



Communication on Integrated Wildfire Risk Management

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What are the issues?

Trends:

- **Size and intensity of wildfires are increasing** + likelihood of extreme fires ('megafires') is increasing
- Wildfire season is getting longer.
- Areas that have not been fire-prone in the past face increased fire risk.

Damage to Europe's society, economy, environment, climate, infrastructure and cultural heritage and estimated to be **around EUR 2.5 billion annually**.

Main risk factors are **climate change, changes in land management** and **human behaviour**:

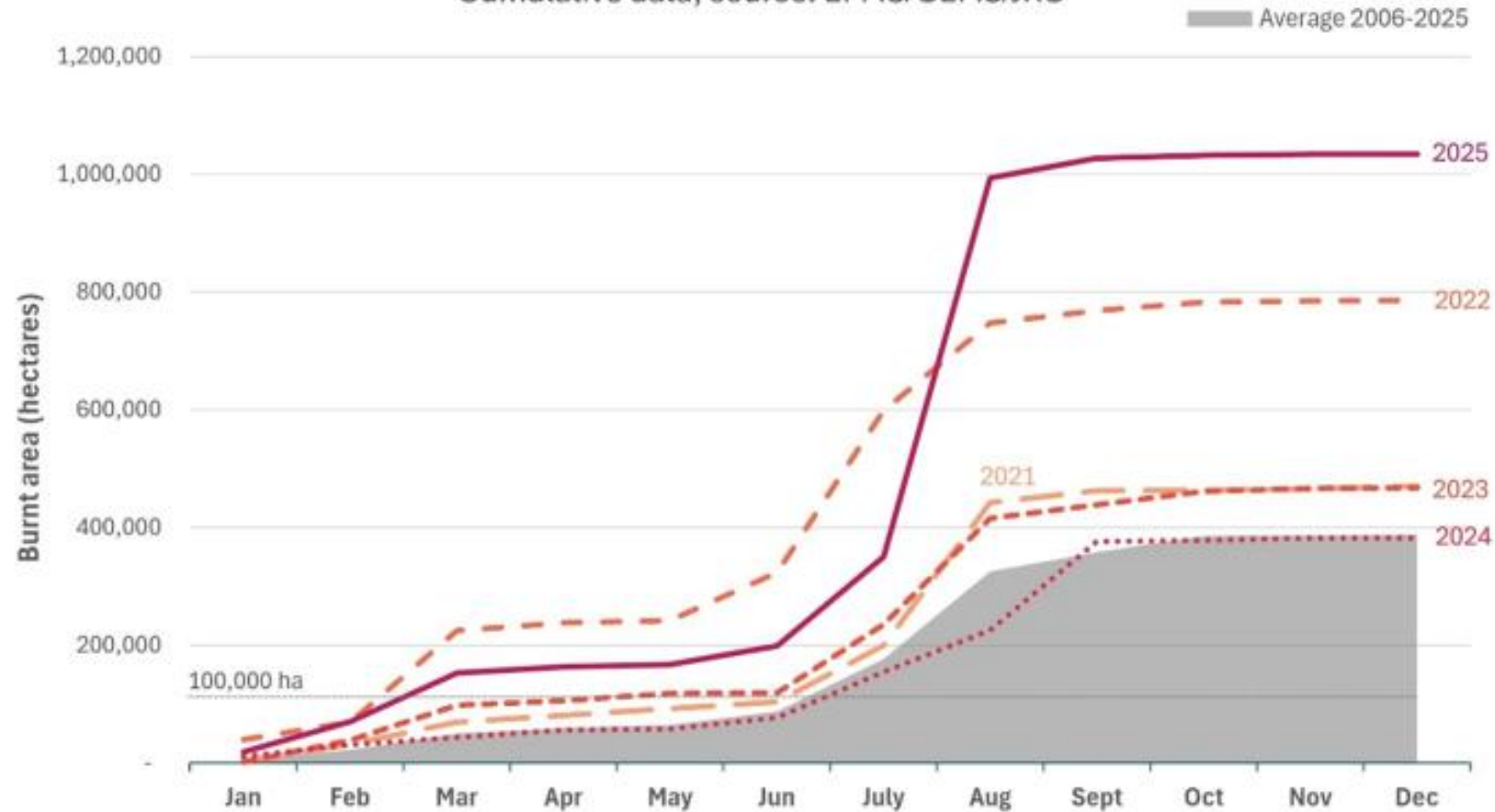
- **Climate change** increases likelihood of extreme weather conditions: heatwaves, long drought periods, increasing temperatures, dry soils.
- **Degradation** of natural ecosystems + socio-economic shifts leading to rural **depopulation** and **land abandonment**.
- **Human activity** plays a major role in wildfire ignitions and by far exceeds natural causes (96%).



