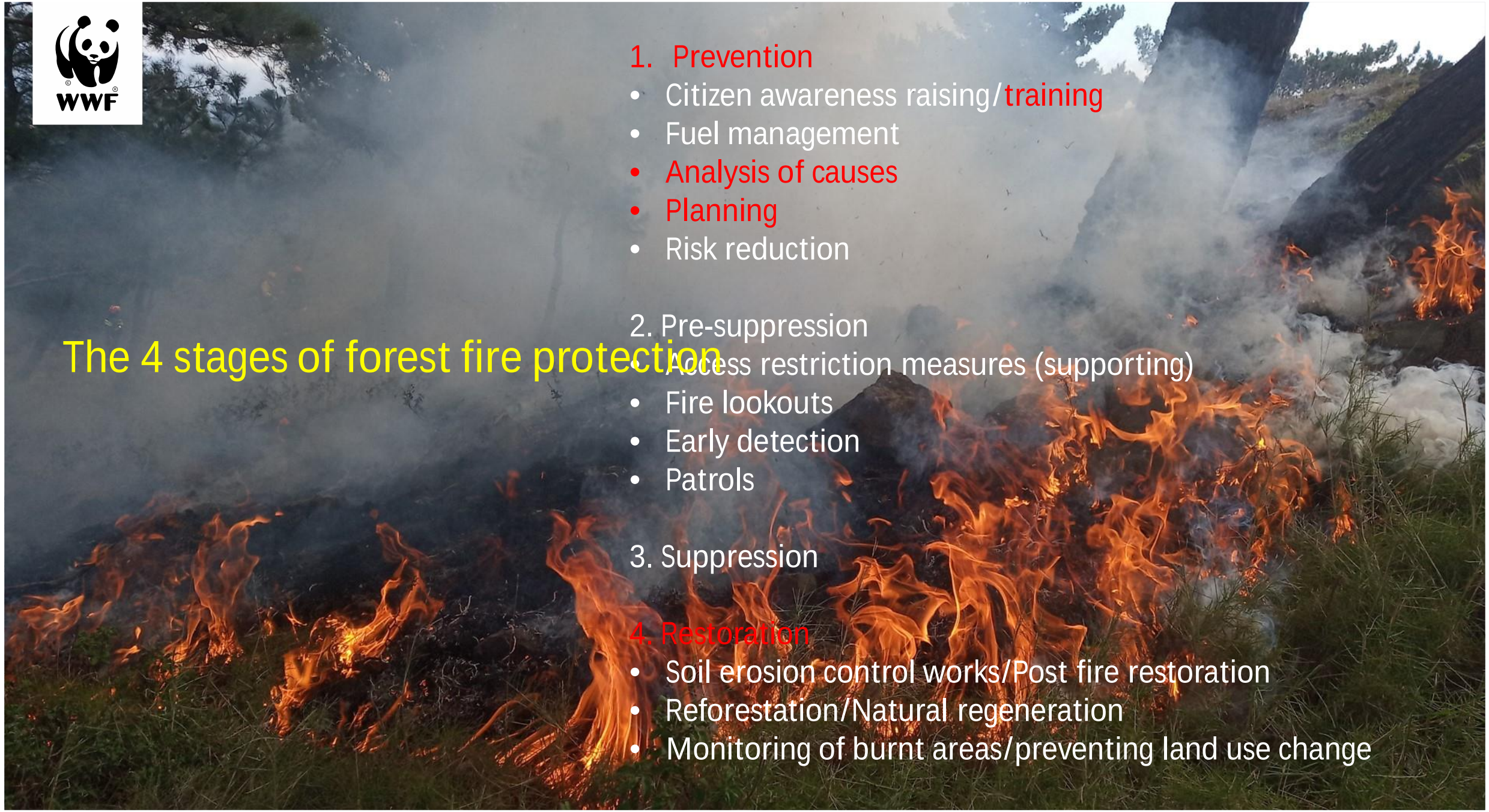
The essential steps forward for effective fire prevention in Greece and lesson learnt from Evros fire

Elias Tziritis
Forest fires actions Coordinator, WWF Greece



The 4 stages of forest fire protection

1. Prevention
- Citizen awareness raising/training
- Fuel management
- Analysis of causes
- Planning
- Risk reduction

2. Pre-suppression
- Access restriction measures (supporting)
- Fire lookouts
- Early detection
- Patrols

3. Suppression

4. Restoration
- Soil erosion control works/Post fire restoration
- Reforestation/Natural regeneration
- Monitoring of burnt areas/preventing land use change

