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# Mediterranean Governance Policy Brief



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## Mediterranean Regions and Multilevel Governance of the Environment

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### Background

This Policy Brief focuses at contributions of regional actors to the governance of environmental policies in the Mediterranean. Governance is defined as coordination systems between government, local and regional authorities, international organizations, private actors, companies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), producing and implementing public policies. Governance can be institutionalized, ruled by procedures, or by informal rules. Two cases studies are analysed here: Natura 2000 and the prevention and fight against forest fires. Natura 2000 is a top-down governance system, designed at the European level with the intention to implement a coherent network of protected areas in the European Union (EU). The "Prevention and fight against forest fires" case is of national competence and the input from the top has mainly focussed on supporting the implementation of prevention activities. The analysis of the two cases takes place in the framework of the MedGovernance Project and shows that coordination exists between the central and regional territorial levels and that the degree of involvement of regional authorities is related to the degree of decentralization.

#### Conclusions

Where decentralization is advanced (Italy, Spain), Natura 2000 shows that top-down governance systems with a strong territorial dimension have a direct impact on the role of regional authorities, increasing their responsibilities and competences. In more centralized countries (France), Natura 2000 has not allowed regional authorities to acquire more responsibilities and competences, being the implementation process under control of the central government and its local representatives. Weak involvement of local population and of local authorities represents a major problem in the implementation of Natura 2000, both in decentralized and centralized contexts. Very proactive roles played by horizontal actors (NGOs) in the governance process of Natura 2000 (against the will of competent authorities), gave them a considerable role in monitoring the implementation of Natura 2000, exerting control at the local level and denounce cases of non-fulfilment of the directives. The prevention and fight against forest fires is based on more formalized multilevel governance. In a context where resources are scarce, European funding is the main financial resources for Natura2000. The more decentralised, the more important is European funding. Top-down approaches can improve governance by encouraging transnational and interregional linkages, both political and operational. The transnational dimension is particularly relevant in the Southern Member States, which are most affected by forest fires. Natura 2000 has not yet developed a transnational dimension since its implementation is demanding. The Life programme is important for exchanging practices of regional authorities within national borders, while INTERREG promoted territorial cooperation among European actors. Coherence among the different Natura 2000 areas is weak: there is a great diversity in regional management plans.



### CASE STUDY 1: THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK: *THE BROAD POLICY FRAMEWORK*

#### European Policy Framework

Natura 2000 was launched by the Habitats Directive in 1992 with the aim of setting up a European ecological network, composed by Specially Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Specially Protected Areas (SPAs), established by the Birds Directive. Its aim is to contribute to ensuring biodiversity through the conservation of certain natural habitat, habitats of specific the species, and particular bird species.

In order to achieve this goal, the Habitats Directive plans the creation of a coherent ecological network of sites containing habitats and species of importance and their effective management.

The Habitats Directive recognises 198 habitat types, 480 species of plants, and 226 species of animals as being of Community interest and requiring special conservation areas to safeguard their future. The establishment of these networks of protected areas also fulfils a Community obligation under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

As a contracting party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the EU is strongly committed to further strengthening the CBD as the key international instrument for achieving the 2010 target. Today, nature and biodiversity are some of the priorities of the EU's sixth environment action programme 2002-12. Various EU commitments were translated in operational terms by the EC communication on "Halting Biodiversity Loss by 2010 – and Beyond: Sustaining ecosystem services for human well-being".

The Communication underlined the importance of biodiversity protection as a pre-requisite for sustainable development, as well as setting out a detailed EU Biodiversity Action Plan to achieve this.

This Plan specifies a comprehensive plan of priority actions and outlines the responsibility of community institutions and Member States in relation to each. The Birds and Habitats Directives constitute the backbone of the EU's internal policy on biodiversity protection. However, it is worth noting that Natura 2000 makes a substantial contribution not only to EU environmental policy, but also to regional and agricultural/rural development policies.

