

**MEDGOVERNANCE**

**ACTIVITY 3-1 – GOVERNANCE ANALYSIS**

**THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK AND THE PREVENTION AND FIGHT  
AGAINST FOREST FIRES**

*Draft version – January 2010*

# INDEX

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CASE STUDY 1: THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>The broad policy framework.....</b>	<b>7</b>
National and regional legal and policy frameworks.....	8
<b>The implementation framework .....</b>	<b>9</b>
The role regional authorities .....	14
<b>The role of transnational and transregional cooperation.....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Main issues at stake in the implementation of Natura 2000 network in Italy and in the Latium region .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CASE STUDY 2: THE GOVERNANCE OF PREVENTION AND FIGHT AGAINST FOREST FIRES .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>The broad policy framework.....</b>	<b>20</b>
National and regional legal and policy frameworks.....	22
<b>The implementation framework .....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>The role of transnational and transregional cooperation.....</b>	<b>31</b>

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The present document is the thematic report for environment elaborated within the 3-1 activity of the MEDGOVERNANCE project.

Therefore, this report aims at presenting today's actual contribution of regional actors in the "governance" of environmental policies impacting the Mediterranean territories. Governance can be defined as the coordination systems existing between government, local and regional authorities, multilateral organizations but also private actors, companies and NGOs allowing to produce public policies, decisions and projects. Coordination between this plurality of actors can be either institutionalized or ruled by procedures and even informal rules.

As for the thematic field of environment, two cases studies were identified and analysed: Natura 2000 and the governance in the prevention and fight against forest fires. These cases studies represent two interesting examples of coordination systems among actors at different levels (vertical and horizontal) and are though particularly relevant from the point of view of the multilevel interactions in place. In all the Medgovernance partners, the analysis has shown that a coordination exists between the central and territorial level. In any case, the degree of involvement of regional authorities remains linked to the level of decentralization process in place. So, Spanish and Italian regional authorities are the main actors in both the case studies. They are responsible for the implementation of Natura 2000 network, in coordination with the central level (Ministries of environment), whose responsibilities concern mainly the supervision and harmonization of the implementation process. In the prevention and fight against forest fire, subsidiarity is the guiding principle in the subdivision of competences between the regional and central level. Regional authorities are at the forefront in prevention activities but also in the active fight against those forest fires occurring in their territory, with the central level intervening in case a disaster overwhelms local capabilities. On the contrary, in France the central level is the main actor, while regional authorities play a quite marginal role in both case studies, for a matter of competences but also of regional interest.

The analysis conducted aimed to understand to what extent and how top-down level has promoted the role of the regions in these two governance systems. At this regards, it worth bearing in mind the differences existing between the two case studies. Natura 2000 is a top-down led governance system, having being designed by the European level with the intention to implement a coherent network of protected areas in the territory of the Union. On the contrary the "Prevention and fight against forest fires" remain a national competences and the input of the top-down level has mainly been addressed to the support on the implementation of prevention activities (e.g. information production and sharing; financial resources) and to encourage transnational cooperation on the active fight against forest fires.

The analysis has shown that the top down level might have an influence on the role played by regional authorities and then strengthened the multilevel features of a governance system in a specific area, although some preconditions apply and limits persist. In particular, from the results of the interviews, the following conclusions can be drawn.

The analysis has stressed that the role of the regions depends on the decentralization process in place. Also in the case of top-down led governance system as Natura 2000, in the absence of an explicit requirement for regional authorities to acquire a stronger role, domestic legislation applies. Natura 2000 directives do not contain any requirement in this sense, but simply ask for a participatory approach to be put in place. Thus, in principle, from a community level point of view regional authorities are not very different from other territorial actors (at vertical and horizontal level).

Nonetheless, in those domestic contexts where an advanced decentralization process is in place, Natura 2000 shows that top-down led governance systems with strong territorial dimension can have a direct impact on the role of regional authorities, increasing their responsibilities and competences. In Italy, the deepening of the decentralization process led to a change in the subdivision of competences between the central and the regional level, with the former assuming a role of coordination and harmonization and leaving to the regions the main responsibilities on the implementation of the network. On the contrary, in more centralized countries such as France, Natura 2000 has not led regional authorities to acquire more responsibilities and competences, being the implementation process under the control of the central level or of its local representatives (de-concentrated authorities).

In all Med-governance partners, the implementation process of Natura 2000 has had positive impact on stimulating interactions between the competent authorities and horizontal actors (participation). The analysis has shown that horizontal actors have been actively involved by competent authorities. In the case of Natura 2000 the participation process is less structured and has acquired different features on a case by case basis. In France, participation has been formalized in the framework of the COPIL. In Italy, although no formalized mechanisms have been put in place, horizontal actors (mainly, academics; NGOs; experts) have been actively involved. Interviews also stressed how horizontal actors are more likely to be involved when external expertise is required to integrate the competences of regional authorities. On the contrary, unless the involvement is justified by the strict formal requirements, participation remains weak. Consequently, the weak involvement of local population and, in many cases, of local authorities represents one of the major problem in the implementation of Natura 2000 network either in decentralized (e. Italy) or centralized (ex. France) countries. 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 complaints local populations, who reacted against the implementation process.

However, it is worth stressing the very proactive role played by horizontal actors, especially environmental NGOs, in the governance process of Natura 2000. Beyond the will of the competent authorities, environmental NGOs have played a considerable role in monitoring the implementation of the network, exerting a control at territorial level also by denouncing cases of non-fulfilment of the directives requirements. Some of these denounces were also at the origin of some of the infringement procedures opened against Italy by the European Commission.

On the other hand, the prevention and fight against forest fires is based on a more formalized multilevel governance. In the case of Italy, for example, all the intervening horizontal actors involved in the active fight against forest fires (e.g. Fire brigade, State forest service; volunteer organizations) have established a contractual relation with the regional authorities in order a clear subdivision of tasks and responsibilities to be assured.

In addition to this, the analysis of the case studies has shown that the top-down level have given a valuable contribution to the governance systems in place. In the case of forest fires the Commission is fully committed to contributing with Member States to the prevention and fight of forest fires, as well as to restoring the forest potential by means of several Community instruments. In particular, two main types of activities have been foreseen: information production and diffusion (mainly by the European Forest Fire Information System - EFFIS) and support to prevention related activities by favoring the implementation of structural measures, such as the creation of forest paths, water supply points and firebreaks. Measures of this kind can be foreseen in the Rural Development Plans, implemented in the framework of the European Policy on Rural Development. Furthermore, projects related to forest fires prevention

can be financed also by the EU research framework programme or the regional policy and the structural funds.

In a context where resources are scarce, many of the interviewees consider the European funding, as the main financial resources for implementing Natura 2000. Interviews have not led to make an exact esteem of these resources. However, it is worth noting that many of these funding come from the resources dedicated to regional and rural development, which are, at least in Spain and Italy, directly managed by the regional level. The results of the interviews suggest that also in this case there is a direct link between the decentralization process and the importance acquired by European financial resources. One possible explanation can be the fact that in more decentralized contexts, regional authorities can define the strategy and then decide where resources should be concentrate in. In France, on the contrary that in Spain and Italy, the implementation of Natura 2000 is mainly financed by national funding.

When analyzing the ways top-down level could contribute to the governance and to the strengthening of the role of the regions, transnational and interregional levels should also be taken into account. The assumption here is that the top-down level can contribute to the governance also by encouraging transnational and interregional linkages both at political (ex. Political dialogue) and at operational (ex. exchanging of practices and know-how) by fostering cooperation between stakeholders.

At this regards, the analysis has shown that the contribution of the top-down level to the promotion of the transnational governance presents different features in the two case studies.

In the case of “prevention and fight against forest fires” the top-down contribution to the development of transnational dimension of governance is particularly relevant. At community level, trans-national cooperation has been promoted in order to stimulate coordination and promote exchange of views among Member states (within the Commission’s Expert group on Forest Fire) and contribute to enhancing preparedness (danger assessment and exchange of fire fighting means) when facing major forest fires. At this aim the Community Civil Protection Mechanism, established by Council Decision in 2001<sup>1</sup>, is the main instrument that enhances Community cooperation in civil protection matters. Furthermore, transnational dimension has been considered as being particularly relevant in the case of the Southern Member states, which are among the European countries the most affected by forest fire. Several pilot projects with a clear Mediterranean dimension have then been implemented, such as the European Union Forest Fire Tactical Reserve – EUFFTR and the “Fire 4”, which is likely to represent the future basis for the establishment of a EU civil protection force. Moreover, since 1998 the Barcelona process has offered a framework for cooperation on civil protection with the aim of improving euro-Mediterranean cooperation in this area and of strengthening the network of civil protection agencies in partner countries. Further developments in this field will take place in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean. In addition, at multilateral level, FAO’s activities in Fire Management represents another interesting framework of cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries.