What are the issues?

Burnt areas in EU from 2021 to 2025

Cumulative data, source: EFFIS/CEMS/JRC



Data includes only fires above 30 hectares to ensure consistency for year-on-year comparisons.

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Approach

- **Commission Communication on integrated wildfire risk management** outlines:
 - **Existing tools and support** that the EU provides;
 - **Future concrete actions** the Commission will undertake to strengthen the implementation of integrated wildfire risk management in the EU;
 - **Actions Member States are encouraged to take** (forming the basis for the proposal for a Council Recommendation).
- **Why a proposal for a Council Recommendation?**
 - Responsibility for managing wildfire risks lies **primarily with Member States and their regional and local authorities**.
 - This proposal supports **coordinated action** among Member States.
 - As a legal, but non-binding act, the adoption of the Recommendation would signal **strong political commitment** of Member States to strengthen wildfire risk management.

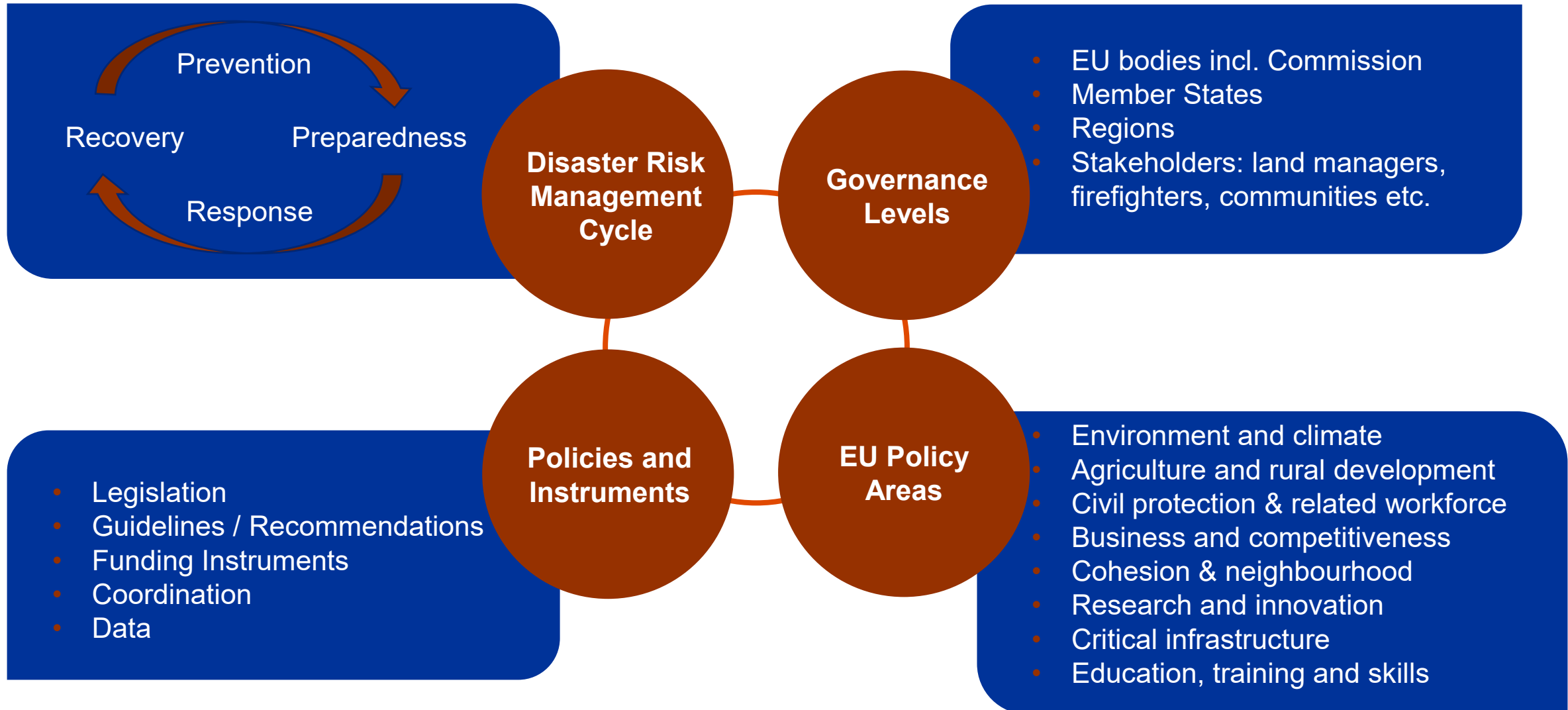


Integrated wildfire risk management

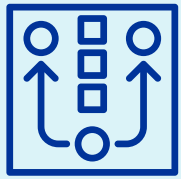
- Addresses wildfire risk **holistically** as a **long-term problem** across its ecological, social, cultural, and economic dimensions
- **Covers the whole risk management cycle** of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery



Integrated Wildfire Risk Management

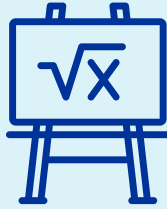


Thematic blocks of the Communication



1.

PREVENTION
THROUGH
LANDSCAPE
MANAGEMENT &
RESTORATION



2.

PREPAREDNESS
WITH BETTER
DATA AND
RESEARCH



3.

POPULATION
AWARENESS
AND
PREPAREDNESS



4.