#### National Policy

The European Directives were transposed into national legislation in Italy, France and Spain. For a detailed overview of this legislation, please refer to the Report by the same others at the basis of this Policy Brief. As far as the Protection of Biodiversity is concerned the CBD requires Member States to adopt a National Strategy on Biodiversity. The Italian Environment Ministry should have prepared an Italian Plan for Biodiversity.

To avoid delays, Italy, with the support of the WWF, simply translated the EU version of the Plan. However, at the time of writing the Report (2010) by the same others at the basis of this Policy Brief Report was written, the plan should have been under preparation.

Some preparatory activities, however, have already been implemented. Moreover, a regional law on biodiversity was under preparation in the Latium region in 2010. In Spain, the strategic framework for the implementation of Natura 2000 is represented by the Spanish Forest Plan, approved in 2002, and the Natural Heritage and Biodiversity State Strategic Plan.

#### Regional Policy Framework

For the Report at the basis of this Policy Brief, regional legislation for 5 regions was analysed: Latium and Piedmont in Italy, PACA in France, and Andalusia and Catalonia in Spain. Catalonia was the first region to legislate on the matter (1985) and PACA did not legislate at all on the issues at hand. For a detailed overview of this legislation, please refer to the Report.

**CASE STUDY 1: THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK****Defining the Decision Making Process**

Under the Bird Directive, Member States select the most suitable sites and designate them as Special Protected Areas (SPAs). Since 1994 all SPAs form an integral part of the Natura 2000 ecological network. On the contrary, Special Areas of Conservation are designated in three stages.

Each Member State must draw up a list of sites hosting natural habitats and wild fauna and flora previously identified by the Directive. On the basis of the national lists and by agreement with the Member States, the EC subsequently adopts a list of Sites of Community Importance (SCI), i.e. "a site which, in the bio-geographical region or regions to which it belongs, contributes significantly to the maintenance or restoration at a favorable conservation status of a natural habitat".

No later than six years after the list of SCIs has been adopted, the Member State concerned must designate it as a Special Area of Conservation. Member States must take all necessary conservation measures to guarantee the maintenance or restoration, at a favorable conservation status, of habitats and/or the populations of species in Special Area of Conservation.

Member States may decide whether prepare appropriate management plans for the sites or eventually decide to integrate conservation measures into other development plans. Moreover, the Directive requires that an assessment is carried out in order to analyse the implications of any plan or project not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the plan likely to have a significant effect thereon.

Thus, the Habitats Directive introduces for the first time for protected areas, the precautionary principle; that is that projects can only be permitted having ascertained no adverse effect on the integrity of the site. Every six years, Member States must report on the measures they have taken pursuant to the Directive. The EC must draw up a summary report on the basis thereof.

**General Presentation**

In Italy, the Natura 2000 network is composed by 2.288 SCIs and by 597 SPAs. Both types of areas cover the 20% of the Italian territory. The Latium Region Natura 2000 areas cover 25,7% of the regional territory. Fifty-six of these areas are located in national and regional protected areas. Almost all the management plans by the Regional Council in November 2009. There is some delay in the implementation of the Natura 2000 network, in particular in the planning of the Management Plans and in the identification of conservation measures. The Piedmont region has designated 123 SCIs and 51 SPAs 15, which cover 67 % of the regional area, almost half of which are inside already protected areas. Before the regional law was approved, the national legislative framework was applied. Consequently, the region has incurred in some delays in the identification of the conservation measures, such as the preparation of the management plans. Also in

France, there have been delays in the implementation of Natura 2000, which started only in the 2000s. Right from the start, the process of identifying the zones was strongly discussed and debated. For many actors, key stakeholders had not been involved in the process and the lack of information on the management methodology gave raise to a massive misunderstanding and worrying. In Spain, the list of sites to be included in Natura 2000 began in 1997. Previously, several Special Protection Areas for Birds (SPAs) had been designated through two government agreements (1987 and 1992). With these two antecedents, the Directorate General of the Natural Environment of Catalonia continued working to improve the degree of fulfilment of the objectives of the Directive on Habitats in Catalonia. The Catalan proposal of Natura 2000 was approved in 2006.