However, with the exception of few cooperation projects financed in the framework of the Interreg initiative (ex. INCENDI), there does not exist an analogous interest and effort in promoting dialogue and cooperation at regional or local level. On the other side, the interviews carried out with the Italian regional stakeholders stressed that cooperation is not considered a priority and sometimes not even an option, being not well aware of the opportunities and considering cooperation a matter of central authorities.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Decision of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument and the Council Decision of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast)

On the side of the Natura 2000 network, transnational dimension has not been developed yet, being the implementation process quite demanding and still ongoing. Interviews revealed that the lack of attention to the transnational dimension represent a point of weakness of the network. As said by one of the persons interviewed, the sum of the management plans would not necessarily led to the conservation of habitats and species. The objective of establishing a coherent network of protected areas would require the promotion of cooperation and the creation of interlinks among some of the areas, by creating for example joint management plans or implemented coordinated conservation measures. This could highly conceivable, for example, in the case of migratory birds. This would require the EU to define integration among Natura 2000 areas and to encourage and support cooperation and exchange of practices, as well as a stronger role of Regions at EU level. At present, at EU level, the harmonization efforts is carried out within the Habitat and Ornis committees established by the directives and composed by representatives of Member States at central level. No similar venues exist for regional authorities to dialogue and express views, although some of them represent the ‘official Natura 2000 authorities’ in many Member states.

As far as cooperation is concerned, the Life programme have represented a good window of opportunity to exchange practices for regional authorities within the national borders, while Interreg has promoted territorial cooperation among European regions and territorial actors. However, the exchange of experiences remain sporadic, between regional authorities both at national, European or at Mediterranean level. Among the possible reasons, the lack of awareness of the relevance of cooperation but also the difficulty to combine the complexity of the participation to cooperation projects with the daily amount of work related to the implementation of the network.

Moreover, interviews stressed that coherence among the different Natura 2000 areas is at stake even at national level, between the different regions. The case of Italy has especially shown that the coordination and harmonization effort carried out by the central level has not been sufficient to assure the coherence of the network at national level. The guiding lines prepared by the Ministry of the environment do not assure a sufficient degree of harmonisation of the management plans. Being their requirements quite broad and in the absence of a supervision from the national authority, regional authorities benefited of a high level of discretionality in the process of transposition of this national guidelines into regional ones. This has created a great diversity in the way existing management plans have been defined.

# CASE STUDY 1: THE NATURA 2000 NETWORK

## THE BROAD POLICY FRAMEWORK

### *European policy framework*

NATURA 2000 was launched by the Habitats Directive in 1992<sup>2</sup> 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. The aim is to contribute towards ensuring bio-diversity through the conservation of natural habitat types listed in Annex I, habitats of the species listed in Annex II (*Habitat Directive*), and bird species listed in Annex I (*Birds Directive*).

In order to achieve this goal the Habitat Directive plan 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. These habitats and species complement the 181 bird species (and other migratory species) defined under the Birds Directive as being in need of special protection measures.

The establishment of these networks of protected areas also fulfils a Community obligation under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>3</sup>. Entered into force on 29 December 1993, the CBD commit participating parties to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010 so as: to conserve biological diversity; to use biological diversity in a sustainable fashion; to share the benefits of biological diversity fairly and equitably.

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 and to make sure that it is effectively implemented. The Community's engagement on the achievement of the 2010 target was renewed by the Gothenburg European Council and again in 2002 in the aftermath of the Johannesburg conference on sustainable development. Today, nature and biodiversity are some of the priorities of the EU's sixth environment action programme 2002-12.

In 1998, it adopted a biodiversity strategy<sup>4</sup> in order to fulfil Community's legal obligation under the art.6 of the CBD, which requires "to develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adapt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or programmes [...]". Art. 6 of the CBD asks also to "integrate as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies".

Moreover, biodiversity action plans were adopted under this strategy in 2001, with the aim of supporting integration of biodiversity protection into EU policies concerning other policy areas natural resources, agriculture, fisheries and economic development.

These engagements were translated into operational terms by the European Commission communication on "Halting Biodiversity Loss by 2010 – and Beyond: Sustaining ecosystem

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<sup>2</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cbd.int/>

<sup>4</sup> Communication of the European Commission to the Council and to the Parliament on a European Community Biodiversity Strategy (Com (98)42) ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/docum/pdf/com\\_98\\_42\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/docum/pdf/com_98_42_en.pdf))

services for human well-being”<sup>5</sup>. 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. It also contains indicators to monitor progress and a timetable for evaluations.

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 and regional legal and policy frameworks

### *National policy framework*

European Directives were transposed into national legislation.

Medgovernance partners	Main National legal framework
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Decree of the republic President, 8 September 1997, n. 357</i> (modified by the D.P.R. 12 march 2003, n. 120). This represent the implementing regulation of the Habitats Directive 92/43/CEE. Furthermore, this regulation specifies the subdivision of competences among the main actors involved at national and regional level;</li> <li>- <i>Ministerial decree. 3 april 2000</i>, list of the Specially Protected areas (Directive 79/409/CEE) and of the Specially Areas of Conservation (Directive 92/43/CEE);</li> <li>- <i>Decree of the Environment Ministry, 3 September 2002</i>, Guiding Lines for the management of the Natura 2000 sites.</li> </ul>
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Royal Decree 1997/1995</i>, of 7 December, on measures to contribute to guaranteeing biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora</li> <li>- <i>Royal Decree 1193/1998</i>, of 12 June, modifying Royal Decree 1997/1995, of 7 December, on measures to contribute to guaranteeing biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora</li> <li>- <i>Act 42/2007</i>, of 13 December, on Natural and Biodiversity Heritage</li> </ul>
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Birds and Habitat Directives have been transposed in French law and notably within the Environment code: 3 decrees and the 2005 law on the Rural Territories.</li> </ul>

*Policies, programmes, strategies, Directives... in each participating country concerning the thematic and the case studies*

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 the Italian Plan for Biodiversity. To avoid delays, Italy, with the support of the WWF, simply

<sup>5</sup>[http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/current\\_biodiversity\\_policy/biodiversity\\_com\\_2006/pdf/com\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/current_biodiversity_policy/biodiversity_com_2006/pdf/com_en.pdf)

translated the EU version of the Plan. However, the plan should be under preparation, although none of the people interviewed could predict how long this process will take. Some preparatory activities have already been implemented.

Moreover, a regional law on biodiversity is in preparation in the Latium region. This law will include specific requirements on the Natura 2000 network.

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*

Medgovernance partners	Main Regional legal framework
Latium region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decree of the Regional Council n. 2146, 19 march 1996, which approved the list of the SIC to be become part of the Natura 2000 network;</li> <li>- Decree of the Regional Council n. 1103, 2 august 2002, which approved the guiding lines for the preparation of the Management Plans and the sustainable regulation of the SIC and SPAs.</li> </ul>
Catalonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Act 12-1985 on natural sites in Catalonia</li> <li>- Act on the environmental assessment of programmes and plans A16820-16830</li> </ul>
Andalusia	- Law 7/2007, of the 9th July, regarding the Integrated Management of Environmental Quality (GICA)
PACA	None
Piedmont	Regional Law n.19, June the 29 2009 “Testo Unico sulla tutela delle aree naturali e della biodiversità” (Consolidated Law on Natural Areas and Biodiversity).

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK**

### *What is the decision making process?*

Under the Bird Directive, Member States select the most suitable sites and designate them directly as Specially 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 individuated by the Directive and listed in its annexes.

On the basis of the national lists (pSCI) and by agreement with the Member States, the Commission will then adopt a list of Sites of Community Importance (SCI), that means “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 type in

Annex I or of a species in Annex II” (art. 1 (l)). No later than six years after the list of SCI 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 areas 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 (art. 6 Habitats Directive) – incidence evaluation - must be 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. Projects may still be permitted if there are no alternatives, and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest. In such cases compensation measures will be necessary to ensure the overall integrity of network of sites. As a consequence of amendments to the Birds Directive these measures are to be applied to SPAs also. Member States shall also endeavour to encourage the management of features of the landscape to support the Natura 2000 network.

Every six years, Member States must report on the measures they have taken pursuant to the Directive. The Commission must draw up a summary report on the basis thereof.

#### *General presentation*

*In Italy*, the Natura 2000 network is composed by 2288 SCI and by 597 SPAs. Both these areas cover the 20% of the Italian territory.

The Latium Region Natura 2000 areas cover the 25,7% of the regional territory. 56 of these areas are located in national and regional protected areas. Almost all the management plans were prepared, and on 19 november 2009 a group of 7 Management Plans, realized by the Life Natura 2006 NAT/IT/000050 *Co.Me.Bi.S*, were adopted by the Regional Council. Nonetheless, there exists still some delays in the implementation process 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 SPA,s 15, that 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 had applied. Consequently, the region has registered some delays in the identification of the conservation measures, such as the preparation of the management plans. In the absence of a specific regional law, “incidence evaluation” were the only conservation measures carried out by the regional authority.

Also *in France*, there have been delays in the implementation of Natura 2000, which actually started only in 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 July 1996, such situation led the Government to put on ice the process of Directive transposing, re-launched later with by the Ministry of Ecology which elaborated a specific strategy for the implementation of Natura 2000 in France.

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. Moreover, some new sites were incorporated into the list to ensure the maintenance of the good state of conservation of all habitats and Community interest species present in Catalonia, in fulfilment of the obligations of the Directive. The Catalan proposal of Natura 2000 was approved in 2006.

#### *Contribution of the various stakeholders*

The governance of the Natura 2000 network assumes a vertical dimension. Priorities, organisational and implementing rules are established at European level and then translated at National level.

At the EU level, the European Commission 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. At this aim, the EC takes part at the meeting of the Habitats and Birds working groups, involving representatives of the competent authorities of all the Member States. Moreover, the EC supports Member States in the preparation of the national reports and prepares the EU report on the implementation of the Natura 2000 network.

