

Policy Recommendations and Coherence

Session coordinated by Eduard Plana (CTFC) and Maike Overmeyer (FhG)

The discussion session started after the keynote presentation on policy coherence towards integrated WFRM by Eduard Plana (CTFC). The participants were asked to answer the two following questions:

- Question 1: How can coherence of policies with a WFRM link at European level be ensured?
- Question 2: Which (type of) recommendations are/can be developed by the research projects towards the policy arena? How can this process be streamlined?

At the methodological level, individual work was done pointing out the answers that were collected, grouped and discussed with the participants, incorporating the authors' contents and clarifications.

The following text summarizes the main findings of the session, highlighting at the end some potential next steps in the frame of the Firelogue scope and mission in this regard.

1 Question 1: How can coherence of policies with a WFRM link at European level be ensured?

An initial reflection about the dual responsibility between Commission and the Member States was pointed out, mentioning that the upcoming elections are a good chance to consider what MS/citizens/community want from the EU. This was related to the open question around developing an EU wildfire directive (similar to the Flood Directive) in order to set common EU standards and policies. In this regard, a set of considerations were mentioned supporting or limiting a common directive, for instance, that "the EU operates in a manner distinct from countries such as Australia and the USA, measures that work in those countries to ensure policy coherence might not work in the EU" or "why not having an EU multi-hazard directive". In any case "what has worked and what did not" needs to be considered. In parallel, the need of "certification and standards for wildfires to make the EU more resilient" or the "creation of an inter-DG working group to check the coherence of sectoral policies towards integrated WFRM" was proposed. Moreover, beyond the EU level, "how to deploy policy coherence from EU programs to Member States' national agendas" should be considered as well. It was also pointed out to "look more toward the process of how they [Directives] are developed, in the sense that an "WF EU directive might be too soon, not the right move yet".

In terms of institutional governance to reinforce policy coherence, the option to "work by subject and not by organization/institutional competences" where a "more integrative view on policies design and subsequently participation is needed". Other considerations were made around having a "multi-

agency approach to deal with a multitude of threats”. At the same time, to “open channels of communication at two levels: policy – stakeholders; policy – policy” aimed at building “a policy coherence based on common goals from Member States needs”. In this regard, a contribution proposes to “use the EGFF (Expert Group in Forest Fires) as a platform for dialogue/consultancy/work”.

In terms of policy implementation, “the assessment of policy impacts should be included” although EU-wide guidelines need to be “applied flexibly to the state/on a local level”. For achieve this, the “development of bottom-up approaches from local-regional-national levels” was also mentioned.

Along the process of building policy coherence towards integrated WFRM, to “take advantage of successful cases and practices but also lessons learned based on unsuccessful experiences” was pointed out, as well as that policy coherence should be based on a “common frame on data sharing, concepts, etc.” which is needed.

2 Question 2: Which (type of) recommendations are/can be developed by the research projects towards the policy arena? How can this process be streamlined?

Different comments about the contribution of the research projects towards the policy arena focus on the dissemination of the results: “making results accessible and understandable for policy makers” while producing “clear recommendations for the political decision-making leaders”. This should include “practical data about the impacts in citizens’ life; cost-benefit analysis of various WFRM actions; assessment of the impacts of policies; including how to conduct better governance and align policy objectives; map of legislation linked to integrated WFRM and available resources” (and gaps) and including “recommendations for the long-term implementation”.

Moreover, it was suggested to “try to stay away from long, scientific studies”, to edit “short and concise deliverables that consider the cost-benefit considerations”, highlight the “knowledge basis (what do you know/what don’t you know)”, to not miss the “holistic view on policies”, taking advantage of the inter DG work group on wildfires to collect and compare what works/cost benefit calculations.

The constrain of different Commission departments working on different phases was mentioned and, in this regard, “projects need to consider that the EC needs clear guidance on how to implement measures for each phase (i.e. one-page explanations on how to use research results for policies (for example, what format is it needed in?)”.

Along the project lifetime, the need to “coordinate policy activities (policy briefs, policy workshops) across similar projects” was shared as well as the importance of “bringing together science and policy makers”.

Within the advantages of policy coherence, there is a better use of available budget and the acceleration of the needed improvement to cope with not only normal but also extreme wildfire events/unprecedented risk scenarios. With this, “the need for [more] prevention reinforcement should not forget the equally important need for firefighting and suppression”. As a general comment, to “establish a policy coherence as a “new culture” of inclusive and collaborative work” enlarging wildfire community was highlighted.

3 Next steps in the frame of Firelogue

Promoting dialogue among the wildfire community is in the core of the Firelogue mission, and this can be extended to dialogue across EU agencies. Moreover, the coordination with Innovation Actions and other wildfire related projects, may serve to cluster the results by subjects and risk management phases, or topics related to DG competences, policies and targets under the Green Deal. Firelogue, in coordination with the projects, can contribute to identifying and sharing best practices, and in promoting the advances on common frames, terminology, etc.

Moreover, it is in the aim of Firelogue to facilitate the coordination of project activities and Firelogue has the capacity to create specific task forces across the projects to make the best use of the available knowledge, aiming at avoiding duplicities and promoting the policy dialogue in an efficient way. Additionally, dialogue may be structured based on scientific evidence (e.g. through the working groups) considering medium- and long-term policies, able to cope with the root causes of wildfires and its impacts, counting with the participation of policymakers and stakeholders in the dialogue.