

Efficient fire risk communication for resilient societies (eFIRECOM)

Project co-funded by ECHO -Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection

Layman's Report

<http://efirecom.ctfc.cat>

(Solsona, 31th March 2017)

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1-The project in brief

Title: Efficient fire risk communication for resilient societies (eFIRECOM)

Call: Call for proposals 2014 for projects on Preparedness and Prevention projects in civil protection and marine pollution under the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism. Selected theme: Prevention. Priority 2: Actions (guidelines, studies, workshops, and exchange of experience) on the development of urban resilience strategies, including community and local-based disaster risk reduction actions and tools and guidelines for urban risk assessment, taking into account existing international initiatives in this field (e.g. UNISDR resilient cities campaign) and climate change adaptation strategies. Directorate – General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG-ECHO)

Project duration: 1/01/2015 – 31/12/2016 (24th month) + 3 month authorized extension

Total cost: 498.324€ (75% EU contribution)

Website: www.efirecom.ctfc.cat

Email direction: efirecom@ctfc.es

Beneficiary and partners:

Coordinator: **Forest Sciences Centre of Catalonia - CTFC (E)**

Beneficiaries (AB):

AB1: **Fire Ecology and Management Foundation Pau Costa Alcubierre - PCF (E)**

AB2: **European Forest Institute - Mediterranean Regional Office - EFIMED (E)**

AB3: **GEIE FORESPIR – France (F)**

AB4: **Direction Générale des Forêts de Tunisie – DGF Tunisie (TN)**

AB5: **Université Hadj Lakhdar Batna – U. BATNA Algeria (DZ)**

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2- Building up a resilient society through efficient fire risk communication

The low social awareness of the exposure to fire risk combined with the reduced individual capacity to prevent and face emergencies, increase both social vulnerability and the cost of civil protection actions. In the Mediterranean region, these factors are intensified by the increasing risk of forest fires affecting urban and peri-urban areas due to land use changes (increased contact between forests and houses) and climate change (causing extreme fire events in sometimes unusual areas). Both factors lead to more intense fires that spread easily within the wildland-urban environment, compromising the safety of persons, fire-fighting services and infrastructures. The population is largely unaware of the risk and how to act in case of fire, and in turn, the need to protect people and infrastructures may compromise the resources available for fire suppression.

Moreover, communication and awareness policies usually have a limited scope and focus on general communication, and at best, intend to improve the organization of the affected populations in case of emergency, but they do not really promote a holistic culture of risk that allows bringing individual responsibility at the heart of prevention and preparedness. Therefore, it is necessary to raise individual awareness on the risk exposure and individual self-protection capacity, in order to reduce the social costs of wildfires, help achieve more cost-efficient policies and build more resilient societies.

