

(English version)

Question for written answer E-003242/25
to the Commission
Leire Pajín (S&D)
(14 August 2025)

Subject: European Union prevention and response capabilities in the face of wildfire seasons exacerbated by climate change

Extreme heat, prolonged drought and strong winds, intensified by the climate crisis, have led to unprecedented forest fires in Spain, France, Portugal, Greece, Montenegro and Albania, with loss of lives, homes and ecosystems. Europe is facing increasingly long and destructive wildfire seasons. In 2024, the historical average surface area burned was exceeded, and this year that figure has doubled.

We know that the EU has strengthened its response capacities for 2025 through the EU rescEU reserve, with aerial means, brigades and a new crisis coordination centre to anticipate and manage cross-sectoral impacts.

In light of the above:

1. How will the fight against forest fires be structurally integrated into the EU Preparedness Strategy — taking due account of the impact of extreme temperatures on public health — to ensure a more preventive than reactive response?
2. What concrete mechanisms have been put in place to implement the planned key actions — in addition to the extension of rescEU — in terms of cross-sectoral coordination and coordination with Member States?
3. Based on the experience gained this season, what best practices have been identified that will be adopted as standard practice so as to improve resilience and reduce the extent of burned areas in the coming years?

Submitted: 14.8.2025

Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(13 October 2025)

The Preparedness Union Strategy ⁽¹⁾ is based on an integrated all-hazards approach, including wildfires and their cascading effects. It promotes a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response, bringing together policies on environment, agriculture, cohesion, health and civil protection.

The fight against forest fires must be complemented by preventive measures, improved risk awareness and climate adaptation. To that end, the Commission will notably propose a European Climate Resilience Plan ⁽²⁾ by the end of 2026.

The Preparedness Union Strategy foresees measures to embed preparedness by design across legislation and programmes, to strengthen early warning and to expand knowledge-sharing through the Civil Protection Knowledge Network ⁽³⁾.

The Emergency Response Coordination Centre has continued to play a key coordination role during the summer of 2025. A team of wildfire experts were constantly monitoring the situation. More than 670 firefighters from 14 European countries were pre-positioned in high-risk areas.

The Copernicus Emergency Service provided satellite images. The wildfire fighting fleet, including planes and helicopters from rescEU ⁽⁴⁾, has shown once again its added value. The rescEU reserve will be further expanded in line with the EU stockpiling strategy ⁽⁵⁾.

The 2025 season has confirmed the added value of pre-positioning, faster mobilisation procedures and closer integration of prevention, preparedness and public health measures. These lessons will be carried forward as standard practice in order to strengthen resilience and limit the impact of future fire seasons ⁽⁶⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52025JC0130>.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/14770-European-climate-resilience-and-risk-management-integrated-framework_en.

⁽³⁾ These actions include, among others, the implementation of the preparedness by design principle across EU legislation, policies and programmes, the adoption and implementation of a European Climate Adaptation Plan and the improvement of early warning systems, Horizon Europe also funds research on wildfire prevention and preparedness.

⁽⁴⁾ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/rescue_en.

⁽⁵⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:52025DC0528>.

⁽⁶⁾ The Commission informs the Honourable Member that the extent of burned areas depends on several factors, including weather, climate evolution and prevention.