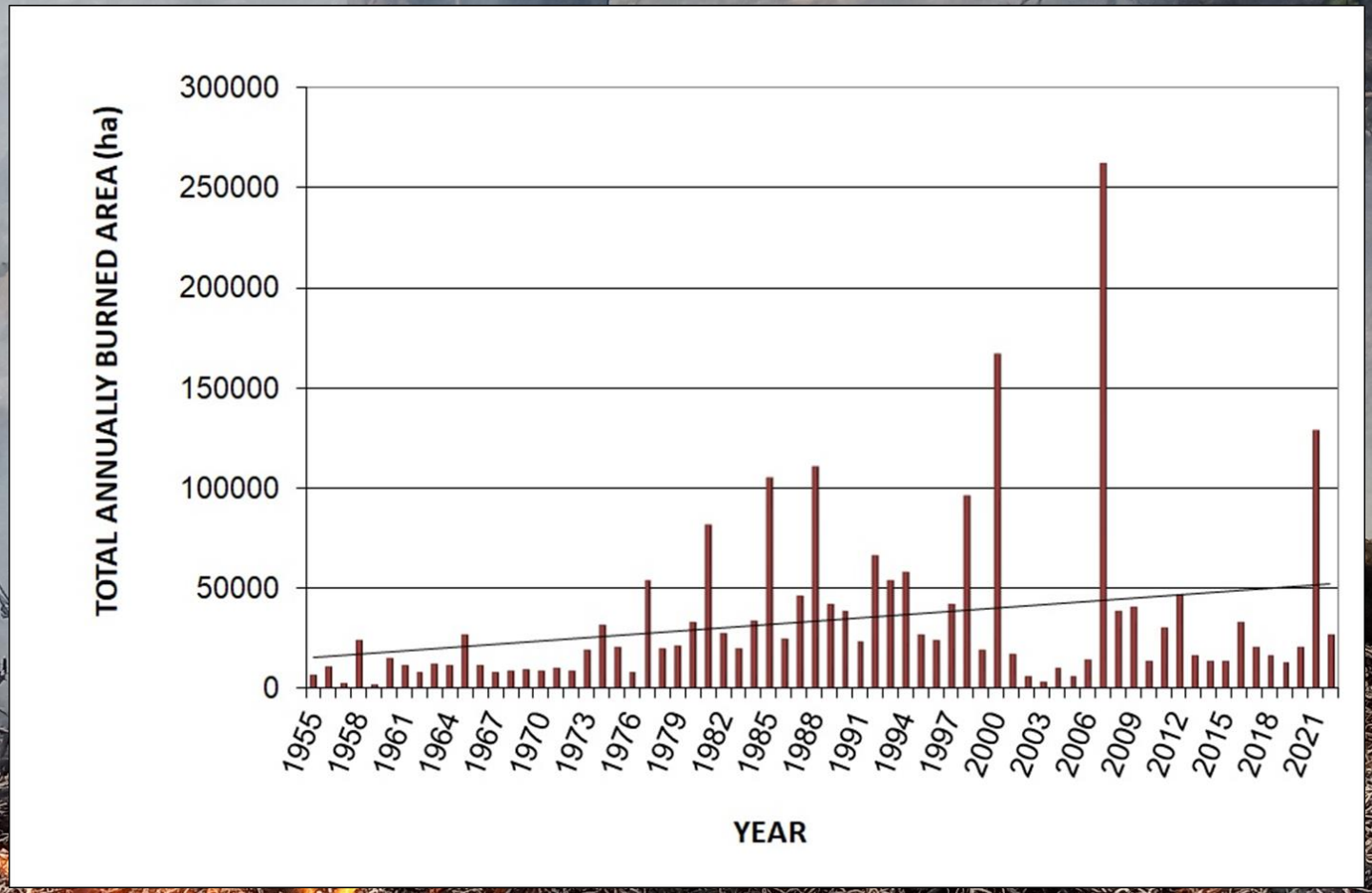
Fires are natural phenomena that historically have been part of the ecosystem in Mediterranean and semi-arid climates

HOWEVER...

the increasing of

- frequency of fire occurrence
- intensity and
- burned areas

Fires have become a problem



Basic current trends in numbers

9.734 rural fires/year

95% human caused (40% negligence, 25% intentional acts of arson, 30% unknown, 5% natural)

45.000 ha /year (only 2023 >20.000 ha burnt twice within 20 years)

83.95% of the total funds available are directed towards suppression and only 16.05% towards prevention.

