



NEWSLETTER N.4 DECEMBER 2018



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1. EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This is the last of a total of four newsletters over the course of the Mefisto project. The 4th issue presents a brief outline of the progress that has been achieved over the last six months of the project.

Since the official start of the MEFISTO, almost two years ago, there has been significant advances on the project development. Among the other, we collected and shared information about fire fighting organization across the countries participating in the project and developed a Mediterranean forest fire fighting training standardization was developed, as well as the analysis and improvement of transnational cooperation, the definition of the functions and skills of European Forest Fire Officer (EUFO) and the development of common terminology.

In the last months, after the pilot training course for EUFOs, held in Valabre (FR) in May, the Partnership analysed the results of the training course and evaluated the strength and weakness points emerged during the event. On December, we had another important event, which closed the practical issues of the project. In fact, the Tuscan Training Center "La Pineta" hosted the "pilot practical exercise" for the EUFOs designated in Valabre. Finally, the final conference, held at "La Pineta", was the occasion to share project results with Italian and international stakeholders. Thanks to the contribution of external experts, invited to feed the dialogue about forest fire fighting and prevention, and thanks to project partners who showed the main results of the project, the conference was attended by more than 70 persons interested on the activities carried out in these two years.

I believe that this brief review of technical progress, included in this newsletter, is a good opportunity for us to present our activities and results, exchange information with you and create awareness on the need of a collaborative and international approach to fire management and fire fighting. On behalf of MEFISTO Partners, I would like to renew our interest and availability for collaboration and networking in this field also after the end of the project.

Thanking all of you for your interest in MEFISTO project, I wish you a Happy and successful 2019.
Best regards,

Enrico Marchi
MEFISTO Coordinator

Associate Professor of the Department of Agriculture, Food, Environment and Forestry Science and Technology, University of Florence (ITALY)



2. THE MEFISTO PROJECT

The project "MEDITERRANEAN FOREST FIRE FIGHTING TRAINING STANDARDIZATION", (MEFISTO), coordinated by the University of Florence, aims to raise the preparedness level through an efficient and standardized training protocol developed by a representative network of Mediterranean stakeholders. This project addresses new opportunities for interoperability between Mediterranean training centres, allowing international cooperation against disasters related to forest fires. MEFISTO also aims at establishing training programs with specific sessions on the organization, protocols and procedures applied in neighbouring countries. Its general objective is to improve the effectiveness of cross-border fire fighting and to allow an easy and safe transfer of human and material resources from one Country to another.





3. STATE OF THE PROJECT

The last six months of the MEFISTO project have been used for the development of three main points:

- The redaction of deliverable D_E.3: "Report of the Pilot training course", where the activities carried out in the first training course for European Forest Fire Officer (EUFO) are reported. In fact, on May 2018 the pilot training course for EUFO was held in Valabre (France). In the report, a deep description of the lessons is included. Moreover, a detailed analysis of results, including the outcomes obtained by a satisfaction questionnaire submitted to all participants, was carried out.



- Final Conference

In addition to the preparation of the field exercise, Tuscany Region, with the help of the other partners, has organized in these months the Final Conference of the project, held at the Training Center "La Pineta", Siena, on December 14th.



- Pilot Exercise

The positive results obtained in the pilot training course have been integrated by a successive event held in Tuscany on December 2018: the pilot exercise. In fact, to test the training of EUFOs, a final exercise was established in the project. Tuscany Region organized a two-days event at the regional training centre called "La Pineta", including an entire day for in-field activities. 12 Incident Commanders from France, Italy, Portugal and Spain were directly involved in the event. All detailed information will be available in the specific Deliverable D_D.3 "Report of the pilot exercise", together with a detailed analysis of results and a SWOT analysis.





4. LATEST EVENTS

MEFISTO PILOT EXERCISE. FIELD EXERCISE. DECEMBER, 12TH - 13TH, 2018.