## Stakeholders

The governance of the Natura 2000 network presupposes a vertical dimension. Priorities, organisational and implementing rules are established at European level and then translated at National level. At the EU level, the EC guides the overall implementation process. The EC assures also the harmonisation of the documents to be prepared by Member states, such as the Monitoring report. In addition, the EC gives support in evaluating the conservation status and in the monitoring of the Natura 2000 sites. In the process of national transposition of the Directives, the implementation process may differ from a Member State to another in term of internal governance. The main differences concern the role played by the national and regional authorities. In Italy and Spain, the implementation takes place above all at regional level. In both cases, the competences of the implementation of the Natura 2000 network has been attributed to the regional level (Italy), with some exception: for example in the case of those sites which are located in or coincide with national parks (Spain), where the responsibility has been attributed to the respective Ministries of the Environment. Concerning Italy, the cooperation dialogue between the Ministry and the regional authorities takes formally place within the "Conferenza Stato- Regioni". In practise, contacts and exchange of views and information between the central and the regional level take place also on an informal basis. Being the responsible for the implementation of the Natura 2000 Network, Italian regional authorities shall identify the sites; assure the conservation of habitats and species as well as manage the sites. In France, instead, the implementation process is mainly driven by central administrations and in particular, by the Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development, Energy and Sea (MEDEM) and the DREAL, regional representative of MEDEM placed under the authority of the *préfet*. Nonetheless participation of territorial actors (local and regional authorities, environmental NGOs as well as fishermen, hunters, farmers) was specifically sought by the French strategy on the implementation of the Habitats Directive both in the identification and in the planning of the DOCOB, strategic document defining the objectives and identifying the projects to be implemented for all the Natura 2000 areas. In practise, delays in the launching of the process and the need to avoid that a procedure of infringement to be opened against France, Natura 2000 areas were identified by the central government and more precisely by the Regional Directorate for Environment (former DIREN). In the PACA region, for example, this first step involved very little dialogue with local actors. Such contradiction created misunderstandings and suspicions among local elected representatives.

## Financing

Financing is one of the main issues at stake in the implementation of Natura 2000 Network. The provisions of the Habitats Directive establish that the responsibility for the management of the Natura 2000 areas lies with the Member States. At the same time, the Habitats Directive recognizes that due to the unequal distribution of species and Habitats among Member States, some of them could be exposed to a bigger financial burden than others. For this reason the possibility of a community co-financing has been foreseen by the Directive. Community funds and initiatives available for supporting Natura 2000, include: EAGGF funding for environmental farming etc.; European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) offers possibility for co-financing investments in the framework of environment programmes, etc.; European Social Fund (ESF) offers co-financing for training, promotion of employment opportunities, etc.; LEADER+ allows for the implementation of integrated rural development programmes; INTERREG allows for transboundary cooperation between Member States; Cohesion Fund which in 2010 was available to Spain, Portugal and Greece and aims at improving environment and trans-European transport networks; and LIFE-Nature: The LIFE-Nature instrument provided pump-priming investment activities related to site set-up and experiments in restoration and new management techniques. In the case of Italy, community resources have represented the main financial sources.



The identification of the Natura 2000 areas was carried out mainly with LIFE resources and structural funds. To a lesser extent, national funds were transferred to regional authorities through. In the case of the Latium region, it is hard to assess how much funds were obtained for the Natura 2000 – some details of European, National and regional sources are provided in the Report at the basis of this Policy Brief. As for France, a financial convention was signed between local managers of Natura 2000 and the State in order to finance Natura 2000. In Spain, the total investment provided by the State through the Directorate General of the Environment and Forest Policy for the period 2009–2012 amounts to 20.888.992 euro.

