

Επιστροφή στην πρόληψη ή καταστροφή χωρίς επιστροφή

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Οι υποκείμενες πολιτικές ασθένειες της διαχείρισης των πυρκαγιών οδηγούν τα δάση, την κοινωνία και την οικονομία της χώρας στη διασολήνωση. Η πρόληψη γίνεται αντιληπτή μόνο όταν πρόκειται να διαφυλάξουμε το κράτος από την ευθύνη της απώλειας ανθρώπινων ζωών. Εθνικό σχέδιο υπάρχει μόνο για την καταστολή των πυρκαγιών ενώ παραγνωρίζεται διαχρονικά η ανάγκη διαχείρισης του κινδύνου και των επιπτώσεών τους στο πλαίσιο σχεδιασμού της πρόληψης σε εθνικό επίπεδο.

Παρά την αλήθεια του ισχυρισμού, οι έντονες και μεγάλης έκτασης καταστροφικές πυρκαγιές του 2021 δεν έχουν αποκλειστική αιτία την κλιματική αλλαγή. Σε πολύ μεγάλο βαθμό οφείλονται στις πολιτικές επιλογές των τελευταίων δεκαετιών για τη διαχείριση των πυρκαγιών και ειδικότερα στον επιχειρησιακό διαχωρισμό της πρόληψης από την καταστολή, την πρωμολογία της καταστολής και την ανυπαρξία διαχείρισης των Μεσογειακών δασών στις περιοχές με διαχρονικό κίνδυνο πυρκαγιών. Αυτές οι καταστάσεις αποτελούν τα χρόνια υποκείμενα νοσήματα που απειλούν ανά πάσα στιγμή να στείλουν το περιβάλλον, την οικονομία και την κοινωνία ..στην εντατική, την εποχή του «ιού» της κλιματικής αλλαγής. Εάν δεν «εμβολιάσουμε» τα ελληνικά δάση με την απαιτούμενη ετήσια

δόση πρόληψης, η «εντατική» της πυρόσβεσης δεν θα μπορέσει να ανταποκριθεί όσες «κλίνες» Canadair και αν θα διαθέτει.

Το παράδοξο των δασικών πυρκαγιών είναι ότι όσο περισσότερο τις καταστέλλεις τόσο πιο καταστροφικές γίνονται. Κι αυτό επειδή τα μεσογειακά δάση είναι ζωντανοί οργανισμοί που παράγουν διαρκώς βιομάζα η οποία προετοιμάζεται από το κλίμα και τις καιρικές συνθήκες για να αποτελέσει κάποια στιγμή τροφή για την πυρκαγιά. Έτσι η αυστηρή καταστολή προκαλεί στο δάσος μια «αυτοάνοση» κατάσταση που αυξάνει τις διαθέσιμες για την πυρκαγιά ποσότητες δασικών καυσίμων. Για να μπορέσουμε να εξασφαλίσουμε τη βιωσιμότητα του δάσους και να ελαχιστοποιήσουμε τις ζημιές από τις πυρκαγιές θα πρέπει προληπτικά να σχεδιάσουμε το τοπίο και τη βλάστηση έτσι ώστε να προσφέρει μικρά και συχνά γεύματα στη φωτιά! Τέτοια, που η συμπεριφορά της να είναι ελέγξιμη από τον μηχανισμό της καταστολής ακόμη και σε ακραίες συνθήκες.

Η υιοθέτηση από την ελληνική πολιτεία της τυφλής και επιθετικής καταστολής της φωτιάς, που είναι η βασική αρχή της αστικής πυρόσβεσης, έχει μεσο- μακροπρόθεσμα αντίθετα αποτελέσματα στις δασικές πυρκαγιές. Καταπολεμάμε τη φωτιά όταν οι συνθήκες είναι ευνοϊκές για πυρόσβεση, εξασφαλίζοντας χειρότερες συνθήκες από πλευράς φορτίου καυσίμου στην επόμενη πυρκαγιά, όταν οι συνθήκες θα είναι αντίξοες.

