Dealing with wildfires

EU Wide Knowledge for Regional and Local Authorities

Find all resources mentioned in this guide here!

What are wildfires?

Wildfires are uncontrolled fires that may rapidly spread across vegetation, threatening ecosystems, infrastructures, and human lives. Most wildfire ignitions are caused by human activity, including sparking from power lines or railroads, but also occur naturally under given climatic conditions.

Prolonged dry spells particularly increase the risk of wildfires, but also other factors, such as rain and wind patterns, vegetation, landscape structure, and forest management practices, largely impact the risk of wildfire outbreaks. While regular natural fires are beneficial in many ecosystems (e.g. contributing to biodiversity and forest regeneration), the intensity and frequency of damaging wildfires are growing. Mediterranean regions have long dealt with wildfires, but climate change is now increasing the risk of wildfires all across Europe.

Key facts and events

According to the Joint Research Center and the European Commission:

60,000
occcur in the EU every year

2
billion EUR approximate economic losses a year

1
million heactares scortched in 2025

Major wildfires in recent years

2022

In the year, nearly 900,000 hectares of land burned. Fires occurred in all EU Member States and were mapped in every country except for Luxembourg.

2023

The largest single wildfire in EU history burned more than 96,000 hectares of land in Alexandroupolis, Greece.

2025

The European Union experienced its worst wildfire season on record in 2025, with 7,783 fires across 25 countries. Conditions intensified damatically during a prolonged Mediterranean heatwave, triggering 22 major fires in Portugal and Spain alone.

Key impacts

ECOSYSTEMS

Destruction of forests, grasslands, and other ecosystems. Degradation of freshwater supplies.

HEALTH

Smoke and ash from significantly impacts air quality, leading to respiratory and cardiovascular problems. Especially for vulnerable populations.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Damage to homes, roads, and utilities leading to significant economic losses, reduced property values and increased insurance costs.

Understand your risk

Start by understanding your wildfire risks with data maps and tools

The **ThinkHazard!** tool allows you to quickly assess the wildfire risk in your area by simply typing the name of your location.

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European Commission set up the **European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS)**, which provides comprehensive information on wildfires in Europe. It includes **real-time wildfire monitoring, long-term fire weather forecasts, and wildfire risk mapping** based on impacts to people, ecosystems, and economic assets. It also provides **current and historical wildfire data** and statistics across Europe.

Explore what others are doing

Then look through how other regions or local communities are responding to the challenge

Want to dive deeper?
Scan me.

Analyzing forest fires

Cyprus and Greece are using an Integrated Forest Fire Analysis System to **address the rising wildfire risk** in Mediterranean forests

Managing wildfires through communities of practice

Occhito Lake is using **innovative environmental and forestry planning** to improve the collaborative governance mechanism as well as the protective and environmental functions of the forest.

Detecting forest fires through real-time satellite-based system

Sweden uses **fully automated system** that supports early detection and localisation of wildfires, allowing for faster responses and helping to prevent fires from spreading.

Find these and other examples through our case studies and adaptation stories. **Scan this guide's QR code.**

Implement concrete actions

Then start planning concrete actions to address your unique challenges

The European Commission Expert Group on Forest Fires published a guidebook on land-based wildfire prevention with principles and experiences on managing landscapes, forests and woodlands. The guidebook highlights prevention measures for national, regional and local levels to make landscapes and communities more resilient to wildfires. It also lists concrete examples of measures implemented in the EU.

Establishment of early warning systems

Like in Tatabánya, Hungary, where a fire-weather index helps the fire brigade prepare for and respond to wildfire events.

Adapting fire management plans

Like the integrated approach of prescribed fire and grazing, to make forests climate resilient and prevent severe fire events in Viseu Dão Lafões, Portugal.

Find other **recommended actions** in the Adaptation option's database. **Scan this Guide's QR code!**

Assess planned actions

The **REGILIENCE self-assessment tool** can help avoid negative effects of adaptation actions which increase vulnerability, diminish well-being or undermine sustainable development. It's available in 10 languages!

Find funding opportunities

Find the right funding sources for your needs

Access information on **funding sources from EU institutions, agencies, and Member States** in the **Mission Portal´s funding database** to support your flood adaptation strategies.