Finally, the EC exerts a control over the implementation process, by opening the procedures of infringement against those Member States which do not respect the requirement of the Directives.

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.

The Italian and Spanish ministries of environment assure the relationships with Brussels and play a role of coordination and guide, as well as of harmonisation of the implementing process among the regions (Italy) and autonomous communities (Spain). At this aim, for example, the Italian Ministry elaborated guidelines for the preparation of the management plans of SCIs and SPAs.

The cooperation between the Spanish state and the autonomous communities in terms of definitions of Natura 2000 Network sites forms part of the Spanish Forest Plan and the Natural Heritage and Biodiversity State Strategic Plan. Both these instruments commit to cooperation between the State Authorities and the Autonomous Communities: to support actions proposed or being developed by the Communities in their corresponding strategic planning documents; to coordinate such actions with those undertaken at central level; to assure the coherent implementation of the conservation and improvement of biological diversity in forest sites related policies. Specific strategic planning documents are also prepared at regional level. In the case of Andalusia, for example, a reference should be made to the Zoning Plan for the Andalusian area (POTA) and the planning measures for the Natural protected areas of Andalusia (zoning plans for Natural resources and governing plans for use and management; public use programme; plans for sustainable development).

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.

According to the DPR n. 357/1997, Regional authorities are competent for establishing the level of involvement of other local authorities, even though on the basis of the Law 59/97 preference should be given to the provinces. Moreover, on a case by case analysis the DPR n. 357/1997 foresees the possibility for regional authorities to involve also other kind actors (ex. Mountain communities, municipalities, other organisation responsible for the management of protected areas).

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.

As for the DOCOB, they should be drafted within a dialogue process involving local actors, gathered, since 2005, within a Steering committee named COPIL, managed and coordinated by a local authority (chosen by the *préfet*).. DOCOB should be finalised by the local *Préfet*. Once validated, the objectives are implemented through the elaboration of Management Conventions. The COPIL is also responsible for the management of the protected areas. It is worth stressing the role of control exerted by the central level. Impact studies for those projects not foreseen by the DOCOB are being increasingly demanded by State authorities in order to authorize development projects located in Natura 2000 areas.

#### *Financing split between local, regional, national, European/Mediterranean, international actors*

Financing is one the main issue at stake in the implementation of Natura 2000 Network.

The provisions of the Habitat Directive establish that the responsibility for the management of the Natura 2000 areas lies on Member States. At the same time, the Habitat 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. In the absence of a specifically dedicated fund and considering the link between Natura 2000 and the others policies (in particular with the Regional and Rural Development policies), Member States have used the possibilities available with the different Community financial instruments (see Box 1). This situation was reiterated also in the 2007-2013 programming period. A communication of the European Commission, and a related working document, has better specified the way the

different European Financial Instruments could contribute to Natura 2000, giving particular emphasis to the management related issues<sup>6</sup>.

**Box 1: Community Funds and Initiatives available for supporting Natura 2000<sup>7</sup>**

**EAGGF:** Through Rural Development, the fund offers support for environmental farming (Articles 22-24 of Council Regulation (EC) 1257/99), for farming in areas under environmental restrictions (Article 16 of Council Regulation (EC) 1257/99, as amended by (EC) No 1783/2003 and forestry practices in rural areas all over the EU territory. These measures apply in Natura 2000 areas as well. Moreover, following the 2003 CAP reform, Article 16 applies only in Natura 2000 areas. All Member States provide some support for farmers within Natura 2000 sites, to a greater or lesser extent.

**ERDF:** The Fund offers possibility for co-financing investments in the framework of environment programmes, measures and schemes for nature conservation as long as they contribute to overall economic development of the region

**ESF:** The Fund offers possibility for co-financing types of actions like training, promotion of employment opportunities, etc.

**LEADER+:** This Structural Funds' Initiative allows for the implementation of integrated rural development programmes for selected areas. These programmes can include management planning and actions as well as promotion and information measures for the Natura 2000 sites.

**INTERREG:** This Structural Fund's Initiative allows for trans-boundary co-operation between Member States, as well as between Member States and non EU countries and has been used for the promotion of enhanced management of trans-boundary sites between Member States as well as with non EU countries. It has proved to be an important source of funds for trans-boundary projects.

**Cohesion Fund:** This fund is currently available only to three countries, Spain, Portugal and Greece and aims to assist these countries to make progress in environment and transeuropean transport networks. The Fund provides support to projects rather than programmes. Environmental support from the fund has been used so far to a lesser extent for facilitating some restoration and management projects for Natura 2000 in Ireland (which was eligible up to 2003) and could be as appropriate one possible source of funding.

**LIFE:** The LIFE instrument comprises three components - LIFE-Environment, LIFE-Nature and LIFE-Third countries. Although the resources available for LIFE are rather limited compared to ERDF and EAGGF, the instrument has been used by all Member States and facilitates projects for a great number of stakeholders. LIFE-Nature provided pump-priming investment activities related to site set-up and experiments in restoration and new management techniques. About 10% of all Natura 2000 sites have been supported. LIFE-Environment has been used by relatively few Member States for habitats management, particularly in cases where other environmental functions are also relevant (e.g. wetlands, coastal ecosystems), mainly for time-limited investment, but not for ongoing management.

*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 in the framework of the following projects: BioItaly (1993-1996) and of the LIFE-Natura 99 "Verifica della rete Natura 2000 in Italia: modelli di gestione". During the programming period 2000-2006, Natura 2000 benefited also of the structural funds.

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<sup>6</sup> Communication From The Commission To The Council And The European Parliament, Financing Natura 2000 Brussels, 15.07.2004, COM(2004)431 final (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2004:0431:FIN:EN:DOC>)

<sup>7</sup> Communication on Financing Natura 2000 - Working Document ([http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing\\_workdoc\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/financing/docs/financing_workdoc_en.pdf))

At a lesser extent, National funds were also deployed to regional authorities through the Framework Programme Agreements (APQ- Accordo di Programma Quadro) stipulated among the State and Regional authorities.

*In the case of Latium region,*

To establish the right amount of funding which has contributed to the financing of Natura 2000 network is a difficult task. The main sources of financing are the following:

- Regional resources established by the regional budget;
- National resources (through the APQ)
- European resources.

The financial resources, though, are quite diversified. In the programming period 2007-2013, Latium region has been using the following financial sources<sup>8</sup>:

Source		Amount
APQ7 (2008-2009)	“Conservation of biodiversity and implementation of the Regional ecologic network”	5.000.000 €
Rural Development Plan 2007-2013	Measures (213, 224, 323.a)	22.949.467 €
Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013		21.000.000 €
LIFE (COMEBIS – until september 2009)		1.100.000
<i>Total</i>		50.049.467

As for France, a financial convention was signed between leaders of local Natura 2000 processes and State to finance their leadership in the Natura 2000 process; it covers all the expenses involved by the process (ex. human resources, external expertise, etc.). The projects that will come out of the DOCOB will then be co-financed through a diversity of channels:

1. Small grants allocated by the DDEA;
2. Co-financing from the regional council for environment education actions;
3. *Ad hoc* financing according to the partnerships identified within the River Convention.

Finally, for the period 2009–2012, the investment provided by Spain through the Directorate General of the Environment and Forest Policy amounts to 20,888,992 euros.

**The role regional authorities**

*Competences<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup> This information was gathered through the following PPT: [http://www.lifecomebis.eu/privato/archivio\\_documenti/24.pdf](http://www.lifecomebis.eu/privato/archivio_documenti/24.pdf)

*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 a 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.

As far as the *PACA* region is concerned, the regional council has no legal direct 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. In this perspective, the *PACA* regional council chose to be involved at the lowest level possible on the implementation of Natura 2000 and to concentrate on the following activities:

- 1 The management of Regional Natural Sanctuaries
- 2 The management of 5 existing Regional Natural Parks (PNR) and the management of three PNR under preparation;
- 3 The participation to the management of 3 National Natural Parks (Crins, Mercantour, Port-Cros).

So, although often invited, representatives of the Regional Council participate rarely to COPIL. Nevertheless, the regional council is a partner of several Natura 2000 processes and projects provided that these processes and projects have an impact on the priority defined by the regional council such as the management of protected natural areas or the constitution of a green corridor in the regional territory.

The regional council does not contribute to the financing of Natura 2000. In particular cases, the regional council may finance projects having a broader impact than Natura 2000 alone. For instance, in the context of the Val de Durance Natura 2000 area, the *PACA* regional council plays an active role in the process notably as:

- 1 A member of the SMAVD board;
- 2 A participant to the COPIL;
- 3 Co-financing some projects that are identified by the DOCOB and be implemented in the next step.

In the case of Italy, regional authorities are at the forefront of the implementation of the Natura 2000 network.

The Piedmont Region is responsible for the environmental issues. It has a strong role in the implementation of the policy. Concerning Natura 2000, it has selected and proposed the SCIs and SPAs and has the competence to protect the areas. At this aim, the Region is in charge of defining and implementing the necessary conservation measures. In these tasks, the region has been supported by the academics and by the IPLA (Istituto per le piante da legno e l'ambiente),

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<sup>9</sup> Explain how in policy areas such as culture migration, but also environment, competitiveness or transports, regional authorities may initiate actions and projects *beyond* their formal competences on this issue.

an in-house institute of the Region Piedmont. The latter, with the support of experts and consultants, has also prepared the study for the management plans for 13 zones, that are considered the most threatened areas.