On December 12th and 13th, the pilot exercise was organized to conclude the training activities began in Valabre (France) in May. The exercise was divided in two days: in the first day the trainees were involved in an in-field simulation of big fire. Organizers gave a scenario of summer fire, with critical conditions and a serie of ground and aerial resources. Many ground means and one helicopter were really available, and were used by EUFOs to manage the situation. During the exercise, the 12 EUFOs, 3 from each participant country, were asked to respond to the simulated emergency, preparing a suppression plan taking into account the available resources and fire conditions. A collaborative approach allowed trainees to share experiences and strategies, highlighting the importance of international cooperation on this kind of events.

In the second day, an indoor exercise was carried out. The trainees, together with the Italian experts, analysed in detail a recent large fire that affected Tuscany in 2018. Thanks to the use of interactive instruments, the participants had the possibility to analyse fire dynamics and firefighting activities carried out during that event. After the description, a fruitful discussion, about fire fighting organization, strategies, techniques and fire management, was carried out. This have allowed participants to identify the weaknesses and to highlight the different approaches, thus sharing the different points of view.



One of the teams studying the fire in the Incident Command Post



After the exercise, participants and project partners analyzed the results in the Forest Firefighting training Center "La Pineta".

MEFISTO 5TH MEETING - SIENA (ITALY). DECEMBER, 13TH 2018.

The last internal meeting between MEFISTO Partnership was held on December 13th at the Forest Firefighting training Center "La Pineta", Tocchi - Siena (Italy).

The most important aspects treated during the meeting regarded the conclusion of the project, the last documents to be produced and the final report.

UNIFI members coordinated the discussion and a shared planning for the final months was created on the basis of the official deadlines.



The partners of the Mephisto Project during the fifth meeting.

MEFISTO FINAL CONFERENCE. DECEMBER, 14TH 2018.

The final conference, which was held in the Tuscan training center (La Pineta) on December 14th, counted around 70 participants, which is a very good result in terms of participation. Attendees were mainly firefighters (professionals and volunteers), foresters, researchers from universities and research centers, mainly from Italy, but also from France, Portugal and Spain.

After the introduction of Professor Enrico Marchi, who explained the general objective of the MEFISTO project, the association and the general results, two international experts, external to the project, gave their contribution in the field of forest fire management: Peter Moore from FAO, and Oriol Vilalta, from Pau Costa Foundation.

In the second part of the event, several members of all project partners made presentations on specific results of the project, starting from the analysis of the different fire fighting and training organization, through the development of a glossary and the analysis of international agreements for cross-boarding collaboration.

Other aspects treated about MEFISTO were the main topic of the project: the creation of the "European Forest Fire Officer", EUFO, together with the related training program, which was applied in the pilot training course held in Valabre (France) on May 2018 and ended with the field exercise in Tocchi, Siena, the two days before the final conference.

The creation of a European network of stakeholders in training for fire fighters (EUFORFIRE) was the last point faced in conference program.



Professor Enrico Marchi, project coordinator, explaining the main objectives of MEFISTO



Peter Moore, FAO-Forestry Department, during his presentation



5. MAIN PROJECT OUTCOMES

Finally, note that the major project achievements and outcomes have been:

- highlighting similarities and differences between EU Mediterranean Countries in forest fire fighting (legal frame, organization, procedure, etc.);
- development of a multilingual glossary on forest fire, both as pdf file available on the project web site, and as a freely downloadable smartphone App (available on both IOS and Android);
- definition of a set of procedures to improve efficiency and effectiveness in forest fire fighting collaboration;
- analysis of the existing agreements on cross-border collaboration in forest fire fighting and definition of guidelines for the redaction of the new agreements and the review of the existing ones;
- development of a set of common minimum training objectives and contents for the common positions and roles of responsibility recognized by all the Partners;
- creation of the figure of European Forest Fire Officer (EUFO) by means of the definition of its functions, required skills, training needs and evaluation
- creation of a European network of stakeholders in training for fire fighters (EUFORFIRE).

All project results are freely available and downloadable at www.mefistoforestfires.eu.

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