Forestry Service: staff reductions of 53% and resource reductions of 80%.

Reports and laws without implementation

ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΑΣΗ ΡΑΓ' -21 ΜΑΤΟΥ 1993 6949

ΒΟΥΛΗ ΤΩΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΩΝ

ΔΙΑΚΟΜΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΚΟΙΝΟΒΟΥΛΕΥΤΙΚΗ ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ

Για τη μελέτη σε βάθος του προβλήματος των πυρκαγιών και την υπόδειξη τρόπων οργάνωσης και μέσων για τη μακροπρόθεσμη και αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπισή τους.

ΠΟΡΙΣΜΑ

Πρόεδρος	Αντιπρόεδρος	Γραμματέας
Διονύσιος Μπεχράκης	Μόσχος Γικόνογλου	Αντώνης Σκυλάκος
Βουλευτής Νέας Δημοκρατίας	Βουλευτής ΠΑΣΟΚ	Βουλευτής ΚΚΕ

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ΜΑΙΟΣ 1993

Επιμέλεια παρουσίασης
Μαρέτα Καλδή
Βουλευτής Ν.Δ

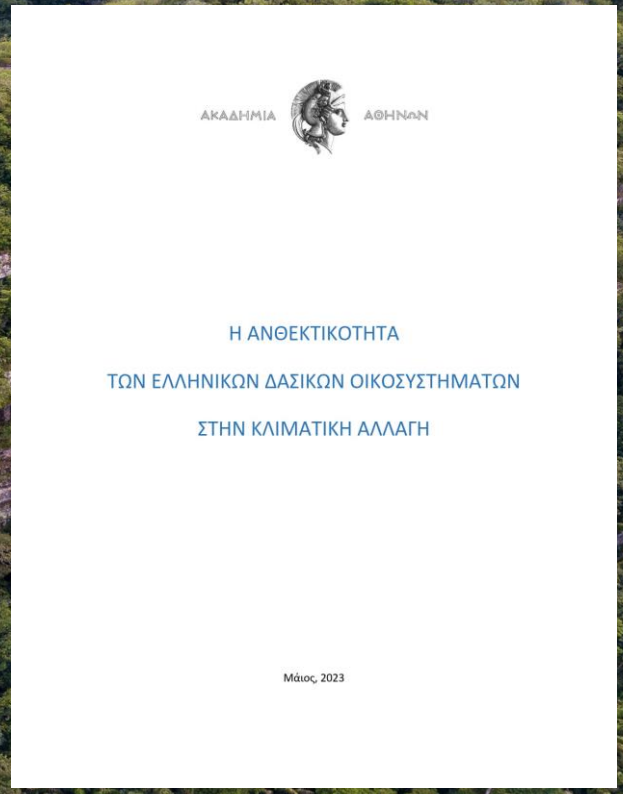
The Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)
Secretariat Of The Global Wildland Fire Network
UNISDR Wildland Fire Advisory Group
International Wildfire Preparedness Mechanism
International Fire aviation Working Group

The Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC)

Επιτροπή για τις Προοπτικές Διαχείρισης Πυρκαγιών Δασών και Υπαίθρου στην Ελλάδα

Έκθεση της Ανεξάρτητης Επιτροπής που έχει συσταθεί με την Πρωθυπουργική Απόφαση Υ60 (ΦΕΚ 3937/Β/2018) για την ανάλυση των υποκείμενων αιτιών και τη διερεύνηση των προοπτικών διαχείρισης των μελλοντικών πυρκαγιών δασών και υπαίθρου στην Ελλάδα

Αθήνα, Ιανουάριος 2019



ΑΚΑΔΗΜΙΑ ΑΘΗΝΩΝ

Η ΑΝΘΕΚΤΙΚΟΤΗΤΑ

ΤΩΝ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΩΝ ΔΑΣΙΚΩΝ ΟΙΚΟΣΥΣΤΗΜΑΤΩΝ

ΣΤΗΝ ΚΛΙΜΑΤΙΚΗ ΑΛΛΑΓΗ

Μάιος, 2023

Iceland Liechtenstein Norway Active citizens fund

Διαχειριστής Επιχορήγησης:

ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΠΟΔΟΣΑΚΗ

SOLIDARITY NOW

ΕΚΘΕΣΗ

Οικονομικά πράλήψης και καταστολής δασικών πυρκαγιών

Αξιολόγηση της διαχείρισης των δημοσίων πόρων | προτάσεις για την ενίσχυση της διαφάνειας, της λογοδοσίας και της αποτελεσματικότητας

Φορέας Υλοποίησης

WWF

Εταίρος

MIR

Responsibilities

Prevention : Forest Department

Suppression: Civil Protection-Fire Service

Restoration: Forest Department

+30 authorities or stakeholders have multiple engagement to different topics of forest fire protection


The country's forest fire protection system has a clear suppressive orientation.
Bold political decisions are needed to put prevention into practice and adapt to the challenges of climate change!