3- Aims and scope

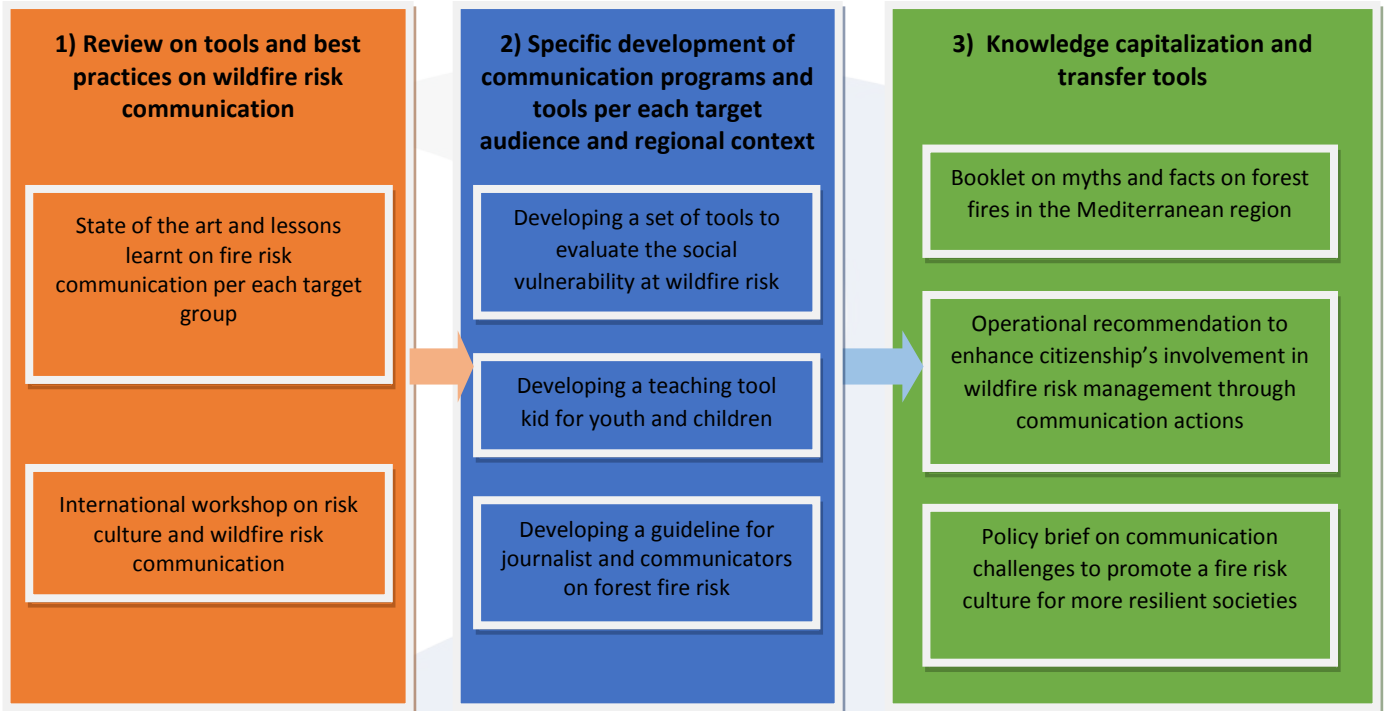
The **eFIRECOM** project aims at enhancing the resilience of citizens to wildfires in interface areas from the Mediterranean region, through effectively promoting and increasing awareness and participation on the culture of risk with updated knowledge and best practices.

To achieve the main goal, the Project counts on 4 specific objectives:

- 1) To analyse the current level of risk communication in different Mediterranean countries for different target groups (citizens, local entities and municipalities, scholars and their teachers, and journalists);
- 2) To share experiences and lessons learned on the development of risk communication tools;
- 3) To develop and test communication tools on wildfire risk, adapted to each target group needs;
- 4) To prepare and promote technical and policy recommendations on how to improve the effectiveness of the communication on wildfire risk and to reduce social vulnerability to wildfires in the Mediterranean region, with special attention to North African countries.

4- Techniques, actions and results achieved

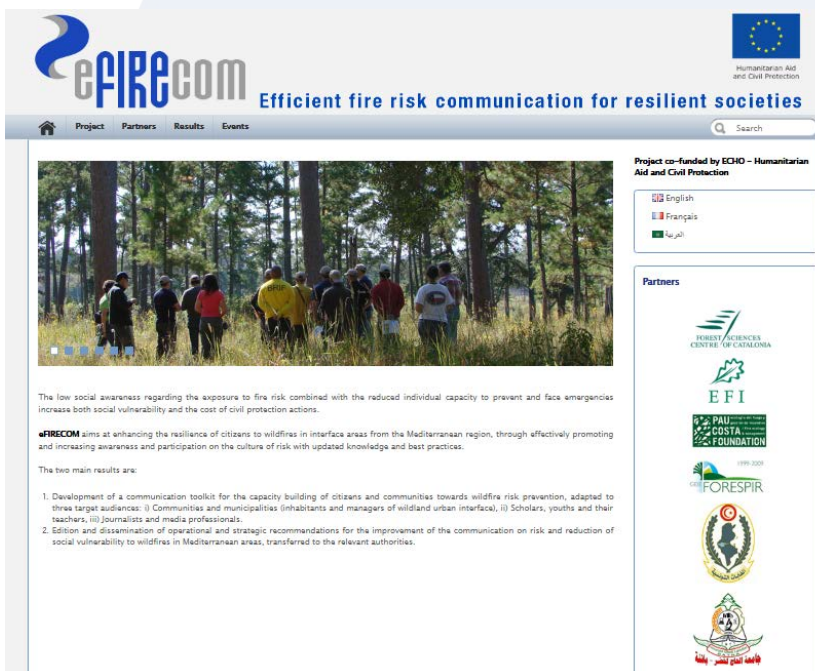
The sequential process of capitalization and transfer of knowledge and experience conducted during the project development was the following:



All the project activities as well as the results achieved are freely accessible on the web:

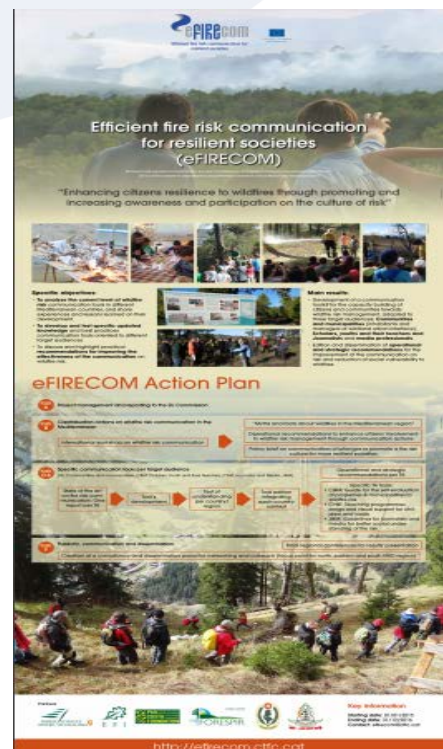
<http://efirecom.ctfc.cat>

Project web site and roll-up



The screenshot shows the project website with the following elements:

- Navigation:** Project, Partners, Results, Events
- Search:** Search bar
- Project Description:**
 - Project co-funded by ECHO – Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
 - Language options: English, Français, العربية
 - Partners: FOREST SCIENCES CENTRE OF CATALUNYA, EFI, PAU COSTA FOUNDATION, FORESPIR, and others.
- Text Content:**
 - "The low social awareness regarding the exposure to fire risk combined with the reduced individual capacity to prevent and face emergencies increase both social vulnerability and the cost of civil protection actions."
 - "eFIRECOM aims at enhancing the resilience of citizens to wildfires in interface areas from the Mediterranean region, through effectively promoting and increasing awareness and participation on the culture of risk with updated knowledge and best practices."
 - "The two main results are:"
 - Development of a communication toolkit for the capacity building of citizens and communities towards wildfire risk prevention, adapted to three target audiences: i) Communities and municipalities (inhabitants and managers of wildland urban interface), ii) Scholars, youths and their teachers, iii) Journalists and media professionals.
 - Edition and dissemination of operational and strategic recommendations for the improvement of the communication on risk and reduction of social vulnerability to wildfires in Mediterranean areas, transferred to the relevant authorities.



The roll-up poster features the following content:

- Header:** Efficient fire risk communication for resilient societies (eFIRECOM)
- Quote:** "Enhancing citizens resilience to wildfires through promoting and increasing awareness and participation on the culture of risk"
- Visuals:** Photos of community meetings and people in a forest.
- Objectives:**
 - Develop a communication toolkit for the capacity building of citizens and communities towards wildfire risk prevention.
 - Edition and dissemination of operational and strategic recommendations for the improvement of the communication on risk and reduction of social vulnerability to wildfires in Mediterranean areas.
- Partners:** Logos of the project partners.
- Footer:** <http://efirecom.ctfc.cat>

The **specific results achieved** by thematic scope are:

1. Review of the state of the art on forest fire risk communication.
 - Report on review and evaluation of knowledge on fire risk communication to communities and municipalities
 - Report on review and evaluation of knowledge on fire risk communication to children, youth and teachers
 - Report on review and evaluation of knowledge on fire risk communication to journalists and media
 - Proceeds of the International workshop on risk culture and wildfire risk communication

2. Development of a communication toolkit for the capacity building of citizens and communities towards wildfire risk prevention, adapted to three target audiences.

Communities and municipalities

- Report on operational recommendations to enhance communities and municipalities involvement in wildfire risk management through communication actions. (English).
- Report on political recommendations to promote a fire risk culture amongst communities and municipalities. (English).
- Forest fire risk in the wildland-urban interface; elements for the analysis of the vulnerability of municipalities and homes at risk. (English, Spanish, Arabic and Catalan; printed edition).
- Guideline for the assessment of wildfire risk in the municipality. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan).
- Guideline for the self-evaluation of properties to the Wildfire risk in urban interface. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan).

Scholars, youths and their teachers

- Report on political recommendations to promote a fire risk culture amongst children, youth and teachers. (English).
- Report on operational recommendations to enhance children, youth and teachers involvement in wildfire risk management through communication actions. (English).
- Report on teaching programs to improve wildfire risk prevention and understanding. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan).
- Storybook for children about fire and forest fires in the Mediterranean *“Baby burn and Fierce flame, from fire to forest fires. We also prevent wildfires with fire!”*. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan; printed edition)
- Short videos created with and for children and youth about wildfire risk. (English, Spanish, French and Catalan).
- Forest fires phenomenon” posters to be exposed in classroom. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan).

