

First virtual meeting of the Expert Group on Forest Fires in Latin America and the Caribbean (EGFF LAC)

Place: meeting by Zoom

Date: 14/12/2021

Time: 15.00-17.30 CET

The meeting was chaired by Jesús San-Miguel-Ayanz, European Commission Joint Research Center (JRC), Directorate E, Space, Security and Migration, Disaster Risk Management Unit E1. The list of participants is included in the annex.

1. Agenda

1. Revision of the role of the Expert Group on Forest Fires (EGFF) in Europe, EU JRC
2. Experience and potential benefits of the EGFF – the experience of the Spanish national forest fire service, MITECO.
3. Potential benefits of the EGFF LAC for international organizations (UNEP, ACTO, FAO)
4. Presentation of forest fire management and the 2021 fire campaign in LAC countries.
5. Program of the EU-LAC project on support to wildfire management in LAC and the new program of this project under the new Team Europe Initiative on the Amazon (Team Europe Amazon).
6. Any other business and next meeting and initiatives.

2. Discussion of agenda points

1. Revision of the main roles of the Expert Group on Forest Fires (EGFF) in Europa, EU-JRC

J. San-Miguel presented the role that the Expert Group on Forest Fires (EGFF) has in the extended European region, which comprises also North Africa and Middle East. The EGFF was established in 1998 with only 7 country and has grown to a total of 43 countries currently, being the admission to the group done on a voluntary basis. He makes emphasis in the progress obtain through cooperation among countries, the European Union and the international organizations that work on forest fire management in the region, such as FAO. Tangible benefits of the group are the harmonization of forest fire data, the annual forest fire report that was just published with a press release by the European Commission and signed by the Commissioners in charge of Environment and Research and Innovation.

2. Experience and potential benefits of the EGFF – the experience of the Spanish national forest fire service, MITECO

Elena Hernández Paredes, Chief of the Forest Fire Service in Spain, describes the benefit provided by the participation of her service in the EGFF. Elena is a member of the EGFF since 10 years, although Spain is a member in the group since 1998, year in which the EGFF was established. She makes emphasis on the use of initiatives of mutual assistance among countries (Twinning) in which a bilateral collaboration is established between two countries to help the joining of one of them to the EGFF as well as the collaboration with international organizations such as FAO or those supporting fire management like GIZ. She highlights initiatives such as the extension of the EGFF to North Africa (including twinnings), the harmonization of the classification of forest fire causes (with FAO and GIZ), the guidelines on forest fire prevention based on field management (a reference for new policies and



initiatives). The benefits are the exchange of experiences, the debate and new initiatives, the recompilation of standardized information that allow the comparison and the evaluation of regional fire regimes. The EGFF is an independent and technical entity with influence at the level of establishment and management of synergies with other groups. Improvements that could be established are the set-up of a dedicated secretariat of the group, additional work in thematic subgroups within the EGFF as well as a better integration with experts outside the group. Finally, she makes emphasis on the need to change the focus of wildfire management towards forest resilience, increasing the work on fire prevention while keeping the preparedness and response to the forest fires (fire extinction, civil protection).

3. Potential benefits of the EGFF LAC for international organizations, UNEP, ACTO, FAO.

UNEP – Francesco Gaetani, who works on the climate information, mentions two priority areas of research on meteorological services and management and intervention on wildfires. He considers important the incorporation in the EGFF of activities in research centers and space agencies in the countries. Additionally, he emphasizes the need to add to the EGFF the subnational fire management, since, in many federal countries, the subnational level is the one at which fire management is organized in cooperation with the national level.

ACTO – Carlos Salinas, Technical Director of ACTO, remarks the need of working in cooperation with the organizations engaged in fire management. ACTO has two ongoing initiatives; one of them is the Memorandum of Understanding on integrated forest fire management on the establishment of a network among the 8 Amazon member countries in ACTO and another one on the Regional Amazon Observatory (ORA) which was recently inaugurated and in which countries share information. The ORA has several modules, a forest module, a module on biodiversity and others that integrated wide information. It connects with GeoAmazonia (daily fire hot spots) and has situation room with hydrological and fire thematic.

FAO – Pieter Van Lierop, Official for Latin America and the Caribbean, proposes to use the 5R approach (review, reduction, readiness, response and recovery) towards a focus on 3R2P (Revision and analysis, Prevention, Preparation, Response and Restoration). FAO has already collaborated with the EU on the extension of the EGFF to North Africa and Middle East. FAO has always worked on wildfire management in support to the management at national and regional levels. In the LAC region, FAO does not have specific projects in the field of forest fires because fires are integrated into project landscape scale projects, which include aspects related to wildfire management.