It's not just climate change and suppression model ....

Rural abandonment and traditional agricultural uses

Forest fuels accumulation

Gaps in local prevention planning

Problematic cooperation between the competent authorities

Insufficient funds for forest management & prevention

Insufficient training of firefighting staff and citizens

Lack of sufficient planning in WUI areas

2023-A year of disaster

41% in Protected Areas

18 Natura 2000 areas

3 National Parks

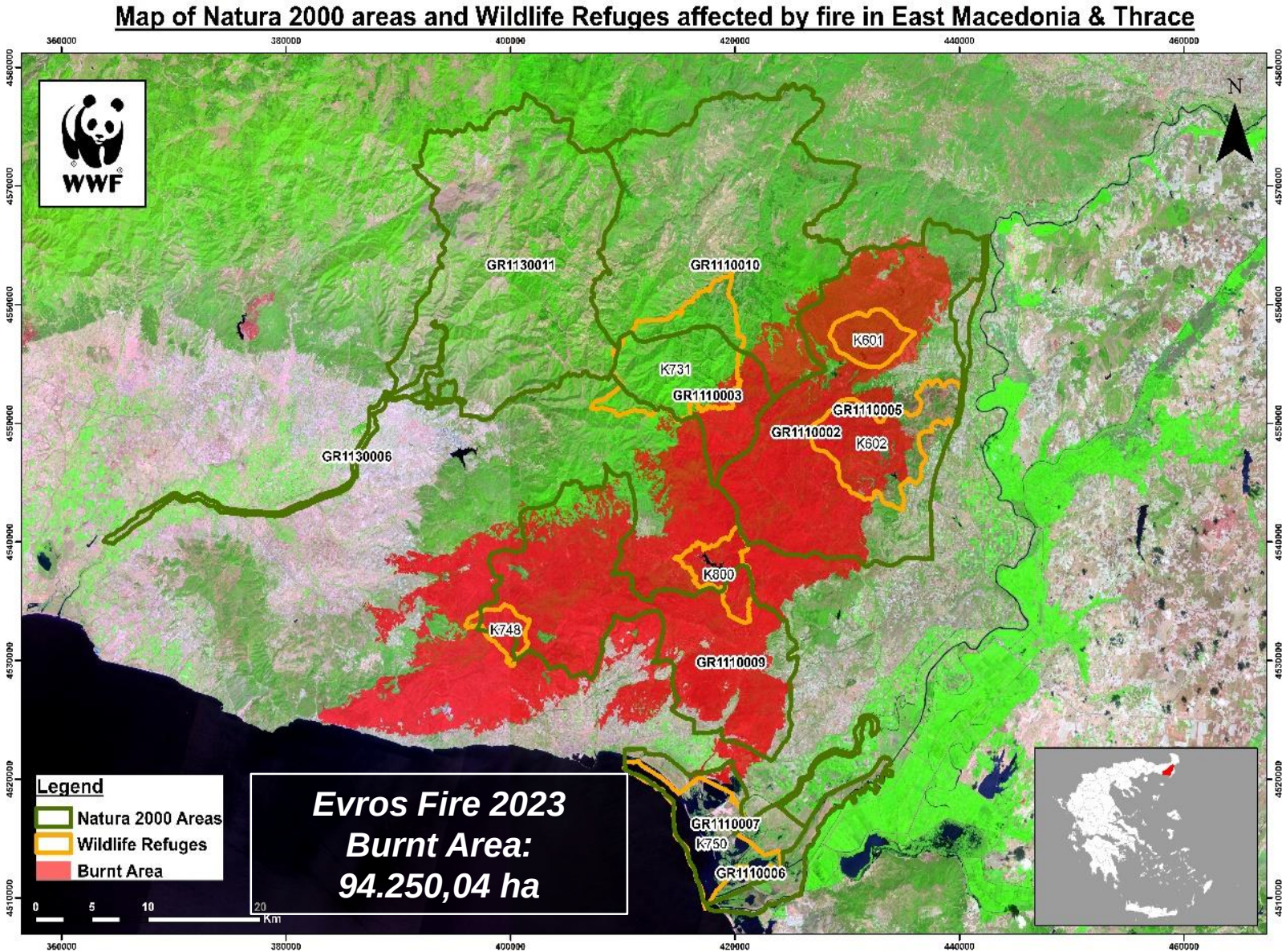
1 National Forest

5 Wildlife refugees

>20,000 ha double burnt

2023
Greece experienced its second-worst fire season on record in terms of total area burned
with 172.700 ha affected

Dadia National Park Fire: The biggest ever recorded in EU



The evaluation of fire incidents is the first step for future prevention

The main objective of the report was the evaluation of the operation of the forest firefighting mechanism in Greece based on the example of Evros, the behaviour of the Evros 2023 fire and the response

Why?

- WWF Greece works 30 years in Evros
- A pilot for future efforts to assess similar fires- First time in Greece
- Learning lessons that will change the system
- Contribution to the public dialogue for fires
- Evaluation should not be a mean of imposing sanctions but a capacity building opportunity