### **Regional Authorities**

In Andalusia, the Ministry of environment of the autonomous community is the main responsible for the implementation of Natura 2000, together with other stakeholders such as the town councils and other organisation with authority granted by the Ministry of the environment. Catalonia actively participated to the identification of the lists of Natura 2000 sites, by collecting the scientific information needed, by producing cartography of species of interest for conservation and several inventories of fauna; and by undertaking participation actions in order to involve stakeholders in this process. The list was finally adopted through a government agreement. In PACA the regional council has no direct legal competences on environmental issues, except for those environmental issues which are likely to have a strong impact on territorial planning. However, the progressive disinvestment of State in many environmental issues and projects co-financed by the regional council (in the framework of the State-Region Contract) has led the PACA regional council to prioritize and select carefully its investment in the environmental field. The Piedmont region is responsible for environmental issues and has a strong role in the implementation policies. Concerning Natura 2000, it has selected and proposed the SCIs and SPAs and has the competence to protect the areas.

In Latium the main responsibilities lie with the “Environment and Cooperation among People Directorate – Conservation of Nature and Regional Observatory for the Environment Area”. Although the implementation of Natura 2000 Network would require a cross-sectoral integration among areas, collaboration with other directorates remain weak. Examples of cooperation do exist but are occasional.

Up till now, the Latium region has made extensive use of internal and external expertise. Extensive details can be found in the Report at the basis of this Policy Brief. Although consultation and participation should be integral parts of the process of identification and of preparation of the management plans, this has only sporadically taking place. In the Piedmont region, drafts of management plans are to be finalised through a participatory approach.

In practice, plans are presented to the municipalities involved and subsequently also other local stakeholders should be involved. Implementing this participatory approach is not an easy task. The Region attempted to communicate the draft SCIs without any response from local authorities. Moreover, the Regional authority has not organised the formal meeting yet, because considers the management plans as a very sensitive issues, better not to be touched in the period preceding the regional elections. Actually, most of the time local population ignores the existence of Natura 2000 or does not understand the peculiarities of this kind of network. Other times, the implementation of Natura 2000 caused problems with local populations (e.g. Latium, Piedmont and PACA regions). The lack of involvement of local population represents one of the major problems in the implementation of Natura 2000 network.



### CASE STUDY 1. THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK: *TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSREGIONAL COOPERATION*

#### European and Mediterranean Policies

At community level, the Habitats and Ornithology committees and related expert groups organised in the framework of the respective Directives are the main venues for competent authorities to meet and discuss. These committees and groups represent also a venue for national representatives to define the EU common position in fields related to the CBD to be represented at the COP – Conference of the Parties, the body responsible for the implementation of the CBD. Habitats and Ornithology committees are reserved to representatives of Member States at Ministerial level. At territorial level, there does not exist structures putting together regional authorities and/or other territorial actors actively involved in the implementation of Natura 2000. The Mediterranean represents one of the biogeographical regions of Natura 2000. Beyond this, it is not possible to talk of a Mediterranean dimension of the Natura 2000 network, either at policy or at project level. In the Euro-Mediterranean partnership Natura 2000 or the conservation of Natural areas in general has not been considered a priority area of cooperation. Neither the Union for the Mediterranean would include specific projects in this sense.

#### Italy and Latium

There are several open questions on the implementation of the Natura 2000 network in Italy and in Latium. First, the management of the areas. Although management plans were prepared or are about to be finalised by most of the Italian regions, the management of the Natura 2000 networks causes many worries. One of them is the identification of the actors responsible for implementing Natura 2000. In principle, regional authorities would have the ultimate responsibility. In practice, they do not dispose of the financial and human resources to manage the areas in an efficient and effective manner.

Furthermore, there are issues such as lack of surveillance and scarce quality of the impact evaluation. Second, lack of coordination at different levels. On the one hand, this concerns coordination among Italian regions and, on the other hand, coordination with the EC. Third, there is lack of information on Natura 2000 and misunderstanding of the peculiarity of this network, especially vis-à-vis protected areas.

### CASE STUDY 2. PREVENTION AND FIGHT FOREST FIRES: *POLICY FRAMEWORK*

#### European Policy

The Treaties for the European Union make no provision for a common forest policy but there is a long history of EU measures supporting forest-related activities, coordinated with Member States, and in which regional authorities play a prominent role.