Journalists and media professionals

- Report on political recommendations to enhance journalists and media in wildfire risk management through communication actions. (English).
- Report on technical recommendations to enhance journalists and media in wildfire risk management through communication actions. (English).
- Guideline for the journalists and media on the effective information of fire risk towards a better social understanding and resilience. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan; printed edition).



Examples of communication tools developed per each specific target group; communities and municipalities (left), scholars, youth and teachers (center) and journalists and media (right).

- Edition and dissemination of operational and strategic recommendations for the improvement of communication on risk and reduction of social vulnerability to wildfires in Mediterranean areas, transferred to the relevant authorities.
 - Booklet “Fire and forest fires in the Mediterranean; a relationship story between forests and society. Five myths and facts to learn more.” (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan; printed edition).
 - Forest fires risk communication operational recommendations to improve social prevention. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan; printed edition).
 - Policy brief “FOREST FIRES: Creating a resilient society”. (English, Spanish, French, Arabic and Catalan; printed edition).



Examples of knowledge capitalization tools on wildfire risk communication and social prevention; booklet on forest fires myths and facts in the Mediterranean (left), operational recommendations to improve social prevention through fire risk communication actions (center) and policy brief on forest fire risk (right).

All the results achieved are freely accessible on digital edition at the webs: <http://efirecom.ctfc.cat/> and <http://lessonsonfire.eu>; and those available on printed edition can be ordered at the project email.

5-Dissemination activities

eFIRECOM project used open informative events, seminars and workshops, as well as pilot sites and dissemination activities of the achieved results. The major purpose of the conducted activities were to share the state of the art on fire risk communication knowledge and methodologies for each EU region involved into the project, as well as for well adapt the developed tools at each regional context, with special attention to the North Africa. Finally, as a part of the project aims, dissemination actions has been done to spread and disseminate the final risk communication tools through different target audiences.

Specifically, it has been organized:

Workshops:

- 1 International workshop on risk culture and wildfire risk communication; in order to review the available knowledge and current practices. (Solsona, Spain, 8th – 10th July 2015).
- 1 Regional workshop “*Incendis forestals i percepció social; la comunicació com a eina de gestió del risc*” focused on the role of communication as a wildfire risk management tool (15th December 2016 - Manresa).

Pilot sites and trainings:

- Training and knowledge exchange pilot site with foresters of the General Forest Directorate of Tunisia (Solsona, Spain, 4th-6th November 2015). The aim of the visit was to realize and share knowledge and experiences of the wildfire risk assessment, management and prevention, between the Catalan context and the Tunisian one, and to show the ultimate lessons learned during the last years in methodologies, techniques and best practices with regards Catalonia fire risk reduction.
- eFIRECOM mission to Tunisia Forests (Tunisia, 13th-22th April 2016). The aim of the mission was to share knowledge and contexts between experts and common user of the forest fires risk information, according to the work axis of the project. In this sense, General Directorate of Forest – Tunisia Government (DGF) technicians shown the present forest fire risk through visiting many burned forest and its rural areas with a strongly socio-economic relation with forestry activities. In parallel it has been organized a work meeting with members of the local radio of Kef region, to discuss and evaluate the treatment and management of forest fire risk information. The session helped to define the crucial role of media and journalists during an emergency such a forest fire, and to detect the existing gaps and opportunities to be implemented in order to perform and improve the coordination and communication between journalists and official emergency services.
- MEFYTU program training (Castilla-La Mancha, Spain, 25th-28th October 2016). A formative course “Organizing and implementing environmental teaching activities focused on forest fire awareness and prevention” for teachers has been implemented in order to present the MEFYTU’s fires risk awareness-teaching program. The course was attended by professors of 5 elementary schools, and contents were applied to a total of 200 children.

Participation in external related events:

Project dissemination action has been complemented into the extension period with the participation in the V Mediterranean Forest Week held in Morocco (20-24th March 2017), which give and excellent opportunity for the project results dissemination all along the Mediterranean. eFIRECOM project was presented into the Communication Side Event “Communicating for forest and people” organized by the Forest Communicator Network for the Mediterranean and Near East.