METHODOLOGY

Stakeholders mapping

Interviews, focus groups and questionnaires

Official data, information and documents

Analysis of available sources, literature and relevant reports

Satellite data

Scientific documentation of the behavior & spread of Evros fire

Scientific analysis of the severity of the fire

Fire Severity Map

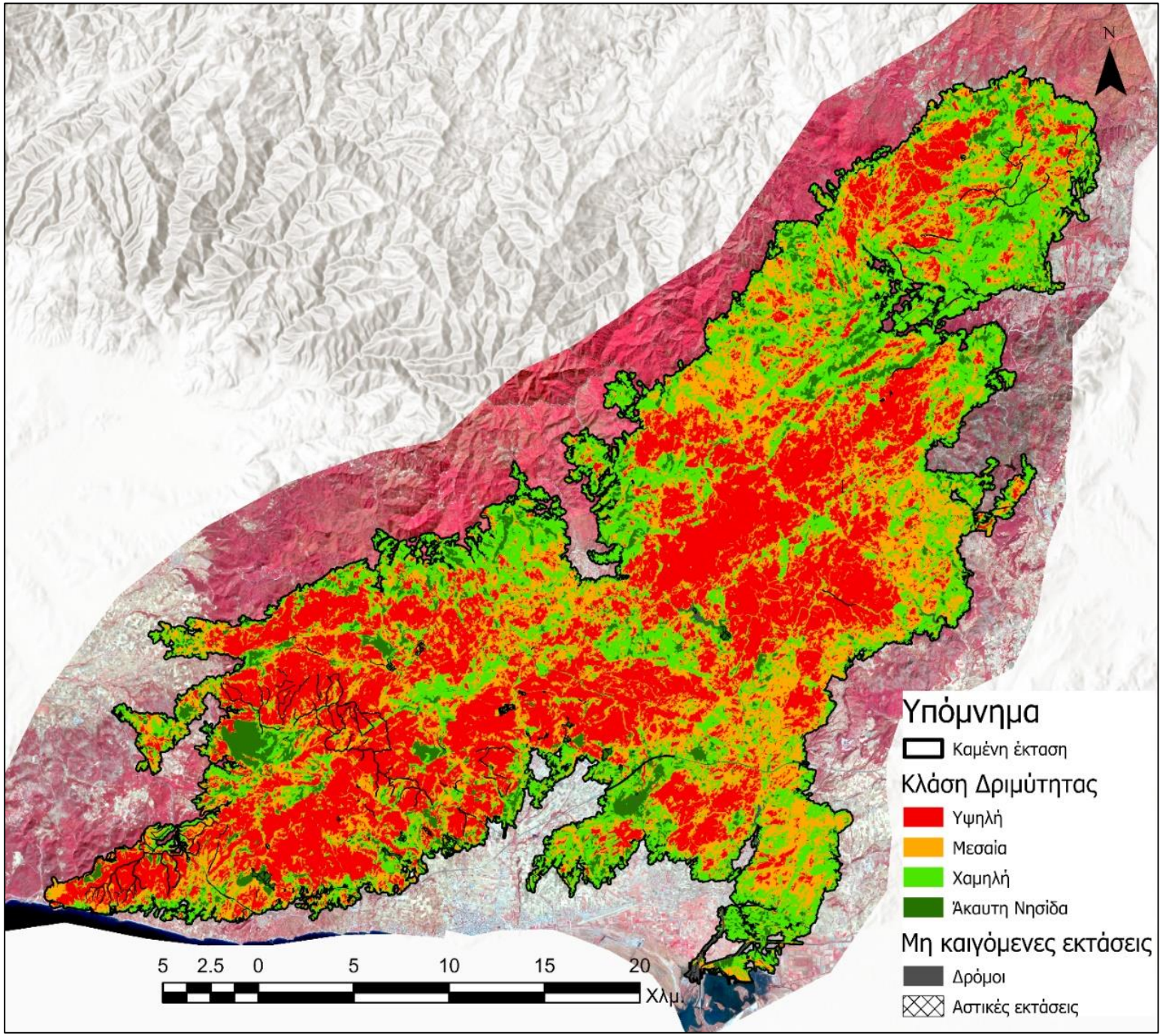
58% of the Dadia National Park burnt

37% high severity

29% medium severity

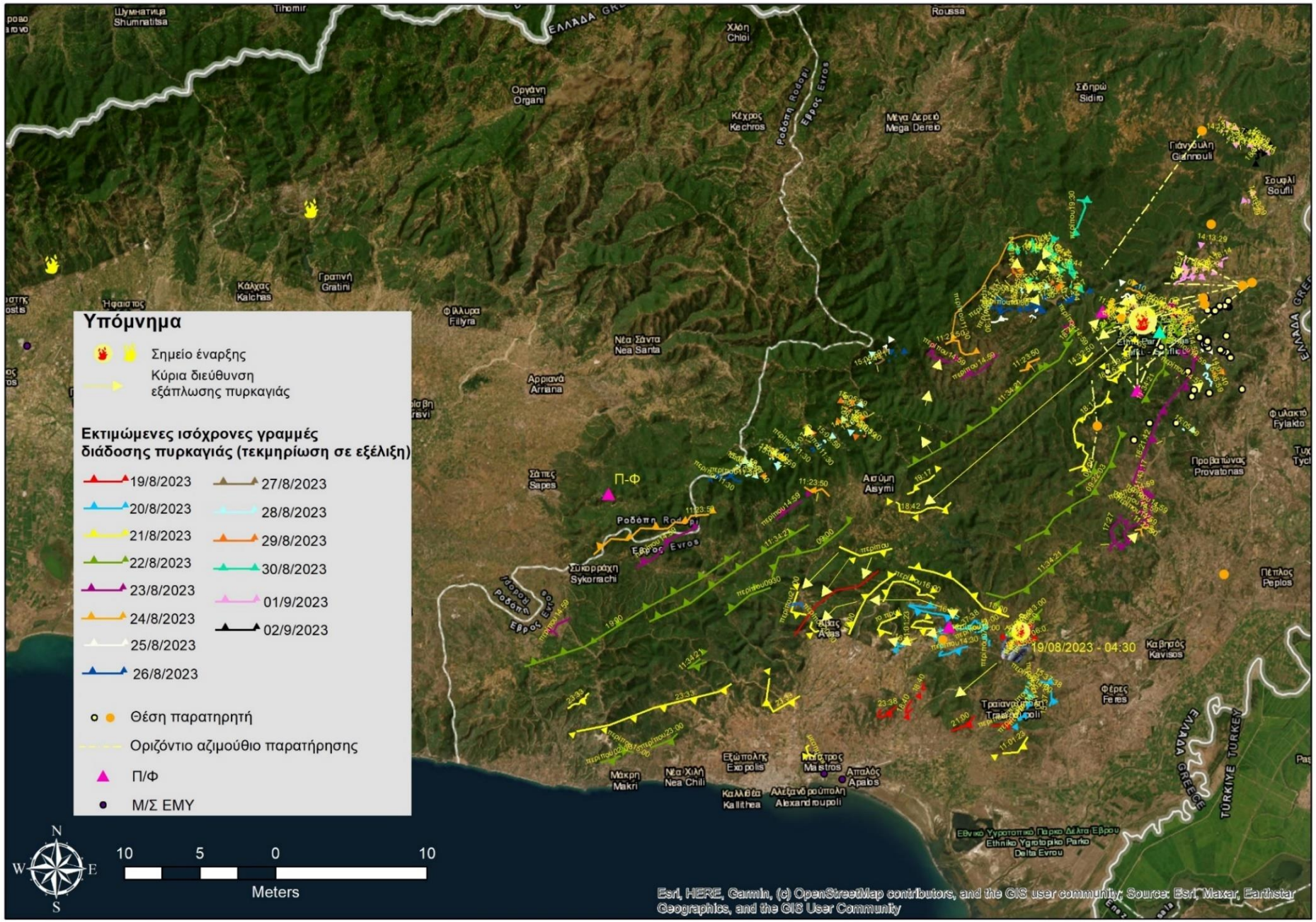
28% low severity