There is a broad array of Community policies derived from diverse EU sectoral policies, e.g. protection of biodiversity and climate change. Consequently, the European Commission is involved in the fields of information, prevention, fire fighting and restoration of burned surfaces. A framework forest strategy was launched by the Council in 1998 and an EU forestry action plan 2007-2011 was adopted in 2006. The first Community instruments were Regulations (EEC) No 3528/86, which dealt with the protection of forests against atmospheric pollution and fire and the Regulation, and (EEC) No 2158/92 creating a common database including all the fires occurred in the Member States.

Both regulations expired in 2002 and were incorporated in Regulation (EC) 2152/03 known as the “Forest Focus” Scheme. Additional measures were co-financed from activities concerning rural development. As of 2007, the new financial instrument for the environment is Regulation (CE) N. 614/2007 LIFE+, which operates in an even broader context and has a project approach.



The Commission is fully committed to contributing with Member States to preventing and fighting forest fires, as well as restoring the forest potential by means of several Community instruments, in particular through (i) information and support activities; and (ii) preventive measures. Concerning the first, the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) was established in 2003 in the framework of Forest Focus by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Directorate General for Environment (DG ENV) of the European Commission (EC). In response to the devastating forest fires in 2007, EFFIS was further upgraded to include satellite tracking of ongoing fires and a six-day forecast. The core of EFFIS consists of a scientific and technical infrastructure at the JRC carrying out research on forest fires and operating a web based platform. The second Community instrument focuses on prevention through structural measures, such as the creation of forest paths, water supply points, and firebreaks through Rural Development Plans.

Furthermore, projects related to forest fires prevention are financed through the EU research framework programmes, regional policies and structural funds. In addition, the EC is taking a long-term approach to prevention in its Communication published in April 2009. In the Council Conclusions on a Community framework on disaster prevention (November 2009) announced a further strengthening of the Community framework on disaster prevention, putting an emphasis on further developing knowledge-based disaster prevention policies at all levels of government and on the exchange of information, knowledge and best practises among Member States and stressed the importance of regional cooperation between Member States and cooperation between regions in different Member States.

#### **Italy, Latium and Piedmont**

According the art.117 of the Italian Constitution, civil protection is a concurrent competence between the State and regional authorities. The competence on this matter is attributed to the Regions within the limits and principles established by a State-level framework law. For example, the prevention and fight against forest fires are regulated by State-level framework law 353/2000 on forest fires, which puts emphasis on prevision and prevention rather than on active fighting forest fires.

This law specifies that the competences in this branch of civil protection activities is attributed to the Regional authorities, identifies the main stakeholders and recognises to the regional authorities the possibility to define the role of other stakeholders.

The State Forest Service organises public awareness campaigns; runs the cadastre of burnt areas; collects, elaborates and publishes yearly fire statistics; and leads investigations. The provisions of the framework law 353/2000 are specified through regional laws. For example, the regional law 29/2002 on the management of forest resources regulates the role and competences of the Latium region as regional law 16/1994 does in the Piedmont region.

In general, at the regional level the main strategic documents are the “Regional Plan for the prevision, prevention and active fight against forest fires” which are prepared according to the guidelines defined at the central level.

The regional plans are often rather detailed and cover a wide variety of actions, including: (i) Main causes of fires and factors influencing fire occurrence; (ii) Areas interested by fire; (iii) High risk fire areas and periods; (iv) Actions that may cause fire in the areas; (v) Location of equipments and human resources; (vi) Location of fire lines and water supply; and (vii) Training needs.