SUPPORT FOR
COORDINATED
RESPONSE



5.

POST-FIRE
RECOVERY



6.

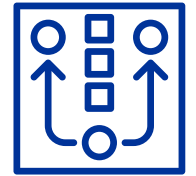
STRENGTHENING
MANAGEMENT
OF WILDFIRE
RISK



7.

INTERNATIONAL
ENGAGEMENT

1. Prevention through landscape management and restoration



Objectives:

Reducing wildfire risk by building fire-resilient landscape

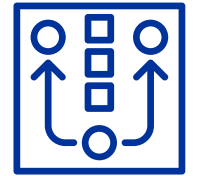
- Tackling rural depopulation and land abandonment which lead to a build up of flammable vegetation
- **Tools:** CAP funding (sustainable forest management, prevention measures - fire breaks, extensive grazing and other grassland management etc.), promoting bioeconomy

Wildfire risk management through nature protection and restoration

- Integrating wildfire risk management in nature conservation and nature restoration policies and vice-versa – managing trade-offs, promoting synergies.
- The Commission published a **guidance document on Natura 2000 and climate change** to promote ecosystem-based fuel-reduction measures that are compatible with the sites' conservation objectives (e.g. grazing, prescribed burning)
- Promotion of SFM practices/forest restoration measures that lead to wildfire risk reduction (diversification of forest structures, move away from plantations of highly flammable species)



1. Prevention through landscape management and restoration



ACTIONS - Commission:

Support knowledge sharing on prescribed burning techniques.

Promote grazing, silvopasture and agroforestry through the upcoming livestock strategy.

Gather best practices on sustainable vegetation fuel management and promote their dissemination.

Provide technical support to Member States to integrate wildfire risk considerations into their national restoration plans.

