

PRESS RELEASE

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Rising Wildfire Risks Demand Urgent Collective Action Across Europe

The increase in extreme wildfires poses a growing security-related challenge for Europe. In order to effectively respond to these developments, several EU research projects have jointly developed an integrated strategy for wildfire risk management (IWRM). Among those involved is the Firelogue project, coordinated by the Fraunhofer Institute for Technological Trend Analysis (INT). The goal is to pool scientific insights, technological innovations, and political measures across Europe and align them strategically. The proposed IWRM strategy provides a concrete and practice-oriented roadmap for this purpose.

Context and problem

Wildfires are evolving globally, with increasing frequency, intensity, and behavior leading to unprecedented damage in ecosystems, particularly in Europe. Changes in wildfire timing and location have resulted in prolonged fire seasons and new risks in traditionally non-fire-prone areas. Climate change exacerbates these issues, overwhelming firefighting capacities and threatening citizens, the environment, and infrastructure. Human factors, such as rural abandonment and the expansion of wildland-urban interfaces, further complicate the situation. To address these systemic challenges, a coordinated and integrated response involving all stakeholders is essential, leveraging existing knowledge and recent investments in wildfire research and innovation to enhance collaboration and effectiveness across Europe. Several European research projects hence propose an Integrated Wildfire Risk Management (IWRM) Strategy for Europe.

About the European Integrated Wildfire Risk Management Strategy Proposal

The proposal for an Integrated Wildfire Risk Management (IWRM) Strategy for Europe was developed by a large consortium of scientists and practitioners from the EU Green Deal wildfire research projects FirEUrisk, FIRE-RES, TREEADS and SILVANUS. The strategy outlines a holistic European framework for resilient landscapes, suggesting more concerted action across Europe and additional measures to fully exploit data-driven innovation. The strategy builds on over €70 million in EU investment and proposes actionable steps ranging from the design of fire-resilient land mosaics to incentives for fire-smart bio-economies and public-private cooperation. It underscores the need for co-designed landscape planning, education on wildfire risks, and new financing mechanisms to support adaptation.

A core recommendation is the establishment of an inter-agency EU wildfire coordination body and the introduction of a European Wildfire Management Directive to harmonise efforts across Member States. "We must embrace fire-smart landscapes, engage communities, and integrate policy, science, and technology to adapt effectively," says the Strategy's authors.

“We need concerted action at EU level and by the Member States to implement scientific state of the art, to exploit recent technological developments and to speed-up knowledge sharing,” the authors emphasize. This sentiment is echoed in their proposal for stakeholder-led Fire Forums, capacity-building for local authorities, and investment in real-time data infrastructure like an upgraded European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) including exposure and vulnerability analyses.

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The proposed IWRM Strategy aims to unify Europe’s fragmented wildfire response and risk reduction landscape. Crucially, the strategy incorporates Europe’s considerable scientific capacity. “We already have high-resolution satellite systems, fuel maps, AI-based decision support tools, and regional fire modelling platforms. What’s missing is a pan-European mechanism to scale them and to integrate these tools into coherent action,” says Dr. Claudia Berchtold, one of the strategy’s lead contributors and coordinator of the research project Firelogue.

The Integrated Wildfire Risk Management (IWRM) approach is rooted in four pillars: risk assessment and evaluation; risk management and adaptive planning; stakeholder engagement and communication; and inclusive governance.

Five Key Takeaways from the IWRM Strategy

- 1. Establishment of an inter-agency working group at the European level for strategic coordination.** This group should include multiple DGs and agencies to ensure coordinated efforts and leverage synergies in wildfire management.
- 2. Development of integrated fire risk assessment systems that include various relevant variables beyond weather.** Streamline risk assessments considering factors such as ignition sources, propagation, exposure, and vulnerability.
- 3. Provision of guidance for implementing Integrated Wildfire Risk Management (IWRM) across diverse contexts, including a potential European Wildfire Directive.** Tailored guidance will help adapt wildfire management strategies to specific regional and national needs, promoting harmonized approaches. The strategy proposes aspects to be covered such as the development of resilient landscapes, fire-smart bio-economies or the application of solutions to emergency management and response operations.
- 4. Creation of IWRM targets, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and data sets for effective assessment and monitoring.** Establishing measurable targets and data frameworks will facilitate the evaluation of IWRM initiatives and improve accountability.
- 5. Need for new funding structures and public-private partnerships to support knowledge sharing and the implementation of innovative solutions.** Innovative funding mechanisms and collaborations will enhance resource availability for local adaptation and the testing of new landscape solutions.

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About Firelogue:

Firelogue is a Coordination and Support Action Funder under Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement No. 101036534. It brings together more than 70 Mio. € in research funding that has been invested mainly under the European Green Deal call on “Preventing and fighting extreme wildfires with the integration and demonstration of innovative means”. It closely collaborates with the following projects: [FIRE-RES](#), [SILVANUS](#), [TREEADS](#) und [FirEUrisk](#).

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