Once conservation measures are established, the Region shall designate a subject “ente gestore” as managing body. The managing body could be a park, a protected area or the local administration. They should adopt a management plan, to be then approved by the Region, that describes the necessary measures and sanctions for the protection of the SCIs. According to the regional law, the Region shall delegate the responsibility for the management of the areas to local authorities.

Within the Latium region the main responsibilities rely on the Environment and Cooperation among People Directorate – Conservation of the nature and regional observatory for the environment Area. This Area is composed by two offices, both of them working on Natura 2000 but with different tasks. Moreover, ARP is another very important actor in the implementation of Natura 2000 in the Latium Region. In 2008 it was incorporated in the region and in particular in the Environment directorate. Although natural protected areas (defined according to National law) represent their main area of competences, ARP’s role in Natura 2000 has increased over the last years.

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 (ex. with the department responsible for urbanism and the department of agriculture, which collaborated to the preparation of the call for proposal in the framework of the Rural Development Plan) although they take place on a sporadical basis.

More precisely, the competent directorate of the directorate are the following:

- Identification of the sites; technical support to Natura 2000 Sites; preparation of reports (ex. support to the Ministry of Environment in the preparation of the National report on the implementation of the Directives); updating the information on the Natura 2000 sites (every 2 years); monitoring of the Natura 2000 on the entire regional territory and not only on the SCIs and SPAs. Other actors contribute to the monitoring of these areas: Ministry of Environment;; Universities; Protected Areas (Regional Law n. 29/97);
- To carry out the environmental incidence evaluation;
- To carry out a technical revision of those management plans prepared by external actors. Actually, in most of the cases, the Latium region did not prepare the management plans directly, but it has delegated this task to the beneficiaries (ex. municipalities; provinces; ARP – Regional Agency of Natural Parks). The Management plans should be adopted by the Regional Council. Most of the plans were prepared but have not been adopted yet. The adoption of the plans represents an important step in the implementation of the Natura 2000 network.
- To extrapolate the conservation measures from the Management Plans and when necessary to integrate them with further measures;
- To carry out the preliminary technical investigation of projects aiming at the conservation of SCIs and SPAs;
- To define technical requirements of the conservation projects to be realised;
- To develop specific webpages aiming at diffusing information and published the Natura 2000 network;

Up to now Latium region has made extending use of internal (e.g ARP or “enti parco”, i.e. those organisms responsible for the management of regional protected areas, such as natural parks) and external expertise. The identification of the areas saw the participation of various actors (ex. universities, civil society organisations such as the WWF Italy). External expertise has been deployed also in the preparation of the management plans. This phase saw the involvement of different kind of actors, such as consultants or environmental NGOs, universities, those organisms (ex. enti parco) responsible for the management a national or regional protected area.

In this framework, ARP carries out technical activities and contributes to the implementation of the Natura 2000 network. In practise, ARP:

- Has prepared some Management plans (ex. SPA Monti Lepini Centrali, which includes also a SCI). The planning process saw the involvement of external experts, as well as mountain communities and municipalities;
- Has conducted studies and implemented activities related to the monitoring of the Natura 2000 areas;
- Has identified conservation measures in some SPAs;
- Has implemented pilot projects in order to promote the sensibilisation of local population and facilitate the understanding of Natura 2000 network (ex. local SPAs offices).

Environmental NGOs (mainly, WWF, Legambiente and LIPU) do play a role in the implementation of Natura 2000. They have been involved directly by the national or regional administrations. So, for example, in 2009 WWF Italia took the lead of 8 working groups on biodiversity involving experts at the aim of supporting the national level in the planning of the Italian strategy on biodiversity.

In the 90s, these organisations were also involved in several LIFE projects aiming at paving the way for the setting up of the Natura 2000 network. They also contributed to the development of the National guidelines for the preparation of the Management Plans and in the preparation of the first 9 management plans. Beyond the activities directly linked with the implementation of Natura 2000, NGOs has played a considerable in monitoring the implementation of the network, exerting a control at territorial level also by denouncing cases of non-fulfilment of the Directives requirements. Some of these denounces were also at the origin of some of the infringement procedures opened against Italy by the European Commission.

Although, consultation and participation should be integral part of the process of identification and of preparation of the management plans, their involvement was not systematically organised but rather sporadic. It is worth noting that in the Piedmont region, the draft of the management plans are to be finalised through a participatory approach to be financed with the resources of the RDP. In practice, some of these plans will be presented to the municipalities involved. Later consultation tables should be organised also with other local stakeholders. On the opinion of some of the stakeholder interviewed, implementing this participatory approach is not an easy task. In recent years, the Region already 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<sup>10</sup>, Piedmont and PACA regions).

Moreover, they carried out activities dealing with diffusion of information and sensibilisation of local population and local authorities. In this context, some pilot projects have been implemented with the aim of diffusing information and sensibilising local population. The ARP, for example, set up local SPAs offices with the aim of informing and advice local authorities and the population on Natura 2000.

Nonetheless, the lack of involvement of local population represents one of the major problem in the implementation of Natura 2000 network.

## **THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSREGIONAL COOPERATION**

### *Contribution to European and Mediterranean policies*

At community level, the Habitats and Ornis 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 Ornis 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.

Moreover, there are very few examples of trans-national or trans-regional cooperation in this area. Although, some of the territorial cooperation programmes did and still recognise the possibility to implement transnational or interregional cooperation projects in this field, none of the territorial cooperation projects implemented by Latium region has concerned Natura 2000. Nonetheless, there exists example of cooperation with other Italian regions or territorial actors, mainly financed by the LIFE programme (ex. COMEBIS project<sup>11</sup>).

The Mediterranean represents one of the bio-geographical region 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.

Furthermore, complementarity exists between the Natura 2000 networks and the activities foreseen by the Barcelona Convention and in particular by its protocol on Specially Protected Areas and Biological Diversity Protocol. Nonetheless, synergies have not been established among the two initiatives.

### **Main issues at stake in the implementation of Natura 2000 network in Italy and in the Latium region**

There are several open questions on the implementation of Natura 2000 network. They mainly concern:

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<sup>10</sup> See for example: <http://www.lavocedellago.it/n45/pag2.htm>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.lifecomebis.eu/eng/home.cfm>

1. *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. In particular, there are some open questions at this regards. One of these concerns the identification of the actors responsible for implementing Natura 2000. In principle, regional authorities would have the ultimate responsibility. In practise, they do not dispose of the financial and human resources to manage the areas in an efficient and effective manner. When a SCI or a SPA coincide with a protected areas, the management has been given to the authority responsible for the management of that areas. In other cases, such as in Piedmont region, Natura 2000 areas shall be managed by local authorities (ex. municipalities and provinces). Others are still awaiting a responsible authority to be identified.

Similarly and consequently, stakeholders have individuated other factors hindering the conservation of these areas. In particular, they lament a lack of surveillance and a scarce quality of the impact evaluation carried out on those projects, initially not foreseen in the management plans of the Natura 2000 areas.

2. Lack of coordination at different levels:
  - a. Among Italian regions. The guiding lines prepared by the Ministry of the environment do not assure a sufficient degree of harmonisation of the management plans. Being their requirements quite broad and in the absence of a supervision from the national authority, the process of transposition of this national guidelines into regional ones was quite discretionary. This has created a great diversity in the way existing management plans were defined;
  - b. At community level. As said by one of the persons interviewed, the sum of the management plans would not necessarily led to the conservation of habitats and species identified by the Habitats and Birds Directives. The objective of establishing a coherent network of protected areas would have required a strengthening of cooperation between competent authorities and the creation of stronger linkages between similar or interdependent Natura 2000 areas (e.g. those interested by the migration of a determined specie of Birds), by creating for example joint management plans or by implementing coordinated conservation measures.
3. *Lack of information on the NATURA 2000 and misunderstanding on the peculiarity of this network, especially vis-à-vis protected areas.* This is the result of a weak involvement of local authorities as well as local population and stakeholders in all the phases of the implementation, starting with the identification of the areas where SICs and SPAs has been established. Moreover, there is a need for competent authorities (at all levels) to play a more proactive role in linking the Natura 2000 with the socio-economic development of the areas: for example, by promoting the diffusion of information and awareness; by providing providing appropriate financial resources when planning crucial strategic documents such as the Rural Development Plans or the Regional Operational Programmes.

## **CASE STUDY 2: THE GOVERNANCE OF PREVENTION AND FIGHT AGAINST FOREST FIRES**

### **THE BROAD POLICY FRAMEWORK**

In the European Union the formulation of forest policies is mainly under the competence of the Member States due to the respect of the principle of subsidiarity. The absence of a common forestry policy is also due to differences in terms of forest resources and national policies in place. In any case, although the Treaties for the European Union make no provision for a common forest policy, there is a long history of EU measures supporting certain forest-related activities, coordinated with Member States, and in which regional authorities play a prominent role.

Forests are affected by a broad array of Community policies and initiatives arising from diverse EU sectoral policies. For several decades now, environmental forest functions have attracted increasing attention mainly in relation to the protection of biodiversity and, more recently, in the context of climate change impacts and policies. Consequently, various Directorates-General (DGs) at the European Commission are involved in the development and monitoring of measures in the field of information, prevention, fire fighting and restoration of burned surfaces.