**France and PACA**

In France and especially in the Southern/Mediterranean (“red zone”) departments before 1962 forest fire prevention was mainly managed by local firemen and forest rangers, without a national framework policy. In 1963 the Interdepartmental Entente, gathering 15 departments of the East-South of France, was created with the aim to fight forest fires. A law of 1965 allowed the Ministry of Agriculture to finance constructions for the protection against forest fire. PACA adopted a Forest Strategy in 2005, dedicated to the development of regional forests, the prevention of forest fires, and post-disaster rehabilitation. Prevention of forest fire is not a legal competence of French regions. Forests are managed mainly by State and departments, including fire fighting. Thus, the PACA Forest Strategy is the result of a strong political will, triggered by the fact that forest constitutes 40% of the PACA territory. The Forest strategy provides financing for the Inter-communal Forest Clearing and Developing Plans (PIDAF), the main local strategic programming tool in the prevention and fight against forest fires. A ministry circular of February 1980 gave the opportunity to improve the prevention of forest fire, defining the clearing of brushwood in a broader way than removing scrub as such. The State and the regional council agreed to Local Clearing Plans as key elements of forest fire prevention policy. A first attempt was implemented in a small municipality in the Var department. Its failure showed that action should be undertaken at a wider scale, at the inter-communal level.

**Spain, Catalonia and Andalusia**

In Spain, most of the competences on fire risk management have been transferred to the autonomous communities which established coordination channels with the central government. At regional level, planning documents provide for coordination with local authorities. Prevention and fight against forest fires are covered by Emergency Forest Fire Plans, INFOCA in Andalusia and INFOCAT in Catalonia.

Some differences exist between these Plans. In Andalusia, there exist actually two types of local plans, Local Emergency Plans and Self-Protection Plans. The planning processes are open for public participation. In Catalonia, the legal framework for forest fire risk management is very comprehensive and includes regulations on issues such as: (i) Actions on causes; (ii) fire propagation prevention actions; (iii) techniques, extinction mechanisms and emergency management; and (iv) restoration measures of the burnt areas. Its development is closely linked to episodes of large forest fires (GIFs), such those of 1986 (70,000 hectares burnt) which made the Catalan Department of Agriculture launch the fire risk management programme “Foc Verd” and those of 1994 (80,000 hectares burnt) which triggered the launch of the INFOCAT Plan (Forest Emergencies Civil Protection Plan of Catalonia).

The latter organises the emergency management protocols, produces fire danger maps and danger, vulnerability indexes of towns and determines which municipalities have to produce a Municipal Action Plan. These Plans organise the human and material resources, coordinate these resources with the fire brigades and other services, and guarantee the protection of people and property.

The competences on fire extinction have also been transferred to the autonomous community with cooperation protocols with the central authorities. These Plans are complemented with plans related to the planning and the management of forest and agricultural areas and territorial and urban planning, because of their relation with the distribution of forest fuels and risks infrastructures. Forest planning is organised through a hierarchical model in order to assure coherence between the low and the high level instruments. Thus the General Forest Policy Plan (PGPF) represents the most important forest planning instrument at a regional scale.



## CASE STUDY 2. PREVENTION AND FIGHT FOREST FIRES: IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

### Stakeholders

In Italy, prevention and fight against forest fire are the competences of regional authorities which concern: (i) activities for the prevention of forest fires; (ii) information campaigns; (iii) training of staff and volunteers; and (iv) actively fighting against forest fire. Regional authorities use their own means but cooperate with the fire brigade; state forest service; volunteers; national police forces and the army. The State Forest Service (Corpo forestale dello Stato - CFS) is one of the main actors in fire fighting. Regional sections of the State Forest Service were activated in 15 of the 20 Italian regions (5 regions with a special statute have their own forest service). CFS is a police force specialised in the protection of the Italian forest and to safeguard the environment. The CFS set up a database (Sistema Informativo Montagna – SIM) with information and cartographies of fires which occurred in mountain. The CFS contributes to extinguish fires with its own staff and aerial fire-fighting fleet. The fire brigades (Vigili del Fuoco - VVF) are part of the Ministry of Interior and aim at safeguarding people and properties. Volunteer organisations through their territorial units play also a very important role in the prevention and fight against forest fire. In case of a national emergency, the operations to combat forest fires are coordinated by the Civil Protection Department of the Presidency of the Council of Ministries through the Single Operational Centre (Centro Operativo Aereo Unificato (COAU) which is responsible for planning and coordination, both at national and international level, of aerial fire-fighting operations. In the Piedmont region the regional office of forecast and prevention is separated from that of fire fighting. In the area of prevention the region coordinates the following actions: (i) forecast of fire risk; (ii) forest maintenance to prevent fire and to facilitate the action in case of fire with forestry workers; (iii) maintenance of a network of water reservoirs for fire fighting; and (iv) recovery of burnt down areas.