4. Presentation of forest fire management and the 2021 fire campaign in the LAC countries.

BOLIVIA, Franz Calisaya from MMAY, presents the national plan (Multinational Strategy for Integrated Fire Management) which is shared mainly with ABY and includes the intervention of the Armed Forces for each hot spot. In 2021, the number of fires remained stable by the area burned decreased.

BRAZIL, Fabiano Morelli from INPE, emphasize the need of including in the EGFF LAC activities and results of the academic and research centers and mentions the collaboration of INPE with the Universities of Minas Gerais and de Golhas. He mentions as well their interest on the integration of existing system that provide information on forest fires in the region.

PARAGUAY, Raquel Acuña from INFONA mentions the interest in the EGFF and a seeks a deeper integration and collaboration, which will be established following the bilateral meetings with each country that will follow this first meeting of the EGFF LAC.

PERU, Glory Alarco from MINAM celebrates the participation of other Peruvian Institutions in this first meeting of the EGFF LAC. She mentions that MINA produces reports on forest fires that are shared with other national and subnational institutions in charge of fire management. She emphasizes as well the interest in establishing a closer collaboration focused on the exchange of experiences and technical support in the context of the EGFF LAC.



5. Program of the project EU-LAC Support to Wildfire Management (collaboration between JRC and FPI/ Service for Foreign Policy under the project “EU-LAC Policy Dialogue Support Facility”) and foreseen program under the new Team Europe Initiative on the Amazon (Team Europe Amazon).

EU – JRC, Jesús San-Miguel, mentions the next steps in the project, which are foreseen to take place in the months, until July 2022. The work program of the EGFF LAC project will focus on the set up of bilateral meetings of JRC with the countries, which will allow enhancing the knowledge on wildfire management in each country as well as planning for a wider cooperation and coordination at regional level. It is foreseen to organize at least two bilateral meetings with the fire management services in the countries in the next months. He mentions as well, the production of a report on forest fires in LAC, in collaboration with the fire management services in each country, following the guidelines of the annual reports published for the pan-European region, being the last of them that of 2020, published at the end of October 2021. Additionally, a report on forest fire information systems in the region will be prepared in collaboration with the fire management services in each country. The TEI Amazon includes fires as one of the 4 axis of its program (fires, deforestation, local and indigenous governance, productive chains “zero deforestation”).

After July 2022, the program of activities of the EGFF will become part of two EU programs; one of these will be the Team Europe Initiative on the Amazon (TEI Amazon) and the other program will be the EU Copernicus Program. These programs provide a stable situation in terms of programming/funding up to 2027, which will allow establishing a plan for activities, work and cooperation on forest fire management in the next years for the whole LAC region.

6. Any Other issues, next meeting and initiatives

There are no other points mentioned by the participants. The next meeting will be a physical meeting, if possible, in one of the countries in the region. This will be decided according to the situation of the pandemic and through the dialogue with the fire management services in the countries. The second meeting of the EGFF LAC would take place in June/July 2022.

Links of web sites related to the project: [EFFIS](#), [EGFF](#), [GWIS](#).

Annex

Presentations of JRC, ACTO, Bolivia

List of participant Countries/Organizations.

Bolivia, ABT, ABT-JNFyC, FAN, MMAyA, VIDECI

Brazil, IBAMA, INPE

Chile, CONAF

Colombia, IDEAM

México (CONAFOR)

Paraguay, AEP, SEN, DMH-DINAC, INFONA, Min. External Relations

Perú, CENEPRED, MINAM, SERFOR< SERNANP

FAO

ACTO

UNEP

Delegations EU & EEAS

Spain (MITECO)

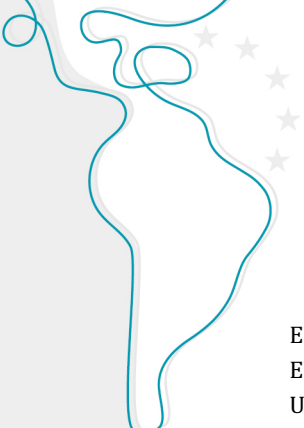
Finland y Hungary

EU ENV

EU INTPA

EU JRC/CCI





EU R&I
EU -LAC PDSF
USFS
USFS SAR (South America Regional Fire Program)
USAID

The list of participants will be included once agreed with the participants, following the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