A framework forest strategy was launched by the Council in 1998<sup>12</sup> and an EU forestry action plan 2007-2011 was adopted in 2006<sup>13</sup>. The Action plan recognises forest fires as one of the main factors influencing the ecological condition and productive capacity of forests in the EU. For this reason, the Commission has foreseen measures in order to enhance the protection of EU forests, mainly by enhancing the diffusion of information and the carrying out of studies, as well as supporting forest fire prevention measures.

The first Community instrument in this field was the Regulation (EEC) No 3528/86, which dealt with the protection of forests against atmospheric pollution and fire and which foresaw the implementation of fire prevention infrastructures. Later, the Regulation (EEC) No 2158/92 represented a step forward in the Community contribution in the prevention of forest fires, by creating a common database (the so called “Common core”) including all the fires occurred in the Member States with a view of improving the knowledge of the causes and dynamics of forest fires and elaborating better targeted strategies for fighting forest fires. All the measures concerning forest fires were so regrouped and implemented through multi-annual national programmes.

Both these regulations expired in 2002 and were incorporated by a single piece of legislation, the Regulation (EC) 2152/03 of the European Council and Parliament on monitoring of forests and environmental interactions, known as “Forest Focus” Scheme. Forest Focus was a Community scheme, running from 2003 to 2007, for harmonised, broad-based, comprehensive and long-term monitoring of European forest ecosystems. It concentrates in particular on protecting forests against atmospheric pollution and fire, and provided specific measures for developing forest monitoring activities and studies on forest fires. On the other hand some measures related to infrastructures against forest fires were co-financed through the Regulation (EC) N. 1257/99 on rural development, later on continued by the Regulation (EC) N. 1658/2005. As of 1 January 2007, the new financial instrument for the environment is the

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<sup>12</sup> [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/c\\_056/c\\_05619990226en00010004.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/pri/en/oj/dat/1999/c_056/c_05619990226en00010004.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/action\\_plan/com\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/fore/action_plan/com_en.pdf)

Regulation (CE) N. 614/2007 LIFE+, which operates in an even broader context but having a project approach. Anyway, 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, two main types of activities: information and support; preventive measures.

*Information and support.* At this aim a specific tool has been created: The European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS)<sup>14</sup>, 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), with the intent of harmonizing fire information systems in the Member States and set-up a common core database on forest fires at the EU level. EFFIS aims at supporting the services in charge of the protection of forests against fires in the EU and neighbouring countries, by providing EU level assessments from pre-fire to post-fire phases, thus supporting fire prevention, preparedness, fire fighting and post-fire evaluations. 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. In addition EFFIS is supported by a network of Experts on Forest Fires from 22 EU countries and observers States that meet regularly with the EC services at least twice per year. Moreover, EFFIS produces reports on forest fires<sup>15</sup> and maintains a huge EU fire database and along the main fire season (June to September), maps of forecasted fire danger are emailed daily to forest services and civil protection services of EU, fire statistics for the on going fire season are exchanged quarterly and newsletters are issued monthly.

There is also a Pilot project implemented by DG environment, which to improve the EFFIS in several areas, following an explicit request of the European Parliament (Resolution of European Parliament of September 2006).

*Support prevention through structural measures.* such as the creation of forest paths, water supply points, and firebreaks can be foreseen in the Rural Development Plans, implemented in the framework of the European Policy on Rural Development. Furthermore, projects related to forest fires prevention can be financed also by the EU research framework programmes or the regional policy and the structural funds.

In addition, the European Commission is taking a long-term approach to prevention and published a Communication on a Community approach to the prevention of natural and man-made disasters (April 2009). The Commission will in this context explore the possibility of developing a specific initiative on forest fires<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, the recent Council Conclusions on a Community framework on disaster prevention (November 2009)<sup>17</sup> within the EU announced a strengthening of the Community framework on disaster prevention, putting an emphasis on the 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. The conclusions have also stressed the importance of regional cooperation between Member States and cooperation between regions in different Member States facing the same or similar types of risks.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

<sup>15</sup> Forest fires in Europe. Annual Report 2008: <http://effis.jrc.ec.europa.eu/download/forest-fires-in-europe-2008.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Communication on a Community approach on the prevention of natural and man-made disasters, including fires

<sup>17</sup> [www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/NewsWord/en/jha/111537.doc](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/NewsWord/en/jha/111537.doc)

## National and Regional Legal and Policy Frameworks

*Italy: The case of Latium and Piedmont region*

The coordination of prevention and fighting against forest fires is part of the competences of the National civil protection service and of the Regions. The organisation of civil protection presents interesting multilevel features, involving all the vertical levels (National; Regional and local authorities) and horizontal actors (public and private entities, research centres) according to a subdivision of competences defined by law and inspired by the principle of subsidiarity: i.e. the activities in the civil protection fields ought to be handled by the lowest competent authorities. The other levels should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level. According the art.117 of the Italian Constitution, civil protection is a shared (concurrent) competence between the State and regional authorities. This means that the competence on this matter is attributed to the Regions, within the limits and principles established by a State-level framework law.

In the case of Italy, the prevention and fight against forest fires are regulated by State-Level Framework Law 353/2000 on forest fires. Law 353/2000 represented an innovation having put an emphasis on prevision and prevention rather than on active fight of 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 (provinces, municipalities, mountain communities - comunità montane; State Forest Service; fire-brigades- volunteers) in the activities of prevision and prevention and active fight against forest fire.

In particular Law 34/2006 – on reorganisation of the State Forest Service - underlines the traditional and still relevant role played in this field by this Service together with the Civil protection department and the Regions. For instance the State Forest Service is organising public awareness campaigns; running the cadastre of burnt areas, established to support database activities requested to municipalities; collecting, elaborating and publishing yearly fire statistics; leading investigations activities on forest fires<sup>18</sup>

The provisions of the framework law 353/00 are better specified through Regional laws, which explain in further detail the role and competences of Regional authorities in this field. In particular, the Regional Law 28 October 2002 n.29 on the management of forest resources, Title VIII – Prevention and active fight against forest fires- regulates the role and competences of the Latium region (planning; implementation of preventions activities; organisation of information campaigns; delivery of training to the personnel and volunteers; to carry out the activities related to the active fight against forest fire, in collaboration with other stakeholders). In the case of Piedmont, the reference regional law is the n. 16/94.

At regional level, the main strategic document are the “Regional Plan for the prevision, prevention and active fight against forest fires”). Such plans are to be prepared according to guidelines defined at central level, prepared by the Ministry responsible for the civil protection, with the support of Department of civil protection of the Presidency of the Council of Ministries; the State Forest Service; the fire brigade. Once prepared, the plan is adopted by the Regional Council (Giunta regionale) and revised yearly. The Latium region plan contains the following information:

- a. Main causes of fires and factors influencing fire occurrence;
- b. Areas interested by fire (cartography) during the previous year;

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<sup>18</sup> Information on these and other activities are available on: <http://www3.corpoforestale.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/313>

- c. High risk fire areas (updated cartography with the indication of the main vegetation types);
- d. Indication of the high risk period. For the Latium region the high risk period goes from the 15 June to 30 September;
- e. Index of danger;
- f. Actions that may potentially cause the occurrence of fire in the areas and during the high risk period indicated in this plan;
- g. Activities for the prevision and prevention of forest fires;
- h. Number and localisation of equipments and human resources as well as the procedures for the active fight against forest fire;
- i. Number and localisation of fire lines and adequate sources of water supply;
- j. Needs in term of training of volunteers and of the personnel dedicated to the prevision, prevention and fight against forest fire; needs in term of studies and researches to be carried out in order to prevent forest fires;
- k. Training activities to be realised;
- l. Economic and financing prevision for the activities foreseen by the Plan.

The duration for the Latium Region Plan<sup>19</sup> goes from 2008 to 2011, while the Piedmont one from 2007 to 2010<sup>20</sup>. The latter plan describes the regional territory and its vulnerable areas. It designates a regional system, based on three actors: the State Forest Service, the Corpo Volontari antincendi boschivi AIB (the Volunteer Fire Fighters) and the National Fire Brigade. The plan illustrates the figures and distributions of fires and all the activities to forecast, prevent and fight t fires.

Again, according to the framework law 353/2000, special fire plans have to be established for the National parks and the State reserves: they are prepared by the local management bodies and approved jointly by the Ministry of Environment and the State Forest Service.

#### *The case of France and of the PACA region*

Before 1962, *in France* and above all in the Southern/Mediterranean departments (in the “red zone”), forest fire prevention was mainly managed at local level by firemen and forest rangers actions, without national framework policy. This situation has been changing since the adoption of a law in 1965 allowing the Ministry of Agriculture to finance constructions for the protection against forest fire. At the regional level, another landmark was the creation in 1963 of the Interdepartmental Entente, which gathers around 15 departments of the East-South of France with the aim of fighting against forest fire.

*The PACA* regional council has adopted a Forest strategy in 2005, dedicated to the development of regional forests (sustainable forest management; supporting the forest and wood industries; supporting and financing the Local Forest Charter processes; improving the attractiveness of regional forests for the general public) with the prevention of forest fires and post-disaster rehabilitation.