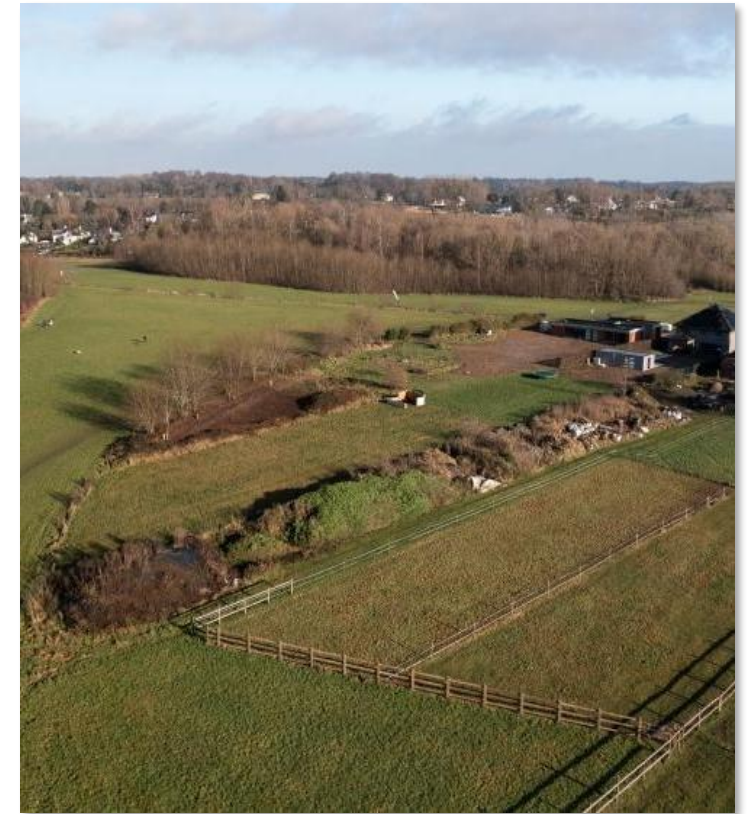
ACTIONS – Member States:

Consider including in operational groups a topic on wildfires in their calls for proposals for the European Innovation Partnerships (EIP-AGRI).

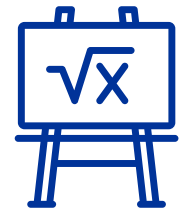
Integrate wildfire risk prevention and resilience into national restoration plans and conservation policies.

Consider dedicated measures to restore wetlands, peatlands, rivers and floodplains.

Prepare locally adapted fuel management guidelines and tools, involving social partners and local authorities.



2. Preparedness with better data and research



Objectives

Improve wildfire risk assessments in the EU

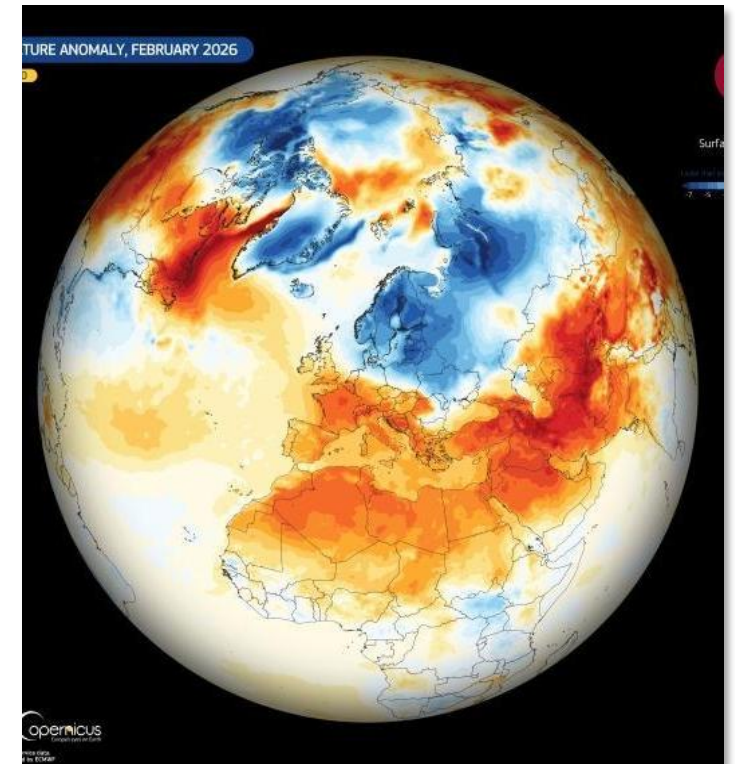
- Address gaps in consistency, cross-border integration:
 - develop **pan-European, standardized wildfire risk assessments** under current/future climate scenarios
 - identify best practices to reduce risk in WUI
 - updated risk assessment guidelines that consider integrated wildfire risk management