Στην Ελλάδα οι τελευταίες δύο δεκαετίες χαρακτηρίζονται από την αδιαφορία της πολιτείας για την αντιμετώπιση των αναγκών της πρόληψης και από πολιτικές έμφασης και πριμοδότησης της καταστολής σε επίπεδο θεσμικών παρεμβάσεων και διάθεσης πιστώσεων. Στο συνολικό απολογισμό των τελευταίων 20 χρόνων οι δαπάνες για την πυρόσβεση, που σε μεγάλο βαθμό είναι εξαρτημένη από την εντατική χρήση των εναέριων μέσων, αυξάνονται διαχρονικά ενώ οι αντίστοιχες για την πρόληψη έχουν σχεδόν μηδενιστεί.

English Translation

Return to prevention or disaster without return

George Eftychidis, Forester

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The underlying political diseases of fire management are driving the country's forests, society and economy into the pipeline. Prevention is perceived only when we are going to protect the state from the responsibility of losing human lives. There is a national plan only for fire suppression, while the need to manage the risk and its consequences in the context of prevention planning at the national level is overlooked over time.

Despite the truth of the claim, the intense and large-scale catastrophic fires of 2021 are not the sole cause of climate change. They are largely due to the political choices of fire management in recent decades, and in particular to the operational separation of repression prevention, the suppression premium and the lack of management of Mediterranean forests in areas with a long-standing fire risk. These conditions are the chronic underlying diseases that threaten at any time to send the environment, the economy and society ..in the intensive, the era of the "virus" of climate change. If we do not "vaccinate" the Greek forests with the required annual dose of

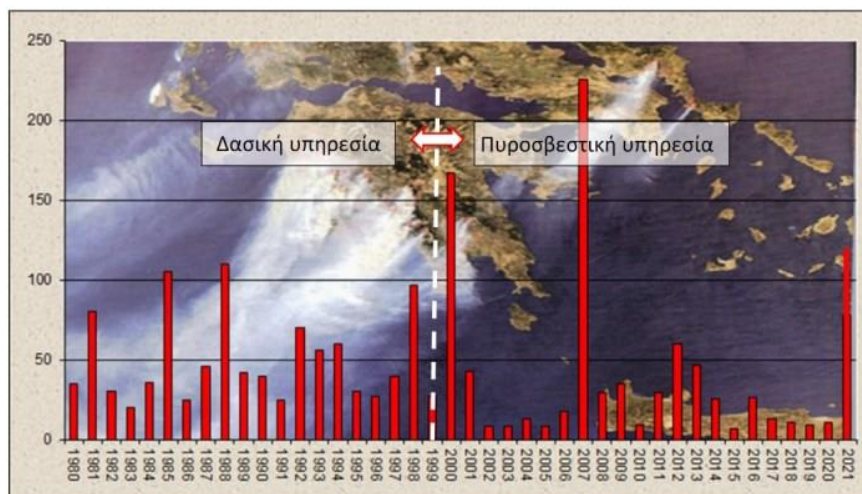
prevention, the "intensive" firefighting will not be able to meet as many "beds" as Canadair will have.

The paradox of forest fires is that the more you suppress them, the more destructive they become. This is because the Mediterranean forests are living organisms that constantly produce biomass which is prepared by the climate and weather conditions to be at some point food for the fire. Thus the severe repression causes in the forest an "autoimmune" condition that increases the quantities of forest fuels available for the fire. In order to ensure the sustainability of the forest and to minimize the damage from the fires, we must precautionarily plan the landscape and the vegetation so that it offers small and frequent meals on the fire! Such that its behavior is controllable by the mechanism of repression even in extreme conditions.

The adoption by the Greek state of blind and aggressive fire suppression, which is the basic principle of urban firefighting, has the opposite medium- and long-term effects on forest fires. We fight the fire when the conditions are favorable for firefighting, ensuring worse conditions in terms of fuel load in the next fire, when the conditions will be adverse.

In Greece, the last two decades are characterized by the indifference of the state to address the needs of prevention and by policies of emphasis and premium of repression at the level of institutional interventions and the allocation of funds. In the total report of the last 20 years, the expenses for the firefighting, which is largely dependent on the intensive use of the air means, increase over time while the corresponding ones for the prevention have been almost zero.