It is worth stressing that the prevention of forest fire is not a legal competence of French regions. Actually, in France, forests are managed mainly by State and departments notably for fight against fire. Thus, the intervention of the PACA regional council on these issues is the result of a strong political will, due to the fact that forest constitutes 40% of the PACA territory and is therefore a strategic dimension of regional territorial planning.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.protezionecivile.regione.lazio.it/protezione\\_civile/singola\\_focus.php?id=33&rav=no&page=&q=](http://www.protezionecivile.regione.lazio.it/protezione_civile/singola_focus.php?id=33&rav=no&page=&q=)

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.regione.piemonte.it/montagna/incendi/piano/dwd/aib2007\\_2010.pdf](http://www.regione.piemonte.it/montagna/incendi/piano/dwd/aib2007_2010.pdf).

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.

The region PACA has been a laboratory for the implementation of this policy, launched by the ministry circular of the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1980. The circular was the first significant impact to improve the prevention of forest fire, defining the clearing of brushwood in a broader way than removing scrub as such. At that time, the State and the regional council agreed to use the Local Clearing Plans as a key element of the forest fire prevention policy. A first attempt was implemented in small municipality in the Var department. Its failure allowed to realise that action should be undertaken at a wider scale of action, at the inter-communal level. It was also agreed that clearing actions should be accompanied by the construction of forest path, water feed channels, etc. Hence, the programming tool became the PIDAF.

#### *The case of Spain and the Andalusia and Catalonia Autonomous Communities*

In Spain, most of the competences on fire risk management have been transferred to the autonomous communities, which establishes the corresponding coordination channels with the central government in each case. At regional level, the different planning documents provide for coordination with local authorities as appropriate in each case.

The prevention and fight against forest fires is covered at an autonomous level by Andalusia and Catalonia by the preparation of the Emergency Forest Fire Plan (respectively INFOCA and INFOCAT). Some differences exist between the two autonomous community. In Andalusia, there exist two types of local Plans:

At a local level, two types of Plans exist:

- Local Emergency Plans relating to Forest Fires: The objective being to establish the organisation and procedure for action and mobilize the local or assigned resources to be used in the fight against forest fires and face the emergencies that arise as a result of such fires.
- Self-Protection Plans for Forest Fires: the objective being to establish the measures and actions necessary for the fight against forest fires and to attend to the emergencies that result from such fires. These actions must be carried out by those companies, isolated settlements, residential areas, campsites and buildings or activities situated in danger zones.

The planning processes are open for public participation and as such, prior to being formalised, they are communicated to the general public. Other types of participants are involved in the preparation of Strategic Plans, together with the Ministry for the Environment within the Andalusian Regional Government. For example, the Seville Council, together with the Ministry of Housing and Land Zoning, developed a number of guidelines regarding urban coordination, which are not linked to the Ministry for the Environment.

*In Catalonia*, the legal framework for forest fire risk management (risk planning, preventive actions and extinction operation) is very wide and includes regulations on the following main issues: Actions on ignition causes and risk activities; Fire propagation prevention actions; Techniques, extinction mechanism and emergency management; Restoration measures of the burnt area. Its development has been closely linked to the episodes of large forest fires (GIFs) which have affected the region since the 1980s. For instance, after summer 1986, with around 70,000 hectares burnt (affecting the emblematic mountain of Montserrat), the Catalan Department of Agriculture launched the fire risk management programme "Foc Verd". The Foc- Verd programme represented the first step in the implementation of preventive actions and

in the setting up of the governance in this field, through the creation of the Forest Defence Groups (ADFs), the Brigade of Rural Agents, The Group of immediate intervention and Forest volunteers.

In 1994, with almost 80,000 hectares burnt, the Department of the Interior launched the INFOCAT Plan (Forest Emergencies Civil Protection Plan of Catalonia), and most of the current legislation on fire risk was developed. After the 1998 GIF episodes (with 21,000 hectares affected), the programme “Foc Verd II” was presented and the technical unit GRAF (Forest Action Support Group) was created within the fire brigade of the Government of Catalonia.

The INFOCAT plan organises the emergency management protocols. It produces the basic fire danger maps and the danger and vulnerability indexes of towns. It determines the periods of forest fire danger in function of the development of resources according to the regulations prevailing in Catalonia and especially the Decree 64/1995 on forest fire prevention measures. Moreover, it establishes the criteria for the activation of the Plan. In function of the characteristics of the forest fire and the vulnerable elements affected, the emergency state level (from 0 to level 3) is determined.

In function of the value assigned to the towns, the INFOCAT determines those which have to produce the Municipal Action Plan (Regulated by Act 4/1997 and Decree 64/1995), approved by the competent body of the town and homologated by the Civil Protection Committee of Catalonia. Activate since 1997, the Municipal Action Plans organise the human and material resources of the town and region to face the emergency and coordinate these resources with the fire brigades and other services, as well as to guarantee the protection of people and property. It is a practical guide to organising the emergency plan.

Moreover, in terms of the emergency prevention and management instruments at municipal level, the Catalan Forest Act 6/88 establishes that towns in high fire risk areas must produce the corresponding Forest Fire Prevention Plan. Together with the Residential Areas Self-Protection Plans, these must be integrated into the Municipal Action Plans.

The competences on fire extinction, as happens with forest competences, have been transferred to the autonomous community. However, there are several cooperation protocols with the central authorities to coordinate the extinction of forest fires in general, based on the level of seriousness of the fire. Likewise, the Catalan mechanism participates in fire extinction in other regions of the state, even in other countries, if the risk situation makes it necessary and possible.

These documents are complemented with other plans related to the planning and the management of the forest and agricultural areas, as well as territorial and urban planning, given their relation with the distribution of forest fuels and risks infrastructures.

Forest planning, in particular, is organised through a hierarchical model in order coherence to be assure between the low and the high level instruments. So, according with the provisions of the Spanish Forest Act and of the Catalan Forest Act 6/88, the General Forest Policy Plan (PGPF) represents the most important forest planning instrument at a regional scale. The previous plan was valid until 2004, while the PGPF 2004-2014 has not been approved yet, although a draft of the programme has been prepared. The PGPF draft provides, for the first time, for the identification and recognition of forest land of special interest for the prevention of forest fires, which will have effects on urban and territorial planning. The PGPF should be articulated in Forest Resources Plans (PORFs). Finally, the forest planning instruments are developed at estate level (Forest Management Simple Plans [PGSFs], Forest Management and

Improvement Technical Plans [PTGMFs] and Forest Plans [POFs], the two former usually for private estates and the latter for public estates).

## THE IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

### *Contribution and participation of the various stakeholders*

In the case of Italy, the prevention and fight against forest fire falls mainly under the competences of regional authorities. In particular, at the level of the Latium Region the competent department is the Directorate of Civil protection – Activities of the Presidency and in particular the areas dedicated to the Volunteers and Local authorities. Also at national level, the main actor is the Presidency of the Council of Ministries – Department of civil protection (DPC), while the political responsibility relies on the President of the Council of Ministers.

The competences of the Regional authorities concern mainly:

1. Activities for the prevention of forest fires. Prevention consists in implementing actions to reduce the causes and interventions to limit the damages a forest fire may produce: employment of systems and equipments of surveillance and control; monitoring the territory; interventions for improving the vegetations of natural and forests environments. The latter intervention has received special attention in the case of Latium region (R.L. 29/2002).
2. Information campaigns are organised by regional and local authorities 30 days before the high risk period begins in order to inform the population on the main causes of forest fires and behavior to adopt in the event of fire.
3. Training of staff and volunteers: Regional authorities are responsible for the organisation of technical and practical training dedicated to the stakeholders (people and volunteers) involved in the prevision, prevention and active fight against forest fire.
4. Active fight against forest fire, which consists in surveillance, detection, in sounding the alarm and in dousing the fire using terrestrial and aerial firefighting means.

In defining the “Plan” Regional authorities identify the activities related to active fight against forest fire. Regional authorities carry out these kind of activities by using their own means but above all in collaboration with the resources, facilities and means of other stakeholders: fire brigade, State forest service; volunteers; National police forces and army (in case of extreme necessity); aerial firefighting means of other regions as well as national aerial fighting means.

Concerning forest fires, the State Forest Service (Corpo forestale dello Stato, CFS) is still one of the main actors. Regional sections of the State Forest Service have been activated in 15 regions (with the exclusion of the Regions of special statute having their own local forest Services). CFS is a police force specialised in the protection of the Italian forest resources and in the safeguard of the environment. It cooperates actively with the DPC and regional authorities in the fight against forest fire carrying out activities of civil protection services and public assistance; environmental monitoring and criminal investigation; analysis and data collection on forest fires. In particular, CFS set up a database (Sistema Informativo Montagna – SIM), which collects information and cartographies of fires occurred in mountains areas and which is connected with the burnt land cadastre. The SIM is considered a very useful tool and has represented an useful starting point for municipalities in the setting up of the cadastre of the areas interested by fire.

Moreover, the CFS contributes in extinguishing fire by its staff and its own aerial fire-fighting fleet managed by the Aerial Operational Centre (Centro Operativo Aereo – COA). The aerial

operational centre (COA) was established in 1992 and located within the General Inspectorate of the National Forest Corps. The COAS supports and coordinates the operational activities carried out throughout the national territory by the State Forest Service. In 2004, Regional Operational Centres were created in order to improve the efficiency of fire-fighting activities.

In addition to this, the State Forest Service has territorial branches: Regional and Provincial Commands as well as local presides at municipal level (*Comandi Stazione*), which play a very important role in defending forests from fire. When a fire occurs they are key stakeholders in the coordination of the fire-fighting activities.