Improve early warning systems, fire monitoring, and behavior modeling

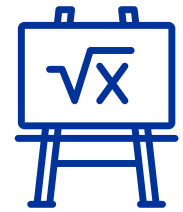
- Further develop EFFIS and its functions: e.g. roadmap for regularly updated fuel maps
- Promote **Destination Earth** and **digital twins**: Simulate wildfire risks with high-resolution models

Promote research and enhance uptake of R&I solutions for prevention/preparedness

- Continue funding for wildfire management projects
- Promote uptake of successfully demonstrated solutions



2. Preparedness with better data and research



ACTIONS - Commission:

Improve the early warning and monitoring tools of the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) – including vegetation mapping and wildfire risk assessment modelling.

Explore opportunities for future R&I support for integrated wildfire risk management in agriculture, forestry and rural areas under Horizon Europe.

Present by 2027 effective practices in sustainable farming and sustainable forest management that have been successfully demonstrated in various EU-funded projects.

Provide updated risk assessment guidelines taking integrated wildfire risk management into account by 2027.

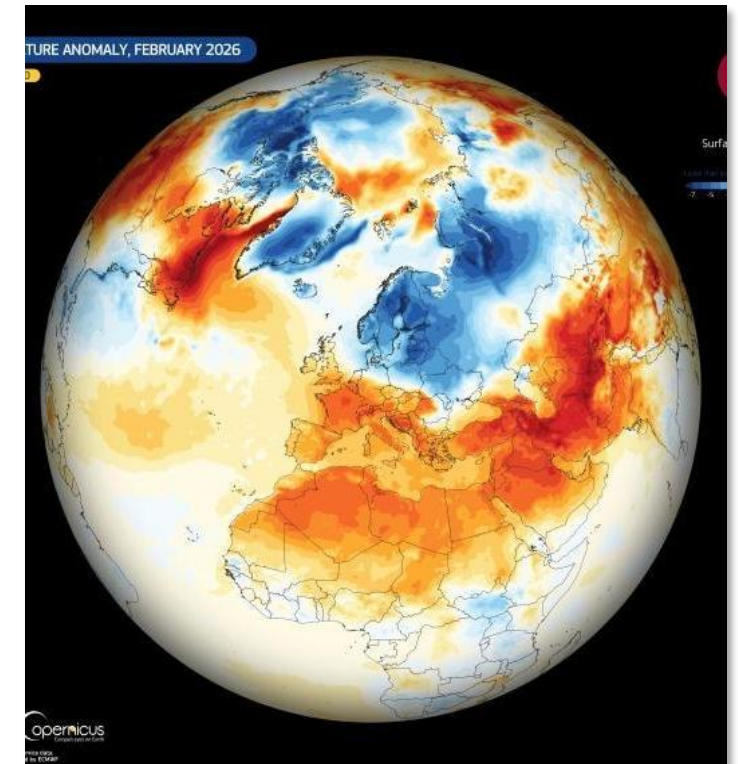
ACTIONS – Member States:

Participate in the development and promotion of Destination Earth.

Make systematic use of EU-level tools and data (e.g. Copernicus services and EFFIS), to support evidence-based wildfire risk management.

Update wildfire risk assessments and use improved fire behaviour analyses.

Develop wildfire behaviour analysis capabilities, and decision support systems dedicated to wildfire risk management.



