Conference ‘Forest fires in Southern Europe – from prevention to restoration’
Brussels, 24-25 January 2005
(France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia and Cyprus)

- Organised by DG Environment, Unit ENV.A3, ‘Legal Affairs and Governance’

- Participation of Commissioner Dimas, European Parliament, forest fire authorities, national, regional and local decision makers, NGOs, other stakeholders
What has been recognized

- Many EU policy instruments exist & lack of common forestry policy
- Each EU Member state has its own specific problems
- The number of fires increases whilst their size decreases
- In future, forest fires will play a significant role (climate change, desertification)
What has been recommended

• The (environmental and social values of) forests have to gain visibility;
• Forest policy has to be put higher on the political agenda (to avoid competition between funding instruments);
• Prevention has to be recognised as the unique cost-effective way;
• Concerning suppression: high priority for rapid intervention;
• A more global and interactive approach for coordinating suppression;
• Civil society (including NGOs) has to be supported;
• To improve participation of public and private forest owners in prevention policy;
• To improve contacts to civil society in order to better involve local actors in a sustainable forest management;
• The role of the media should focus on prevention and not only to suppression;
What has been recommended (2)

- The Commission will seek to establish a more stringent framework for forest policy;
- EU and MS policies should focus on prevention;
- EU and MS programmes should support measures to reduce the abandon of rural areas;
- MS should use all available source of financing to boost prevention;
- Provide Management plans for sensitive sites (biodiversity) by clearly demarcating human settlement and ecosystems;
- To support and develop national legislation against arsonists;
- To promote the restoration with indigenous tree species;
- To increase the visibility and take advantage of the EU Monitoring and Information Centre
- To provide stakeholder actions through the European Social Fund.