The active fight against forest fire sees the involvement of other important stakeholders, such as the fire brigade and the volunteer organisations. Fire brigade (Vigili del Fuoco, VVF) is a public body, organised within the Ministry of Interior, Department of fire brigade, public assistance and civic defence. As far as the dousing of forest fire is concerned, the fire brigade assures the implementation of the operations aiming at safeguarding the safety of the people and the integrity of properties. Where specific agreements are stipulated, Fire brigade may also collaborate with regional authorities in the active fight against fire.

Finally, Volunteer organisations (to be registered in the Civil protection database created at regional level) through their territorial units play a very important role in the prevention and fight against forest fire. The modalities of their involvement have to be specified in the Regional Plan on prevention and fight against forest fire.

In case of national emergency, the operations linked at the dousing of forest fire 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). Established in 1982, it is a command and control centre of the fire-fighting aerial means contributing to the activities of the Civil Protection. The COAU is responsible for the planning and coordination, both at national and international level, of the aerial fire-fighting operations. As far as the forest fire are concerned, the COAU establishes contacts with the National (CON) and the Regional (COR) Operational Centres of the Forest Corps as well as with the SOUP set up by the regional authorities.

In Piedmont region, after a recent reorganization inside the regional office the forecast and prevention sector has been separated from the fire fighting. The first is under the Forest policy offices. The latter comes under the civil protection sector because of the necessity of a reunification under a common operative unit for all the natural risks. Under a formal agreement, the Region coordinates the activities of the State Forest Service, the National Fire Brigade and the volunteers, that designed all the prevention and fight fire regional system. All the operative procedures are approved by the regional executive body.

In the area of prevention the Region coordinates the following actions:

1. Forecast of fire risk. The region has established a system of daily warning, with the technical support of the regional agency of environment (ARPA) and IPLA in order to know in advance on the basis of meteorological conditions, for every small zone in the territory where there is a fire hazard. (financed from 2009 by the ALPFIRS Interreg project).
2. Forest maintenance to prevent fire and to facilitate the action in case of fire with forestry workers.
3. Maintenance of a network of water reservoirs for fire fighting. The Region has monitored all the water points. (financed by the Piano di Sviluppo Rurale, the Rural Development Plan).

4. Restoring of burnt down areas (financed by Piano di Sviluppo rurale the Rural Development Plan).

The operative system in fighting fire is coordinated by the Region with the State Forest Service that manages an operative unit that receives the call for intervention. The State Forest Service directs all fire fighting. The volunteers teams and the National Fire Brigade in the urban areas are directly involved in the suppression of the fire. The region has an agreement with the national department of civil protection for the airborne fire fighters (planes and helicopters) and has a contract with a private company for regional aircraft.

The region is in charge for the training of volunteers and provides them with all the necessary equipment.

The State Forest Service is organized in one regional department, 7 provincial departments, 70 stations.

The National Fire Brigade is organized with a regional direction, 8 provincial units, 31 professional units and 77 volunteer units.

The AIB Volunteers has around 5000 members, for 51 areas (area di base) and 239 teams. It is hierarchically organized. It is an association established in 1994 and has had a standing agreement (convenzione) with the regional authority since 2001. It is unique in Italy for its organisation and dimension.

The operative system is based on a “sala operativa unificata permanente regionale” single operations room with forestry staff under direct responsibility of Region. It coordinates and organizes all the activities for fighting forest fires.

In France, the State is the main actor on the prevention and fight against forest fire. Three ministries are particularly involved in prevention policies:

- Ministry of Agriculture is in charge of the protection of forest against fire; it is financing actions and projects implemented in the framework of the forestry code and aiming at risk assessment, public information, forest monitoring. These actions are financed through the Conservatory of Mediterranean Forest (CFM) but also through the State/region contract. The CFM consists in budgets allocated by the Ministry of Agriculture (programme 149 “forest”) in favour of the *Préfet* of the South Zone as the coordinator of prevention and fight policies in the 15 Mediterranean departments. The beneficiaries are mainly public bodies involved in prevention activities: State, local authorities, national public bodies (ONF, ONCFS, INRA, Cemagref...) or local public establishments bodies (Entente, SDIS...) and also NGOs and associations involved in such activities;
- The Ministry of Environment and Equipment is in charge to implement the environment laws and particularly those referring to forest fire prevention fire (PPRIF) and to risk communication. It also impacts prevention policies through its action on urbanism;
- The Ministry of Domestic Affairs is in charge of the fight against fire but is also involved upstream in the risk prevention policies, notably air monitoring and the prevention activities implemented by the departmental fire services (SDIS).

Since 1986, the *préfet* for the PACA region has been designated as the coordinator of the prevention of forest fire in the whole South East of France. To support the *Préfet* for the PACA region, a dedicated service was created within State local administration: the Delegation for the protection of Mediterranean Forest. (DPFM). The creation of the DPFM has allowed

developing strongly the activities carried out in the PACA region to fight and prevent forest fire and to develop the communication and information activities.

Communication and information actions are increasingly becoming a key dimension of the prevention policies. Changing individual behaviours may be a lever to reduce risks and to improve the fight against fire. The issue at stake in the long term is also to change the public image of Mediterranean forest that are mainly seen as a risk rather than a resources and a component of life quality.

The prevention activities are shared among a wide range of stakeholders and in particular among:

- General councils that finance clearing works and also participate to information and communication activities.
- Local networks taking care to suppress the continuity of the flammable materiel
- Communal Forest Fire Committees that have a vigilance role at local level in order to give warning to the fire fighters in case of outset;
- Research institutes: the Agronomy National Research Institute (INRA) implements research programmes on the prevention of forest fire (FIRE PARADOX); the CEMAGREFF also contributes to the development of mapping tools;
- The Institute for Mediterranean Forest was created by the Interdepartmental Entente in order to implement communication activities towards the general public.

As far as communication and information activities, the main actors are the following:

- The regional council which is a major co-financer of the communication and information activities;
- The Interdepartmental Entente;
- The Forest Foundation (created in 1989);
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Education which launched in the 1990s joint programmes in order to raise awareness among youth on forestry issues.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, in the activities related to the active fight against forest fire, fire brigades are the main responsible. Fire brigades are under the responsibility of the General Direction for Civil Security of the Ministry of Interior. Other important stakeholders is thee Interdepartmental Entente and in particular its New Technologies Pole (PONT) which contributes to upgrade the 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 Department for the management of natural environment is one the main stakeholders. It is placed under the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment, whilst the General Director for the Management of the Natural Environment is in charge of the Regional Operative Management, in other words, the coordination and supervision of the implementation of the Plan for the Fight Against Forest Fires in the entire region as well as driving the integration of the local and self-protection plans.

At a county level, the authority belongs to the Commission for the Environment which forms part of the Andalusian Local Government and the County Management of the Plan is the jurisdiction of the Government Delegate. The Operational Management of the Plan, including

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<sup>21</sup> Notably the programme “At the forest school” established in 1990 for primary school pupils

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At a 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.

At the level of the Government of Catalonia, everything related to forest uses – forest management and regeneration of burnt land – and agricultural and livestock uses 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 (among other functions, it records the statistics and perimeters of fires and produces a daily risk map). The infrastructure and development planning at a territorial level corresponds to the Department of Territorial Policy and Public Works, which also approves the Landscape Catalogues.

The preventive actions (silvicultural treatment and infrastructures) are developed through prevention plans. The Municipal Prevention Plans are written by the town councils and provide for the participation of social stakeholders at a local level. Finally, their approval provides for the participation of the authorities. The prevention plans of the Priority Protection Perimeters are produced by the forest authority, with the participation of social stakeholders.

Among the provincial authorities, the Technical Office for Municipal Forest Fire Prevention (OTPMIF) of Barcelona Provincial Government stands out, and has a fire prevention support programme.

Awareness-raising campaigns are developed jointly by the Department of the Environment, the Department of the Interior, and Barcelona Provincial Government. Moreover, action protocols with the local authorities are established for the management of information in episodes of extreme risk.

The competences for emergency extinction and management correspond to the Department of the Interior, Institutional Relations and Participation. Moreover, Catalonia, like the other autonomous communities, cooperates with the central government extinction plan.

The extinction operations provide for collaboration protocols with social stakeholders and local authorities in case of fire. In particular, the responsibility relies on the Fire Brigades of the Government of Catalonia, although a coordination has been established with the Forest Defence Groups and the forest authority.

Forest Defence Groups are notable among civil society stakeholders. These are associations of forest owners and volunteers who collaborate in prevention and extinction tasks and currently cover over 80% of the territory. Moreover, the main associations of forest owners and agriculture trade unions are: Consorci Forestal de Catalunya (CFC), Unió de Pagesos (UP), Institut Agrari Català de Sant Isidre (IACSI) and Joves Agricultors i Ramaders de Catalunya (JARC).

Of special note is the GRAF (Forest Actions Support Group), a group specialising in the analysis and extinction of forest fires. During the campaign, seasonal forest firefighters are incorporated who complement the personnel of the fire stations. Moreover, a coordination has been established with the police forces, which have the specific function of acting in traffic

control and in the gathering together and evacuation of the population, and the health groups. In the emergency management the coordination point is the Advanced Command Centre, established in the INFOCAT Plan.

Control is undertaken through lookout points with temporary personnel contracted by the Department of the Interior. Moreover, Barcelona Provincial Government has a specific control programme, with the contracting of temporary personnel (prioritising people from the area), which is coordinated with the town councils and the other social stakeholders involved in fire risk management.