Other relevant activities where the project results were disseminated are listed below:

- 2nd International Conference on Fire Behaviour and Risk (Sardinia, 26th-29th May 2015). Presentation “Educational program for forest fire risk prevention”.
- International Conference on Forest Fires and WUI Fires (Aix en Provence, France, 25th-27th May 2016)
- Conference "Cambio climático y global, incendios y uso del fuego en ecosistemas Mediterráneos" (Almeria, Spain, 25th-26th November 2016)
- International Congress on Prescribed Fires (Barcelona, Spain, 1th-3th February 2017). Print version of the deliverables were distributed among the participants.

On the other hand, project results have been presented in three official master degrees at different universities of Spain.

A massive directed sending of the project outputs has been done at Spanish level to main end users actors identified, such as universities, associations and organizations dealing with forest fire risk issues and with special attention on its communication. In sum, 112 organizations received 4 exemplars of the booklet of myths and facts in forest fires and 4 exemplars of guideline for journalists and communicators (2 units in English language + 2 units in Spanish language) plus a brief presentation of the eFIRECOM project.

With regards dissemination actions beyond the project calendar, eFIRECOM project has been selected to be present in the following activities:

- Annual meeting of the UNECE/FAO Forest Communicators Network, which will be held in Malaga (Spain) next 30th May 1th June 2017.
- 7th Spanish Forestry Congress (26-30th June in Plasencia (Spain) to present the tools and the actions for children and youth developed.
- European Forum on Urban Forestry (Barcelona, May 31th to June 2th).
- The eFIRECOM output “video about forest fires phenomenon” to promote awareness amongst children, youth and their teachers has been selected to participate in the International Eco & Tourism Film Festival, which will take place during 31th May to 3th June 2017 in Tortosa (Spain).

A successful story about the interest on the project results took place during the International Congress on Prescribed Fire where many results of the eFIRECOM project were delivered and disseminated through the audience (500 attendants). The specific deliverable for journalists and media “Forest fires, guidelines for journalists and communicators”, reached an important interest level amongst different actors and potential synergies and networking can be established at the short term. In particular, the coordinator of the project “Hungarian forest fire prevention and training program -FIRELIFE”, cofinanced by the EU’s LIFE programme (LIFE13 INF/HU/000827) was strongly interested on the journalist guideline as a best practice to be implemented in FIRELIFE project. For these reason they ask to LP to establish collaboration in order to submit an editable version to be adapted at the Hungarian context.

6 – eFIRECOM in pictures

[1]



[2]



[3]



[4]



[5]



[6]



- (1) Beginning of the International workshop on fire risk communication and risk culture. (2) Training for environmental teachers focused on forest fire risk issues. (3) eFIRECOM presentation in the V Mediterranean Forest Week. (4) eFIRECOM presentation during the ICOPFires. (5) eFIRECOM poster presentation during the International Conference on Forest Fires and WUI Fires. (6) Work meeting with local fire risk expert, developing adapted tool for the French context.

 Centre Tecnològic Forestal de Catalunya - CTFC
compartió la publicació de Naturat Forestandsociety.
16 de diciembre de 2016 · 🌐

A la jornada d'ahir, organitzada pel CTFC a Manresa, es van debatre els reptes actuals i futurs de la comunicació del risc, a partir de diverses experiències i lliçons apreses d'iniciatives sobre el terreny, amb propietaris forestals, veïns d'urbanitzacions, ajuntaments, mitjans de comunicació, turistes i usuaris del medi natural. Molt interessant! Gràcies a tots els participants i als organitzadors Naturat Forestandsociety i Marc Font Piu


<http://blog.ctfc.cat/.../jornada-sobre-comunicacio-i-cultura.../>



 Centre Tecnològic Forestal de Catalunya - CTFC agregó 2 fotos nuevas.
8 de noviembre de 2015 · 🌐

Avui ens visita una delegació de la direcció general de Boscos de Tunísia, per conèixer diferents projectes en què estem treballant.



 Pau Costa Foundation
27 de diciembre de 2016 · 🌐

'Which is the difference between fire and wildfire?' These kids explain us the difference! A new video that explains the Pau Costa Foundation children's project #MEFITU: the Mediterranean Forests, the Fire and You.

Video co-financed by the EU Project eFIREcom: http://efirecom.ctfc.cat/?page_id=17

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7-S3tHX52M8&t=9s>



(Left) Summary of the eFIRECOM workshop “Forest fires and social perception, communication as a risk management tool” held in Catalonia. (Centre) Exchange of knowledge and experiences with a delegation of the General Directorate of Forest of Tunisian Government in Catalonia. (Right) Presentation and dissemination of the videos made with and for children talking about forest fire risk and sustainable forest management.