



SUMMER FIRE SEASON 2003 INTENSIVE ACTIVITY OF SPAIN'S FOREST FIRE-FIGHTING RESOURCES

On the second half of the month of July our resources were requested to help in fire-fighting operations in our neighbour countries. Although there were large fires in the Zaragoza province, it was possible to provide assistance.

Portugal

On the request of the Portuguese authorities during the month of July Spanish resources gave the following assistance to suppress forest fires in Portugal:

- July 14: Fire by the border coming from Portugal into the province of Salamanca (Spain).-A helicrew BRIF on a Puma, an Air Tractor 802 and a Canadair CL-215: Flight time: 5 hours.
- July 28-August 1: Fires in the Fundao district (Portugal): Two Canadair CL-215 every day: Flight time:80 hours.
- July 30: Fire coming from Portugal into the province of Orense: A Canadair CL-215: Flight time: 3 hours

France

- July 31-August 1: Fires in the Alpes Maritimes: Two Canadair CL-215 T: Flight time: 19 hours.

On August 1st danger increased up to EXTREME (temperatures over 40°C all around) in Spain and it was necessary to allocate all resources to fight fires in Spain, mainly in the Western part of the country.

Several lightning storms run from Southwest of the Peninsula to the North starting fires in hundreds of places.

The more difficult fires were registered in the provinces along the Portuguese border, Huelva, Badajoz, Cáceres, Salamanca, Zamora, León, although there were also large fires in the Center/East mountains, Guadalajara, Cuenca, Burgos.

The 56 aircrafts of the State fleet (including 19 Canadairs, 1 C-130, 4 Kamov, 10 AT 802, 3 Puma and 10 Sokol) were flying up to the limit, with 1272:23 hours of flight time in 6 days, three times the normal average.

These aircrafts plus the 11 BRIFs (helicrews type Hot-Shots) were helping the Region's resources, amounting a total of 150 aircrafts and more than 20.000 people.

The situation was always under control and very few of the fires lasted more than one day. Figures of burned surface doubled from July 31st to August 6th up to 57.430 ha. It has not yet been possible to discriminate between forested and non-forested area. Appraisal of damages will proceed in the next days.

A victim was registered. A brigade member died because of heart attack after leaving operations in a Ciudad Real fire.

Madrid, July 7, 2003