In France, the State is the main actor in the prevention and fight against forest fires. Three ministries are involved in prevention policies: (i) Agriculture; (ii) Environment and Equipment; (iii) Interior. Since 1986, the préfet for the PACA region is the coordinator of the prevention of forest fire in the entire South East of France and has at disposal the Delegation for the protection of Mediterranean Forest. (DPFM). The DPFM developed the capacity to fight and prevent forest fire and the communication and information activities. The latter are increasingly important in the prevention policies. The prevention activities are shared among a wide range of stakeholders, including: (i) general councils; (ii) local networks; (iii) Communal Forest Fire Committees; and (iv) research institutes. Fire brigades are the main responsible for the fight against forest fire. Other important stakeholders are the Interdepartmental Entente, in particular its New Technologies Pole (PONT) which contributes to upgrading information and communication tools used by fire brigades.

Also in Spain, the complexity of the issue of forest fires required the involvement of several stakeholders. In Andalusia, the General Director of the Management of the Natural Environment Department is in charge with the coordination and supervision of the implementation of the Plan for the Fight Against Forest Fires in the entire region and driving the integration of the local and self-protection plans. At the county level, the authority belongs to the Commission for the Environment which is part of the Andalusian Local Government. At the local level, there are Rapid Response Groups and Forest Defence Groups in charge of channelling the participation of the public into the prevention and fight against forest fires. In Catalonia, everything related to forest uses, agricultural and livestock is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment and Housing (DMAH) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, respectively.



Within the DMAH, the Forest Fire Prevention Service is responsible for prevention. The infrastructure and development planning at a territorial level responds to the Department of Territorial Policy and Public Works, which also approves the Landscape Catalogues. The Municipal Prevention Plans are written by the town councils and provide for the participation of stakeholders at the local level. The prevention plans of the Priority Protection Among provincial authorities, the Technical Office for Municipal Forest Fire Prevention (OTPMIF) of Barcelona Provincial Government stands out, and has a fire prevention support programme. The competences for emergency extinction and management correspond to the Department of the Interior, Institutional Relations and Participation. Catalonia, like the other autonomous communities, cooperates with the central government extinction plan. Forest Defence Groups are associations of forest owners and volunteers who collaborate in prevention and extinction tasks and currently cover over 80% of the territory. The GRAF (Forest Actions Support Group) is specialising in the analysis and extinction of forest fires. The investigation of causes is the direct responsibility of the rural agent brigades, which work in coordination with the police forces. Training and research fields are covered by the Universitat de Lleida (forest and agronomy studies), the Centre de Recerca Ecològica i Aplicacions Forestals (CREAF), and the Centre Tecnològic Forestal de Catalunya (CTFC), along with the faculties of biology, environmental sciences and other engineering studies.

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### Financing

The total amount of European resources available is difficult to assess given the cross-cutting nature of the case study. Only the case of Catalonia provides some information. The budget for fire risk management policies are mainly provided by the Department of the Environment (forest planning, preventive measures and restoration of burnt areas) and the Department of the Interior (fire extinction). Spending by the Directorate General for the Environment of the Department of the Environment for 2006 was 76 million euro. In the same year, the Directorate General for Prevention, Fire Extinction and Rescue of the Department of the Interior had a global budget of 171 million euro. The budget of the Technical Office for Municipal Forest Fire Prevention of Barcelona Provincial Government had a budget of 9.6 million euro in 2006, while the Department of Natural Parks of the same body invested 1.4 million euros in prevention in protected areas. The budget of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment for fire fighting and prevention reached 95.6 million euro for the whole of the Spanish state. Spending on prevention by town councils should also be taken into account, are not very significant compared to the above indicated budgets

## **CASE STUDY 2. PREVENTION AND FIGHT FOREST FIRES: TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSREGIONAL COOPERATION**

### European Policies

In the EC, transnational cooperation has been promoted to encourage dialogue among Member states and to enhance preparedness. The Commission's Expert Group on Forest Fires (est. 1998), is composed of representatives of national authorities and aims at coordination among Member States and. The EC takes also measures to enhance the readiness of the Member States to face major forest fires.