3. Population awareness and preparedness



Objectives

Raise wildfire risk awareness

- Improve risk communication and awareness raising (promote good practices) .
- Target **tourism sector** and **local communities** (link to the upcoming EU Sustainable Tourism Strategy)

Improve preparedness of communities to prevent, respond to, and recover from wildfires

- Strengthen **wildland-urban interface (WUI) resilience**
- Support **volunteering programs** (European Solidarity Corps, Erasmus+)
- Promote **wildfire education** among children and youth and address **disinformation**



3. Population awareness and preparedness



ACTIONS - Commission:

Disseminate good practices in wildfire risk awareness and community involvement and develop a toolkit for resilience building in the wildland-urban interface.

Support the launch of a pan-European exchange of young firefighters under the UCPM by 2027 to further develop a common European culture of preparedness.

Further promote, together with Member States, volunteering and exchange opportunities.

Engage with citizens through the Online debate on Preparedness and dedicated Citizen Panel.

ACTIONS – Member States:

Further investigate the causes of fire.

Raise awareness among farmers and foresters about fire ignition risks.

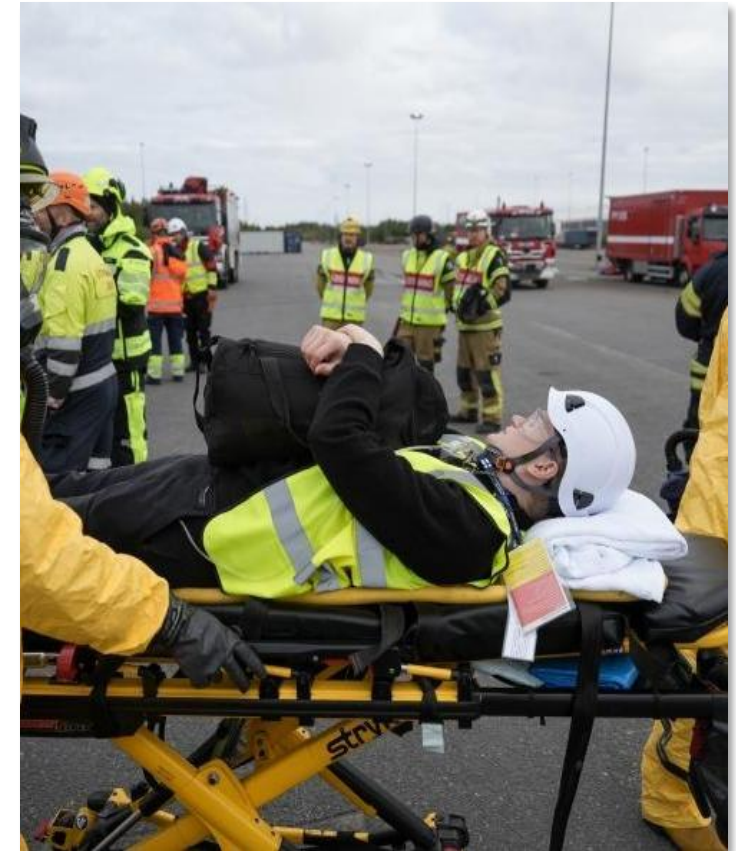
Explore innovative awareness-raising tools targeting children and young people.

Step up the collaboration between tourism stakeholders, farmers and foresters, local authorities, and fire safety experts to make visitors more risk aware.

Support business continuity by promoting training for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Ensure that information is accessible for persons with disabilities, facing discrimination, poverty and/or social exclusion, and older persons.

Integrate wildfire risk considerations into building standards and spatial planning decisions.



4. Support for coordinated response



Objectives

Enhance EU-wide capacities and assets to combat wildfires

- Promote voluntary pre-positioning to areas with high fire hazard
- Ensure sufficient aerial firefighting assets

Enhance coordination, training and technical support

- Promote training and exchange of experts under the UCPM (e.g. twinning model)
- Firefighting hub in Cyprus - centre of excellence focusing on capacity building, training, exercises, and seasonal readiness
- Provide tools and support for early warning and fire behavior analysis (ERCC)



4. Support for coordinated response



ACTIONS - Commission:

Assess the EU's future needs in aerial firefighting to inform the possible procurement of additional rescEU assets under the new MFF.

Support the development of innovative EU-based technologies in wildfire prevention, detection and response capacities.