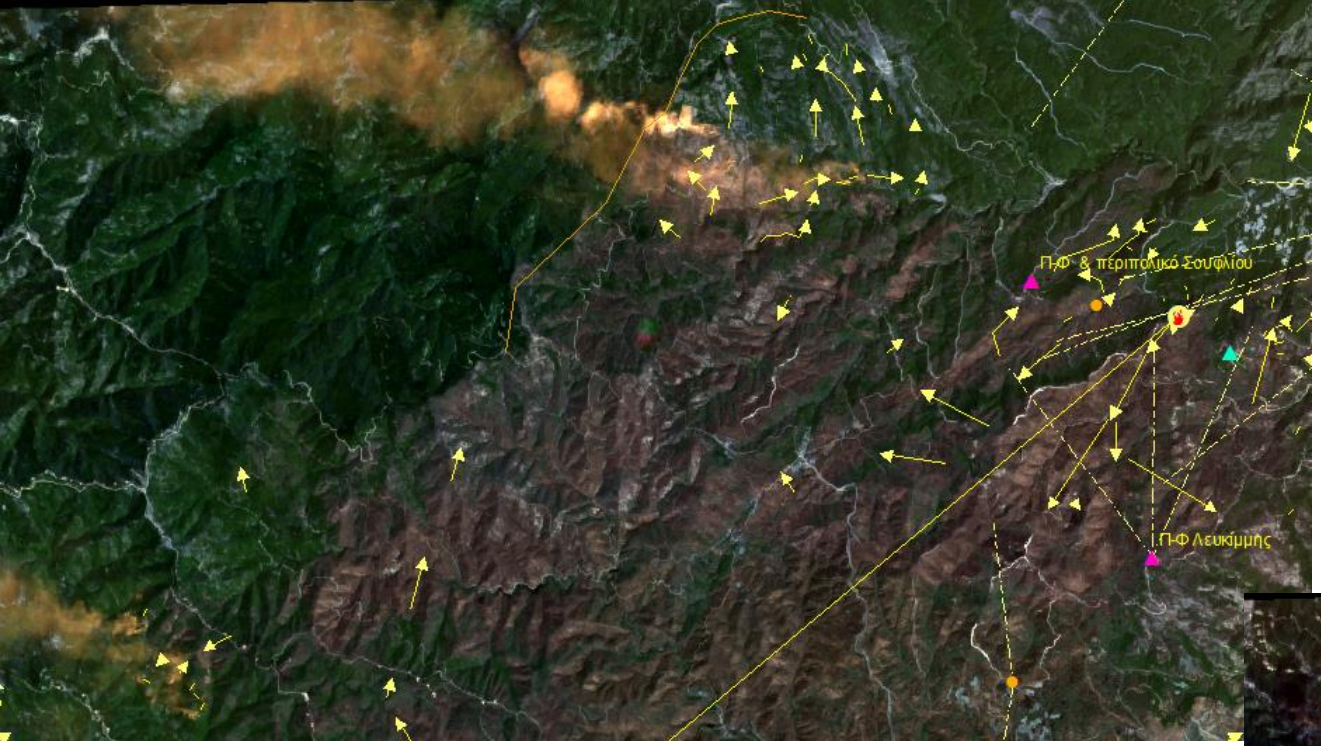
6% unburnt islands



Fire Reconstruction Map

A day to day analysis of the behavior and spread of the fire

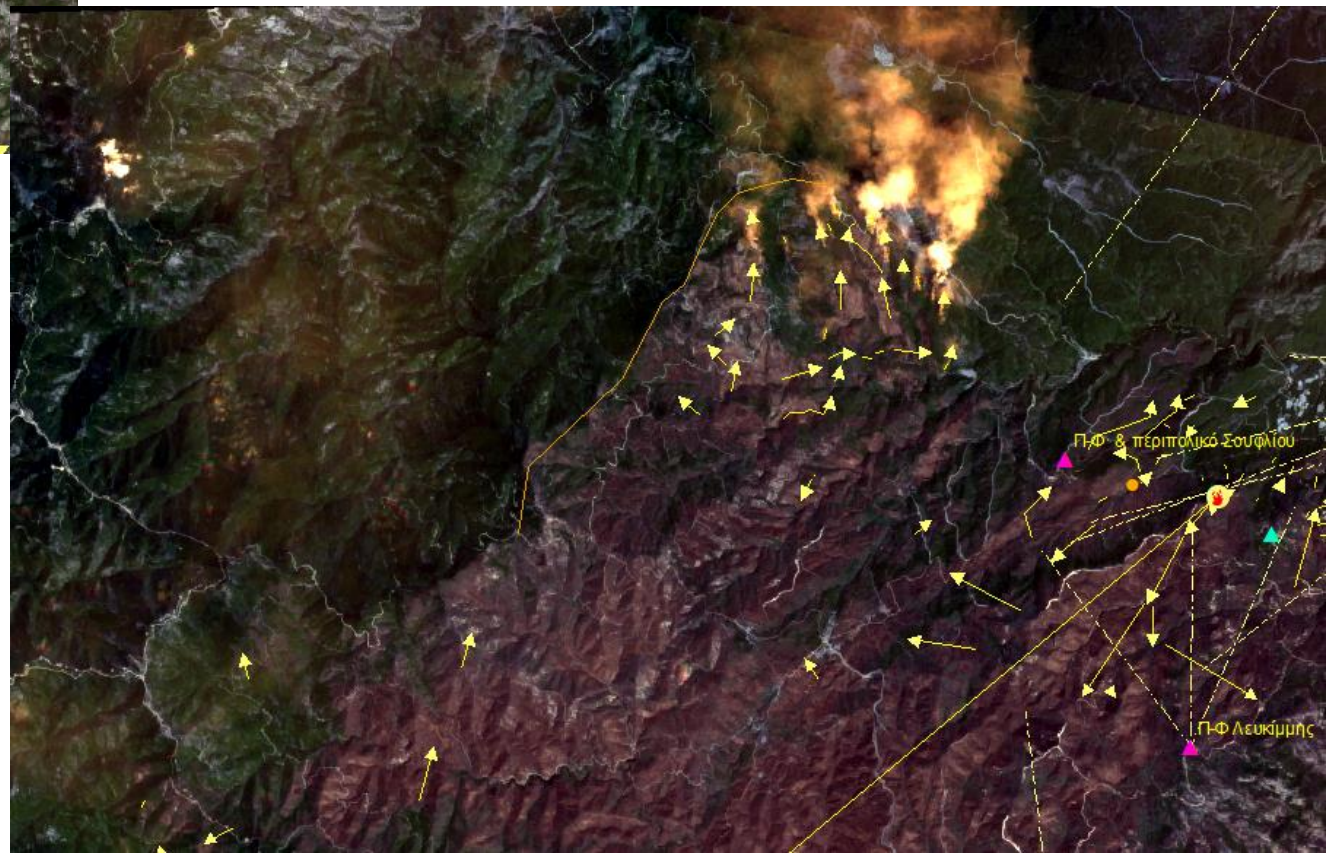




29 August to 2 September 2023

A predictable wind change turns the heel of the fire into a new front

More than 12,000 ha including 90% of the Small Core of the National Park were burnt because of this strategic mistake



Conclusions

Failure to identify windows of opportunity and/or **failure to make appropriate decisions** on the allocation, spatial dispersion and deployment of the necessary ground firefighting forces in different parts of the fire perimeter.

Absence of practically useful scientific support in the operations.

Significant gaps on training of the Fire Service officers and firefighters seem to be related to reduced effectiveness due to lack of knowledge, when suppressing forest fires.

Diachronic problems in the forest firefighting system which often result from a lack of compatibility between different agencies and create **serious coordination problems**.

Indications of **unmet local operational needs** expressed by sectoral officers of the Fire Service .

Incorrect evaluation of available data (e.g. meteorological forecasts), resulting in the **burning of an additional 12,000 ha, including the small core of the Dadia National Park** .

Proposals

In local level

In National level

Immediate actions, midterm and long-term actions

Thank you!!

Elias Tziritis
Forest fires actions Coordinator, WWF Greece
e.tziritis@wwf.gr
Tel. 0030-2103311988 (int.407)