The responsibility of the national authorities for dealing with disasters remains unchallenged but is facilitated by concerted collective efforts. The Community Civil Protection Mechanism (CCPM) was established in 2001 and aims at cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major natural or man-made disasters occurring within or outside the EU.

Participating countries offer assistance in the form of water bombing aircraft (Canadairs), helicopters, fire fighting equipment and personnel. The participating states offer assistance free of charge as a gesture of solidarity. Since 2007, up to 50% of the costs of transporting assistance are co-financed by the EC under the Civil Protection Financial Instrument. A training programme has been set up to enhance skills and improve the coordination of civil protection assistance interventions by ensuring compatibility between the intervention teams. The Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) is the operational "heart" of the CCPM, based in Brussels (EC DG Environment) and accessible 24 hours a day. Any country within or outside the Union affected by a major disaster can appeal for assistance via the MIC. Between 2007 and 2010, the MIC was used 15 times to combat forest fires. Pilot projects have also been promoted, such as the European Union Forest Fire Tactical Reserve (EUFFTR), which was launched in 2007, managed by France (until the end of 2009), and cost €4.375 million (80% EC and 20% France). Whenever the EUFFTR was used for an intervention to combat forest fires, the country requesting assistance covered the cost of fuel and other costs relating to the operation.

The EUFFTR tested innovative arrangements in combating forest fires in Europe. The planes were stationed in Bastia (Corsica), roughly equidistant from Lisbon, Athens and Sofia. The "Fire 5" project is another pilot project aiming at developing a cross border module composed of the personnel and equipment of five Member States (France, Italy, Spain and Portugal and Greece) to fight forest fires and five associated Member States (Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Slovenia and the Czech Republic). Also led by France, the main objective of this EU project is the mutual exchange of experts for common training, experience sharing and communication. The "Fire 5" could be instrumental for the establishment of an EU Civil protection force. Mutual assistance is assured through bilateral agreements, e.g. between Portugal and Spain. The border area has been defined as 15 km at both sides of the border, requests for assistance for fires outside the border area will have to come from and go to the central authorities. Within the border areas, however, regional or local fire authorities can directly request assistance across the border to the regional or local fire authority.

### **Southern Mediterranean**

Since 1998, the Barcelona process has offered a framework for cooperation on civil protection with the aim of improving Euro-Mediterranean the network of civil protection agencies in partner countries. A new regional programme on disaster management (including forest fires) was launched in 2009 with the aim of improving civil protection prevention, preparedness and response capacities at international, national and local levels. It is managed by a consortium led by the Italian Civil Protection Authority, together with the UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) and the Civil Protection Authorities of France, Egypt and Algeria, the Programme works jointly with the National Civil Protection Authorities of the beneficiary countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia, Turkey, Israel, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and observer countries of Mauritania and Libya. Further developments in this field are expected to take place in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean. The FAO's activities in Fire Management represents also an interesting framework of cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries. The FAO has coordinated the development of some tools and mechanisms, such as Fire Management Voluntary Guidelines and the Fire Management, to strengthen capacity in fire management.



## RESOURCES

For bibliographical resources, please refer to: Battistina Cugusi and Andrea Stocchiero "The NATURA 2000 Network and the Prevention and Fight against Forest Fires" available at: [http://www.medgov.net/sites/default/files/thematic\\_report\\_environment\[1\].pdf](http://www.medgov.net/sites/default/files/thematic_report_environment[1].pdf)

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## THIS POLICY BRIEF

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