Strengthen the UCPM exchange of experts for integrated wildfire risk management through a twinning model.

Encourage more firefighting pre-positioning teams in countries with extreme fire hazard.

Establish a European firefighting hub in Cyprus that will host a centre of excellence focusing on capacity building, training, exercises.

Further develop analytical tools, for example AI-assisted wildfire modelling and decision support tools.

ACTIONS – Member States:

Actively share best practices and lessons learned.

Make good use of prepositioning or exchange of experts to enable exchange of good practice.

Collect relevant data on firefighting staff and assess potential needs with a view to ensuring the availability of an appropriately sized and well-prepared workforce.

Provide safe and sustainable working conditions ensuring a high level of protection of the health and safety of firefighters.

Strengthen the coordination between governance levels for an optimal situational awareness at the time of an acute emergency.

Ensure the availability of sufficient aerial assets, including by making use of relevant EU funds.

Commit forest firefighting assets to the European Civil Protection Pool.

Improve the interoperability of firefighting equipment.



5. Post-fire recovery



Objectives

Ensure long-term resilience and ecosystem restoration post-wildfire

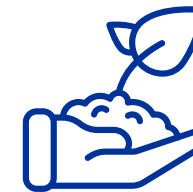
- Promote best practice for rebuilding fire-resilient landscapes and post-fire restoration of ecosystems
- Provide data on post-fire vegetation recovery and soil erosion

Improve data on wildfire impacts

- Harmonise data collection on wildfire impacts (health, economic, environmental) and improve its use in risk and impact assessments



5. Post-fire recovery



ACTIONS - Commission:

Support **exchanges of best practices on post-fire recovery methods** throughout 2027.

Develop **guidelines to facilitate collection of harmonised post-fire data**.

ACTIONS – Member States:

Collect additional cross-sectoral data to **quantify the impacts of wildfires**, supported by the guidelines on harmonised methods.



6. Strengthening management of wildfire risk



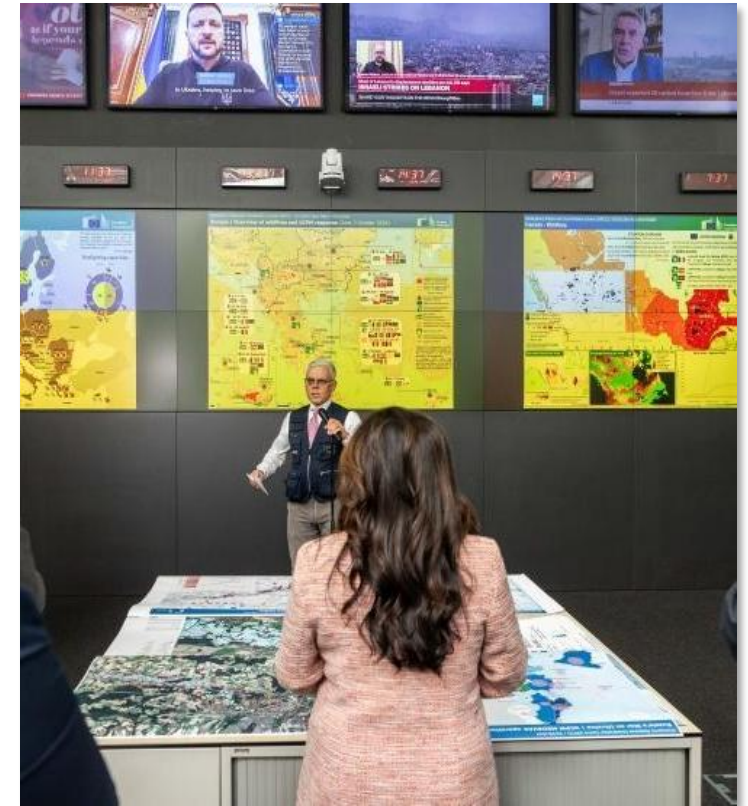
Objectives

Support coordinated and integrated governance for wildfire risk management

- Support tools for strengthening governance
 - **existing**: UCPM's wildfire peer review assessment framework, Technical Assistance Financing Facility and Technical Support Instrument
 - **new**: guidance on IWRM + portal
- Knowledge sharing – UCP Knowledge Network
- Improved coordination among expert groups

Ensuring long-term funding for wildfire risk management

- Promote awareness of the funding options provided by the EU and embed wildfire risk management in future guidance for EU funding
- Improve tracking of wildfire funding in the EU and national level (WB project)



6. Strengthening management of wildfire risk



ACTIONS - Commission:

Present a proposal for a Council Recommendation on integrated wildfire risk management.

