completion Date

Ongoing

2.4 Commission Meetings

Aim

To hold regular and meaningful meetings, engaging with as many member states of CTIF as possible.

Discussion

Regular, well-attended meetings are vital if the commission is to achieve its aims effectively. I will continue to take active steps to engage with as many member states as possible, seeking delegates from as many countries as possible.

Completion date

Ongoing

The next commission meeting, which I am chairing, is to be held in Aix en Provence, Southern France, from 9th – 11th June 2006.

Meeting	Date and Venue
June 2006	ENSOP, Aix en Provence, France
September 2006	Slovenia, at CTIF Delegates assembly
January 2007	England, near London
May 2007	Sevilla, Spain, during Global wildfire conference



Decisions

The Forest Fires Commission has taken no policy decisions since July 2005.

Decisions to be made by Executive Committee

There are no requests for decision from the commission for the executive committee at this time. I do however have some questions that would assist me in conducting the business of the commission:

1. Can all executive committee members assist me by encouraging the completion of the questionnaire by their country?
2. Does the CTIF provide any funding support for meetings and the expenses of its commissions?

I look forward to meeting with you all in Slovenia and will of course inform you of any changes in the work of the commission in the interim.

Mark Jones, Forest Fires Commission



Appendix 2

CTIF Forest Fires Commission

Analysis of responses to CTIF, Forest Fires Commission Questionnaire 2006

Question 1

Appropriate Roles for the commission

I stated that I felt that the key roles were:

1. Providing for the sharing of information and learning on the subject of forest and, more broadly, wildfires.
2. Contributing to the broader aims of CTIF, in the specific field of wildfires.
3. Identifying and sharing “best practices” from all nations.
4. Liaison with other similar organisations for the purposes of furthering our mutual aims.
5. Advising international groups on the CTIF’s position on forest and wildfire issues.

Responders were asked to indicate their appropriateness and offer other proposals.

Appropriateness

90 % of responders felt that these key roles were appropriate.

Other roles proposed included:

1. Organising international drills and training exercises, seminars and conferences
2. Organising joint meetings with local authorities and European organisations regarding forest fires
3. Developing a list of strategic aims for the commission, from which future work may be derived
4. Contributing to strategic planning and staffing models for wildfire
5. To discuss and share airborne firefighting tactics
6. To identify and share the best methods of informing the public
7. To give assistance with identification of suitable alternative funding sources
8. To analyse and share the outcomes of large wildfire events



Question 2

Commission Terms of Reference

To assist with the development of a modern set of terms of reference, it is helpful to know each member state's priorities for the commission. What does your nation/organisation consider to be a priority for the Forest Fires Commission?

(Rating, 1 Highest Priority, 5 Lowest Priority)

Priorities for the Commission	Average Rating
Firefighter Safety	1.1
Public Expectations of firefighters	2.1
Political Expectations of firefighters	3.2
Training for professional firefighters	1.7
Training for Volunteer Firefighters	1.6
Wildland / Urban interface	2.9
Other Priorities proposed Included:	
Cooperation with other services e.g. air services	2
Development of position papers	2
Working with the forestry sector	2
Education and training	2
Equipment information	2
Developing new firefighting systems	1

Question 3

Venues for meetings

Responders were asked to state a preference for the places where meetings may be held? The summary below typifies the responses

Proposed Venues / host organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International conferences or exercises • Rotating principle starting with the countries with most experience in forest fires
Would you be prepared to host a meeting of the commission?	<p>Countries which said "yes"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Czech republic 2. Finland 3. UK 4. Bulgaria 5. New Zealand 6. Croatia 7. USA 8. Slovenia



	Other countries, such as France, Germany and Norway have recently hosted commission meetings.
If yes, how much notice would you require?	Generally, from 6 months to 1 year was typical

Question 4

What, if any, are the main challenges to your participation in the Forest Fires Commission's meetings?
<p>Responses were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information Exchange (this includes the internal information transfer within member states) 2. Time to get to meetings – early notice required 3. To ensure informed discussion and information is relevant to the better protection of forests and rural lands from uncontrolled wildfires and the better use of fire as a land management tool 4. Costs and travel time 5. Benefits derived set against costs of meetings 6. Getting new information 7. The difficulty in partnering due to the internal national arrangements within countries

Question 5

What are the main issues for your nation / organisation in addressing wildfires? And how could the CTIF Forest Fires Commission support fire services in your nation?

Issue	Main Problems/ Challenges for Fire Services	Possible methods by which the Forest Fires Commission could assist
Age of aircraft and crews	Likely lack of future provision	
Obsolete fire appliances/ trucks	Growing repair costs and reduced operational capacities	
Fires caused by carelessness		
Knowledge on the use	Not enough knowledge	Training



of airborne firefighting techniques	by fire crews	
Motivation of volunteer crews	Renovation of equipment and machinery	Drills/ seminars
Provision of firefighting means	Use of contemporary methods	Development of mutual projects
Effective management of the rural landscape	All fires are extinguished	Education of the benefits of prescribed fire
Public education	Lack of funding	Development of international position paper that can be used to generate funding
Firefighter Safety	Providing equipment to train large numbers of rural firefighters	Unsure
Wildland / Urban Interface	Providing local government the tools to undertake appropriate planning and development	Unsure
Fires in Mountains	Lack of proper equipment	Experience
Personal protective Equipment	How to protect firefighters	Experience
Fast Growing Fires	Limitation of fire spread / areas	Experience

Question 6

Information from meetings

Recent commission meetings have not been well attended by a broad range of member nations. The geographical challenges are clear and it is accepted that there are time and financial limits on attendance.



To ensure that as many member states can participate as possible, the following actions were proposed:

(a) Call for agenda items 2 months prior to meetings	90% in favour, counter proposals for 3 months notice
(b) Circulation of agenda 2 weeks before meetings to allow submissions by members not able to attend to be received	90% in favour, counter proposal for 4 wks prior circulation
(c) Incorporation of the views of those members unable to attend by way of written submissions and proposals	100% in favour
(d) Use of CTIF website as repository of commission business	100% in favour
(e) Occasional briefings and information sharing to all CTIF members.	100% in favour

Question 7

How would you like the Commission's business to be shared with members?

(Rating, 1 Most Preferred, 5 Least Preferred)

	Average Rating
E mail to Forest Fire Commission Members only	3.1
E mail to Forest Fire Commission Members only and all nominated country committees	1.7
Placed on CTIF website	2.5
Paper copies posted and e mail contact	3.25



Appendix 3

December 2006 Update: List of delegates to the Forest Fires Commission

Country	Name	Contact Details
UK	Mark Jones, Chairman	Mark.jones@essex-fire.gov.uk
Slovakia	Milan Ivanic	sebestova@pteu.roburnet.sk
Norway	Håvard Sørmoen	Details to follow
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Guests / Associate Organisations

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