Making a simple comparison of the following picture given by the statistics of the last decades we will see that the total areas burned every twenty years are about the same even though the management policy changed (Law 2612/1998) and the funding multiplied. However, the distribution over the years is different as the last two decades are characterized by a decrease in the burned area in mild years and an eruption of the burned area in the difficult years. The results to date therefore do not in any way presuppose that investing in this policy has proved profitable.



Vegetation management, especially in climate change, is the main measure for mitigating forest fire behavior, but requires systematic and consistent implementation and not fire-fighting interventions during the fire season. As the Undersecretary of State PP stated "... if we had not done the cleaning in Hippocrates State, the fire would have run and we would not have been

able to stop it in Malakasa. If we had not stopped it in Malakasa, we do not know where the fire would have ended passing through Kalamos and Oropos. If we had not done the cleaning in Thrakomakedones, we would have lost four times as many houses. "If we had not done the cleaning in Tatoi - this may seem like an oxymoron - we would not have been able to put out the first fire, in a forest that was for years, decades, unmaintained." The Deputy Minister of Defense referred to the "Dryades" program, a program of clearing the vegetation in 21 targeted areas of forest-settlement mixing on the occasion of the damages caused by the bad weather of "Medea", lasting 40 days that started in June (!) Of 2021. The "Dryades" were financed by order of the Prime Minister (!) And were implemented by the GPP, but without, as the Deputy Minister of PP confesses, being its responsibility (!). Once again, the Forest Service (now a ghost of itself) saw the state authoritarily question its technical and scientific role. In 1998 with the Fire Brigade for the repression and in 2021 with the GGP for the prevention. If the state deems a public service insufficient, it abolishes or restructures it. It is politically inappropriate to take decisions that bring services and institutions into direct conflict.

On the other hand, it is not difficult to imagine how many houses and infrastructures would have been saved if a similar vegetation management program had not been made to pay for ... the broken "Medea" but it was planned operationally and implemented systematically. For the time being, we are waiting for the "Dryades" to develop into a 5-year cleaning program, starting in October 2021 with a funding of 300 million, according to the announcements of the Prime Minister.

Of course we still do not know if the implementation of the program will be undertaken by those responsible or incompetent for prevention, which we do not know and who they are, but we hope that the disease has become a lesson! Of course, in the current situation where, with the policy of settlement and tolerance of arbitrary construction, scattered and extensive outbreaks of danger have been created over the decades in many forest areas, the strengthening of forest firefighting is necessary. Obviously, however, it cannot be the responsibility of the GGP or the Fire Brigade to plan activities in the forest area, to manage the forest resilience to the disturbances that are expected to intensify with climate change, nor to implement management and vegetation reduction programs. The evaluation and selection of forest species, in the discussion that has opened for the shielding of the perimeter of the villages and settlements of the mixed zone, should not be done with operational criteria without scientific and ecological documentation. Otherwise the forest service should be abolished.

We all need to understand now that forest fires are a multidimensional issue and their management cannot be the sole object of a single service. We have been talking about a single forest protection body for twenty years, but always after a disastrous year. So unfortunately a vision of many years has become a fantasy to redeem political time after the catastrophe. And yet, fire management requires a balanced interdisciplinary cooperation of several bodies with knowledge and experience in matters of public safety, forest management, environmental protection, land use planning and economic development. An important condition is to address the problem with well-documented medium-long-term planning and not with piecemeal, seasonal measures. To this end, prevention and repression in a single national operational plan should be linked to the involvement, cooperation and synergy of all stakeholders with the monitoring and coordination of a single mechanism.

It is the sole responsibility of the state to untie the heavy bond of Law 2612/98 with which it has tied the future of the Greek forests and to find the appropriate operational link for the cooperation between the Fire Brigade and a modern vertical but open new Forest Service. , designed to manage the adaptation of Greek forests to the conditions of climate change. In the same way that the government has supported and continues to support the dynamic transformation of Civil Protection, the Forest Service should be envisioned and developed into a modern scientific organization that will ensure the resilience and sustainability of Greek forests and the natural environment in the new conditions. This challenge does not concern public services but society itself and the future of the country.