

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-003365/25
to the Commission
Mihai Tudose (S&D)
(2 September 2025)**

Subject: Forest fire fighting

This has been a record year in terms of forest fires in the EU. Over a million hectares of forest have burned since the beginning of the year, with around 126 000 hectares of these in Romania.

The fires have been on an unprecedented scale in Spain and Portugal. The Civil Protection Mechanism has been activated on several occasions, with peak demand from five Member States in just one week. Unfortunately, just a few countries have rushed to help in a spirit of European solidarity. I hope that the example set by the scores of Romanian firefighters who helped fight the massive fires in Spain and Greece will be followed in the years to come by their colleagues from the north of Europe.

What lessons has the Commission drawn from the dramatic fires in Europe this summer as regards how to improve the EU's response to forest fires?

Submitted: 2.9.2025

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

As the fastest-warming continent, the EU is particularly vulnerable to events driven by extreme weather conditions. The 2025 wildfire season was indeed the most devastating in terms of burned area since recorded in 2006.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) was activated 18 times: 58 aerial means, together with 760 first responders, were deployed inside EU.

The process of analysing lessons from this season is ongoing, including a meeting with Member States in November. Yet preliminary lessons learnt have shown, among others, the importance of early warning systems.

Also, the pre-positioning firefighting teams from 14 Member States to high-risk areas provided substantial added value to national response capacities, through active engagement in fire suppression operations in host countries or preparedness enhancement in less experienced countries ⁽¹⁾.

In the 2025 State of the Union address, the President of the Commission emphasised the increasing severity of climate change, proposing a new European firefighting hub in Cyprus that could support regional neighbours ⁽²⁾.

While climate change is an important factor, humans also play a role in the ignition of wildfires ⁽³⁾. Land use and vegetation management ⁽⁴⁾ have also an impact on progression and severity of wildfires.

The different underlying causes of fires need to be addressed to prevent the problems from persisting, and the destruction from continuing in the coming years.

For example, socioeconomic shifts have led to rural abandonment and reduced economic and land management capacity in some countries.

While the wildfire season has shown the importance to maintain and upscale response, it is also important to invest in preparedness and prevention efforts, in line with the Preparedness Union Strategy ⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ This includes dedicated training, tactical firefighting exercises and exchanges of experience.

⁽²⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/state-union/state-union-2025_en.

⁽³⁾ European Climate Risk Assessment, 11.3.2024, p. 15: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/analysis/publications/european-climate-risk-assessment>. According to a Joint Research Centre study, where the cause of forest fires is known (half of cases), about 96% tend to be caused by human action, either deliberately or through negligence, with only 4% due to natural causes such as lightning — <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0e99c069-ff3b-11e7-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (2017).

⁽⁴⁾ For example: Prevention — firebreaks, reducing vegetation; Preparedness — roads to allow firefighting vehicles access, purchasing vehicles; Response — extinguish forest fires (and upgrade tools, e.g. improve situational awareness through drones); Restoration — replanting consciously with preparedness by design in mind (avoid monocultures), work to avoid soil erosion and floods after fires.

⁽⁵⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/preparedness_en.