Develop guidance and a portal on integrated wildfire risk management by 2027.

Ensure coordinated action of the different EU expert groups working on wildfires.

Update the wildfire peer review assessment framework in 2027.

Review economic incentives for wildfire risk management.

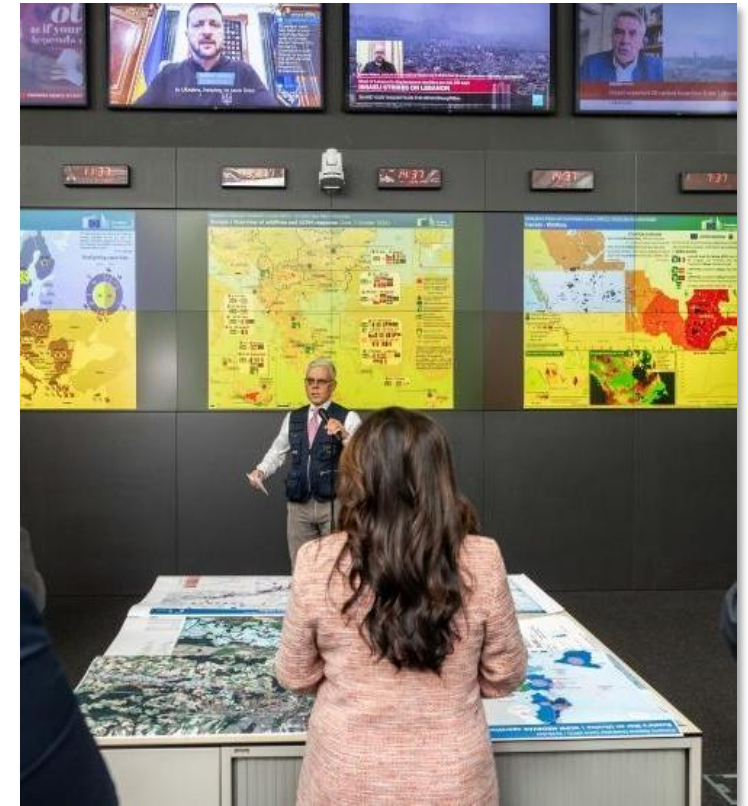
ACTIONS – Member States:

Ensure long-term funding across the full wildfire risk management cycle.

Develop national or sub-national wildfire risk management strategies.

Take up new technologies and innovations developed under Horizon Europe.

Make full use successful solutions and tools to strengthen early warning systems, forest management, and community preparedness against wildfires.



7. International engagement



Objectives

Strengthen global cooperation and knowledge exchange to address shared wildfire challenges

- Foster **partnerships** with wildfire-prone regions (US, Canada, Chile, Brazil)
- Promote cooperation with international bodies and initiatives (FAO-UNEP Global Fire Hub, FoRISK)
- Engage with the **Western Balkans/Southern Neighbourhood** for joint risk assessments and response.
- Promote global standardized data (GWIS)



7. International engagement



ACTIONS - Commission:

Foster the **exchange of experiences with other wildfire-prone regions..**

Step up outreach at political level and strengthen the participation of the Western Balkans.

Step up cooperation with Southern Neighbourhood partners on common actions to improve regional preparedness and strengthen response capabilities.

Collaborate closely with Forest Europe and its newly established **Forest Risk Facility (FoRISK)** to promote **capacity building and knowledge exchange on fire prevention.**

Encourage the implementation of the agri-environment-climate measure and the measure to establish and protect forests by the relevant beneficiaries of **EU pre-accession assistance for rural development.**



Thank you



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