



## **Address to the 8th international Wildland Fire Conference**

Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Secretariat of the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement of the Council of Europe, I would like to express my appreciation that the International Wildland Fire Conference – the eighth in series after starting in 1989 – is hosted by Portugal. We are honored that two of the Specialized Centers of the Agreement – the Global Fire Monitoring Center and the European Center on Forest Fires – based in Germany and Greece – have contributed to the conference.

Starting in 2010, the Council of Europe has supported the decentralization of the Global Fire Monitoring Center by the establishment of regional centers of excellence. The Regional Fire Monitoring Centers for Southeast Europe, based in Skopje, North Macedonia, and the Regional Eastern Europe Fire Monitoring Center, based in Kiev, Ukraine, have taken decisive roles in the initiated the national dialogues towards the development of national landscape fire management policies.

Here as well as in other regions of the Global Wildland Fire Network, which is coordinated by the Global Fire Monitoring Center, the development of Integrated Fire Management policies are going along with capacity building of state institutions. At the last World Forum on Democracy, held in Strasbourg in 2021 and entitled “Can Save Democracy our Environment?” the GFMC highlighted the role of participatory approaches in fire management by the contribution “The Global Wildland Fire Network: A Contribution of Civil Society to build Sustainable and Fire-resilient Societies and Landscapes”.

The review revealed the significance of active participation of civil society in land and fire management and the progress that has been made in realizing cross-sectoral and inclusive approaches in integrated fire management.

The recommendations of the 7th International Wildland Fire conference held in Brazil in 2019, stressed that integrated cross-sectoral approaches in fire management would support the Sustainable Development Goals, the goals of the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Furthermore, the conference reported that this approach would be further strengthened by an appropriate United Nations instrument.

Taking into account multi-years’ work of the Council of Europe, the Secretariat of the Major Hazards Agreement took the opportunity of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, hosted by Indonesia in 2022, to propose the establishment of an “International Landscape Fire Management Framework”. It would streamline the effectiveness and efficiency of international cooperation towards enhancing governance in landscape fire management at local, national, regional and international level.

The “Landscape Fire Governance Framework” with its “Guiding Principles for Adjusting Strategies, Policies, and Management, to Global Change”, as discussed during this conference, is a major step forward. Based collective experiences in integrated fire management into a framework, which would constitute the core philosophy and guidance for countries and international organizations for coping with the challenges arising in the context of global change and notably the climate crisis.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction provides the overall umbrella for the development cross-sectoral and multi-tiered action towards increasing the resilience of environment and society to the increasing risk of disasters. Ecosystem-based approaches such as integrated fire management approaches are pointing to the right direction and thus should be addressed under the common flag of the Sendai Framework.