The investigation of causes is the direct responsibility of the rural agent brigades, which work in coordination with the police forces.

Finally, notable in training and research fields are 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.

#### *Financing split between local, regional, national, European/Mediterranean, international actors*

Interviews have not given clear information on this aspect. In particular, it is not easy to understand the amount of European resources, given the cross-cutting nature of the case study. Only the case of Catalonia has given some information at this regard.

In Catalonia, the budgets 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). As a guide, spending by the Directorate General for the Environment of the Department of the Environment for 2006 was 76 million euros. 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 euros.

The budget of the Technical Office for Municipal Forest Fire Prevention of Barcelona Provincial Government should be considered significant, as in 2006 it had a budget of 9.6 million euros. The Department of Natural Parks of the same body invested 1.4 million euros in prevention in protected areas.

The relative contributions of other regional governments are of little significance. Girona Provincial Government allocated around 200,000 euros to prevention, approximately the same amount as Lleida Provincial Government for roadside management.

Moreover, the budget of the Spanish Ministry of the Environment for fire fighting and prevention reached 95.6 million euros for the whole of the Spanish state.

Spending on prevention by the town councils themselves should be taken into account; although as a whole it is not a very significant amount (it is practically only the large municipalities that can afford prevention infrastructures).

## **THE ROLE OF TRANSNATIONAL AND TRANSREGIONAL COOPERATION**

### *Contribution to European and Mediterranean policies*

**At community level**, trans-national cooperation has been promoted in order to encourage dialogue among Member states and contribute to enhancing preparedness (danger assessment and exchange of fire fighting means) when facing major forest fires.

Dialogue is mainly promoted within the Commission's Expert Group on Forest Fires, established in 1998. This group meets twice a year, usually in Brussels and Ispra (Italy), and it is composed by representatives of the competent national authorities (for Italy, the Corpo Forestale dello Stato) with the aim to stimulate coordination among Member States and promote the exchange of views among its members.

As regards preparedness, the Commission takes measures to enhance the overall readiness of the Member States to face major forest fires. The responsibility of the national authorities of the affected country for dealing directly with disasters remains unchallenged but is facilitated and assisted by a concerted collective effort. At this aim the Community Civil Protection Mechanism<sup>22</sup> established by Council Decision in 2001<sup>23</sup>, is the main instrument that enhances Community cooperation in civil protection matters.

The Community Civil protection mechanism aims at facilitating cooperation in civil protection assistance interventions in the event of major natural or man-made disasters (e.g. forest fires but also flooding, earthquakes, terrorist acts etc.) occurring either within or outside the European Union<sup>24</sup> and which overwhelms the capacity of a country. Participating countries, often those prone to forest fires themselves, typically offer assistance in the form of water bombing aircraft (Canadairs), helicopters, fire fighting equipment and personnel. According to the implementing rules of the Mechanism, the state requesting assistance shall bear the costs of assistance provided by the Participating States. In practice, the majority of Participating States offer assistance free of charge as a gesture of solidarity. Since 2007, up to 50% of the costs of transporting assistance can be co-financed by the European Commission under the Civil Protection Financial Instrument<sup>25</sup>.

The Community Civil Protection Mechanism has a number of tools at its disposal to facilitate both adequate preparedness and effective response to disasters at Community level. A training programme<sup>26</sup> has been set up with a view to enhancing skills and improving the coordination of civil protection assistance interventions by ensuring compatibility and complementarity between the intervention teams from the participating states; as well as the sharing of best practices.

The Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC)<sup>27</sup> is the operational "heart" of the Mechanism. It is operated by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Environment, based in Brussels, and is accessible 24 hours a day. Any country within or outside the Union that is affected by a major disaster can appeal for assistance via the MIC. The MIC performs a coordinating role by matching the offers of assistance from participating states to the needs of the disaster-stricken country. It acts as a communication hub at headquarters level between participating states, the affected country and the experts who are dispatched to the field. It also provides useful and updated information on the actual status of an ongoing emergency. When required, the MIC also deploys civil protection experts who have been seconded by participating states, mainly to operations outside the European Union. Their main role is to act as a link or liaison between the civil protection assistance from the participating states, the MIC and the recipient country.

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<sup>22</sup> There are 30 countries participating in the Community Civil Protection Mechanism: they are the 27 current Member States of the European Union, plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Croatia will join the Mechanism shortly.

<sup>23</sup> Council Decision of 5 March 2007 establishing a Civil Protection Financial Instrument and the Council Decision of 8 November 2007 establishing a Community Civil Protection Mechanism (recast)

<sup>24</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/mechanism.htm>

<sup>25</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prevention\\_overview.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prevention_overview.htm)

<sup>26</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/pdfdocs/Training\\_Civil\\_Protection.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/pdfdocs/Training_Civil_Protection.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/mic.htm>

Since 2007, the MIC has been activated 15 times for forest fires. Over the summer 2009, the MIC also holds a weekly videoconference with national authorities from countries at greatest risk of forest fires to assess the risk of major forest fires that could exceed national capacity. A training course for forest fire experts was organised in Brussels in early July.

Complementarily with the MIC contribution, pilot projects have also been promoted at Community level to step up cooperation between Member States on combating forest fires. The European Union Forest Fire Tactical Reserve (EUFFTR) <sup>28</sup> is one of the main examples. Launched in 2007, EUFFTR is a pilot project proposed by the European Parliament, following the forest fires which devastated much of Southern Europe. The project is managed by France and will run out at the end of 2009. The EU Forest Fire Tactical Reserve pilot project is co-financed to the level of 80% by the European Commission (€3.5 million in 2008); the remaining 20% of the costs are met by France. The total cost of the project is €4.375 million. Whenever the EUFFTR is used for an intervention to combat forest fires, the country requesting assistance covers the cost of fuel and other costs relating to the operation, e.g. accommodation for the pilots etc.

The EUFFTR is deployed within the context of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism in order to test innovative arrangements in combating forest fires in Europe. In particular, it is designed to test whether it is effective to complement Member States' assets with additional capacities at EU level. The EUFFTR consists of two planes that are available to fly 150 hours each from 1 July – 30 September. The EUFFTR can only be used within the EU. The planes are stationed in Bastia, Corsica. The location was chosen as it offers the logistical support of an existing aerial base and allows the aircraft to be roughly equidistant from Lisbon, Athens and Sofia.

The “Fire 4” project (whose name was changed into “Fire 5” when Greece fully joined the team) represents another interesting example of pilot project of this kind. It has a clear Mediterranean dimension aiming at developing a cross border module composed of the personnel and equipment of five Member States (France, Italy, Spain and Portugal and Greece) tasked to fight forest fires. However, other five Member States have been associated in this module: Cyprus, Hungary, Malta, Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Led by France (French Ministère de l'Intérieur et de l'Aménagement du Territoire), the main objective of this EU two-years project is the mutual exchange of experts for common training, experience sharing and communication. The training component includes general training courses on fires and earthquakes hosted by the leading countries (five-day duration, lessons and practical activities); specialized courses for interventions against forest fires and earthquakes (civil protection); seminars for self-training between experts; and exercises (forest fires in Italy in April 2008, earthquakes in Portugal in April 2009) to test mixed staff and equipments.

In this framework, in April 2008 the **S**ardinia **A**Rsons **D**irect **N**ixing **A**ctions (SARDINIA) simulation took place in Sardinia. This simulation was based on real, huge forest fires which had already occurred in the past in highly populated and tourist areas with national specialized staff and tools (Civil Protection, State and Regional Forest Services, Fire Brigades, Volunteers, Red Cross, etc).

The “Fire 5” could represent the base for the establishment of a EU Civil protection force.

Always at community level, cooperation among stakeholders involved in the prevention and fight against forest fire has been promoted also in the framework of Interreg (Ex. INCENDI project) and VI research programme (ex. FIREPARADOX). Nonetheless, as far as mutual

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<sup>28</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/pilot\\_project08\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/civil/prote/pilot_project08_en.htm)

assistance in the in the field of forest fires is assured also by mean of bilateral agreements. It is the case of a specific agreement between Portugal and Spain. As the border area has been defined 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. A fire detected by one country in the border area of the other country, with high probability of crossing the border, will cause the local or regional fire authority to inform the authorities on the other side of the border and even dispatch resources to suppress the fire on the other side of the border. In all cases, both national authorities and the EC Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) will be informed. This agreement goes together with many pre-fire season preparation activities, including joint exercises before the fire season. A similar agreement should have been signed between Italy and France.

#### *Concerning cooperation with southern Mediterranean countries*

At Community level, since 1998 the Barcelona process has offered a framework for cooperation on civil protection with the aim of improving euro-Mediterranean cooperation in this area and of strengthening the network of civil protection agencies in partner countries. A new regional programme on disaster management, among which forest fires, has been launched in 2009 with the aim of contributing, in particular, to the development of improved 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 will take place in the framework of the Union for the Mediterranean. At this regard, the Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean in 2008 states that: “A joint Civil Protection programme [...] linking the region more closely to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism is one of the main priorities of the region”.

At multilateral level, FAO’s activities in Fire Management represents an interesting framework of cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries. FAO’s main role consists in facilitating the development and implementation of global and regional strategies, to produce and facilitate global access to fire management data, information and terminology and to build capacity at national and regional levels. At this aim, 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<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> More information on this subject are available on: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/firemanagement/en/>