

Forest fire risk experience and training exchange workshop

During the 4th, 5th and 6th of November 2015, a team of 6 forest fire risk managers and officers coming from the General Directorate of Forest of Tunis, have visited Catalonia into the framework of the eFIRECOM project. 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.

It has been analyzed the prevention, protection and extinction fire system, with regards to the wildland urban interface, with a fieldtrip to the Bruc municipality (Barcelona) as a study case of the real problematic and to discuss some potential and real solutions to be implemented, from the technological level with real demonstrations of some products (Medi XXI s.a. and METEOGRID s.a.) to the land planning level or social level (see pictures 1,2,3). In this sense, it was outlined the importance of integrate the community of neighborhoods within the prevention and protection faces of the risk, and how the efficient communication and some specific methodologies can help to achieve the aims. In that same area, it has been visited a recent forest fire, which affected important infrastructures and with an important impact to the surroundings of Barcelona city. The fire pattern analysis and the pre event prevention measures planned and partially executed were discussed (see picture 4).

It has been visited also an area where forest treatments around the settlements were in place, and how to add value to these prevention treatment by means of biomass generation, to cover the costs of the mechanical operations, and how the volunteers forest fires groups are structured and work during the prevention treatments and during the emergency as a support group for the fire fighters (see picture 5). According to the scholars and teachers target audience, a specific program developed by the partner PCF, has been shown. This educational program call MEFITU, try to explain the historical relationship between humans and fire, and to avoid the misunderstandings and myths around forest fires and forest management (see picture 6).

Finally a session on risk assessment and modeling was presented in the CTFC headquarter facilities, to demonstrate some existing tools which can be used (in some conditions) to help in the decision making on the land planning and fire prevention and defense strategy development around the territory (see picture 7).

Many discussions have enriched the visits, and helped to link both contexts in terms of understanding the socio cultural difference and therefore the strategies to face the forest fire risk. However, also many similarities, in terms of fire behavior and expected fire conditions under a climate change context, were highlighted and the fact that the stakeholders involvement as a part of the solution and not as a part of the problem is the main challenge to affront in order to mitigate the risk and evolve to a more resilient society. These experience has served to update and share all the knowledge capitalized in Catalonia during the lasts decades, and transfer it to our colleagues from Tunis. A future mission to Tunis, organized by the respective partner is envisaged to present the tools developed during the eFIRECOM project, and to adapt them specifically to the necessities and particularities of Tunis.

PHOTO GALLERY



1- (Top left) Visit of a Residential zone in Bruc municipality, and discussion of the present weaknesses and potential solutions coming from the experience of METEOGRID s.a.; 2- (Down left) Test and demonstration of SIDEINFO technology (MEDI XXI s.a.) as a self-defense measure; 3- (Right) Analyzing how to integrate the existing land use and agricultural areas into the prevention and defense planning.



4- (Left) Visit to the forest fire of Odena burnt in 2015, explaining the fire behaviour patterns and prevention treatments done to promote a safer and efficient extinction in case of fire; 5- (Right) Visit of a local volunteer forest fire group (ADF Bages), and the generation of biomass coming from the treatments of a low fuel load buffer around a WUI area.



6- (Left) Demonstration of the MEFITU educational program for children and youth in the school “el Vinyet” (Solsona); 7- (Right) Presentation of a study case on forest fire risk assessment in the facilities of the CTFC.



8- Participants photo during the end of the mission in the CTFC facilities