

Rural firefighting in Cyprus: A challenge for many.

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Fire risk in Cyprus

- Over the years, forest fires have become a constant threat to Cyprus every summer. Taking in account the dry, hot and long summers of Cyprus this has become a real problem especially in the last few years.

Fire Fighting, a job for many!

- A number of Government agencies are involved in the extinguishment of fires,
 - the Fire Service,
 - the Forest Service,
 - the Civil Defense Force,
 - the Games Reserve,
 - the District Offices and
 - increasingly the last years, village volunteer firefighters.

Each agency is involved according to the fire classification criteria as follows:

- Forest Fires: The primary responsibility rests on the Department of Forest of the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment. (Ministry of Agriculture)
- Rural Fires: The Cyprus Fire Service, which comes under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order through the Police, is responsible to fight all rural fires which are up to the distance of 1km from forests boundaries. (Ministry of Justice and Public Order)
- It is important to mention that the Civil Defense Force, the Game Reserve Agency, the District Officers and other volunteer groups act in support of both in case of an emergency. (Ministry of Interior)

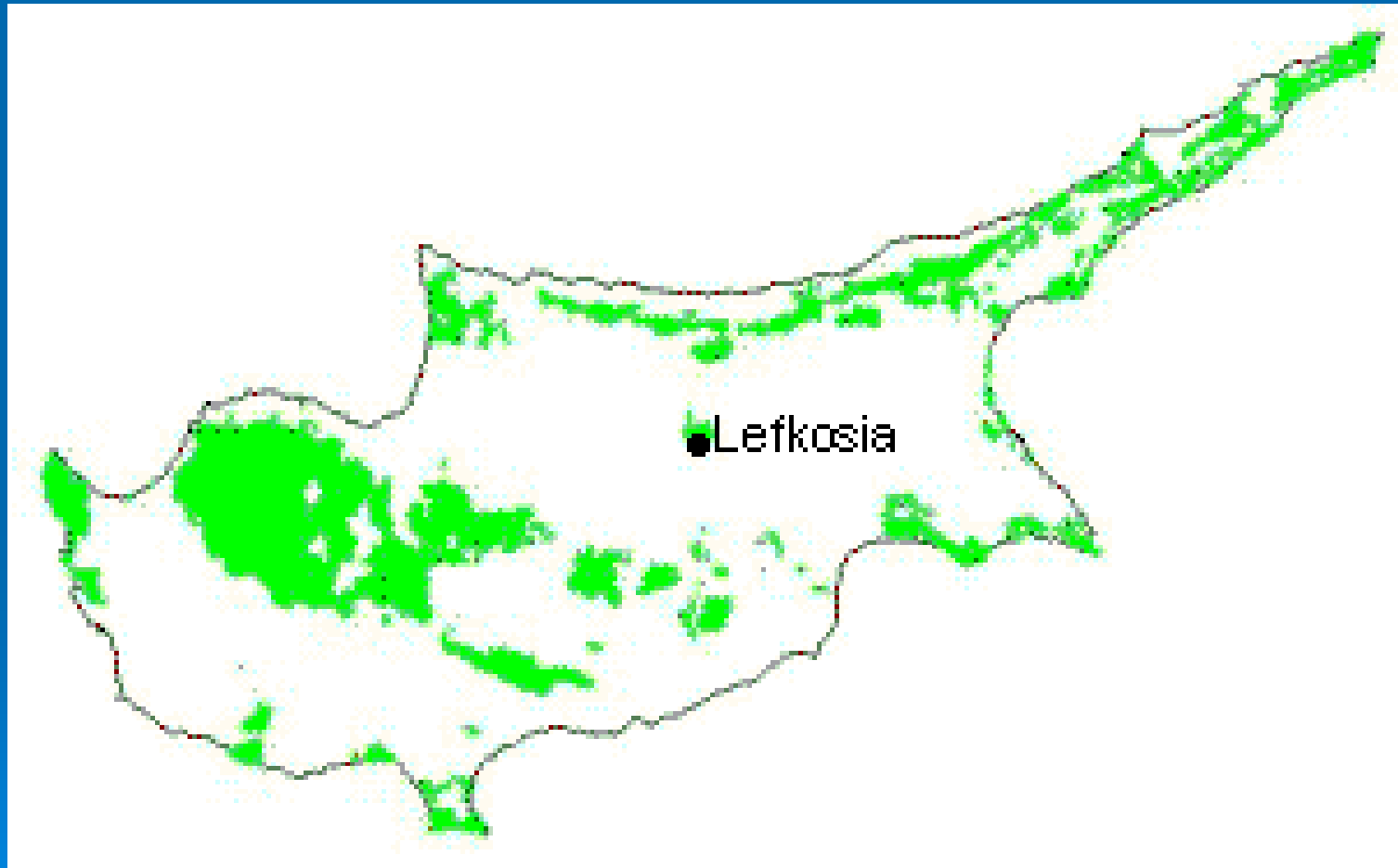
The major players

- The Fire Service is responsible for saving lives, for the prevention and extinction of fires, and rendering humanitarian services to the public.
- According to its mission statement, the Cyprus Forest Service, is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the forest policy, the formulation and enforcement of the forest legislation, the Management of state forests, the running of the Cyprus Forestry College and the reforestation of all degraded forest lands.

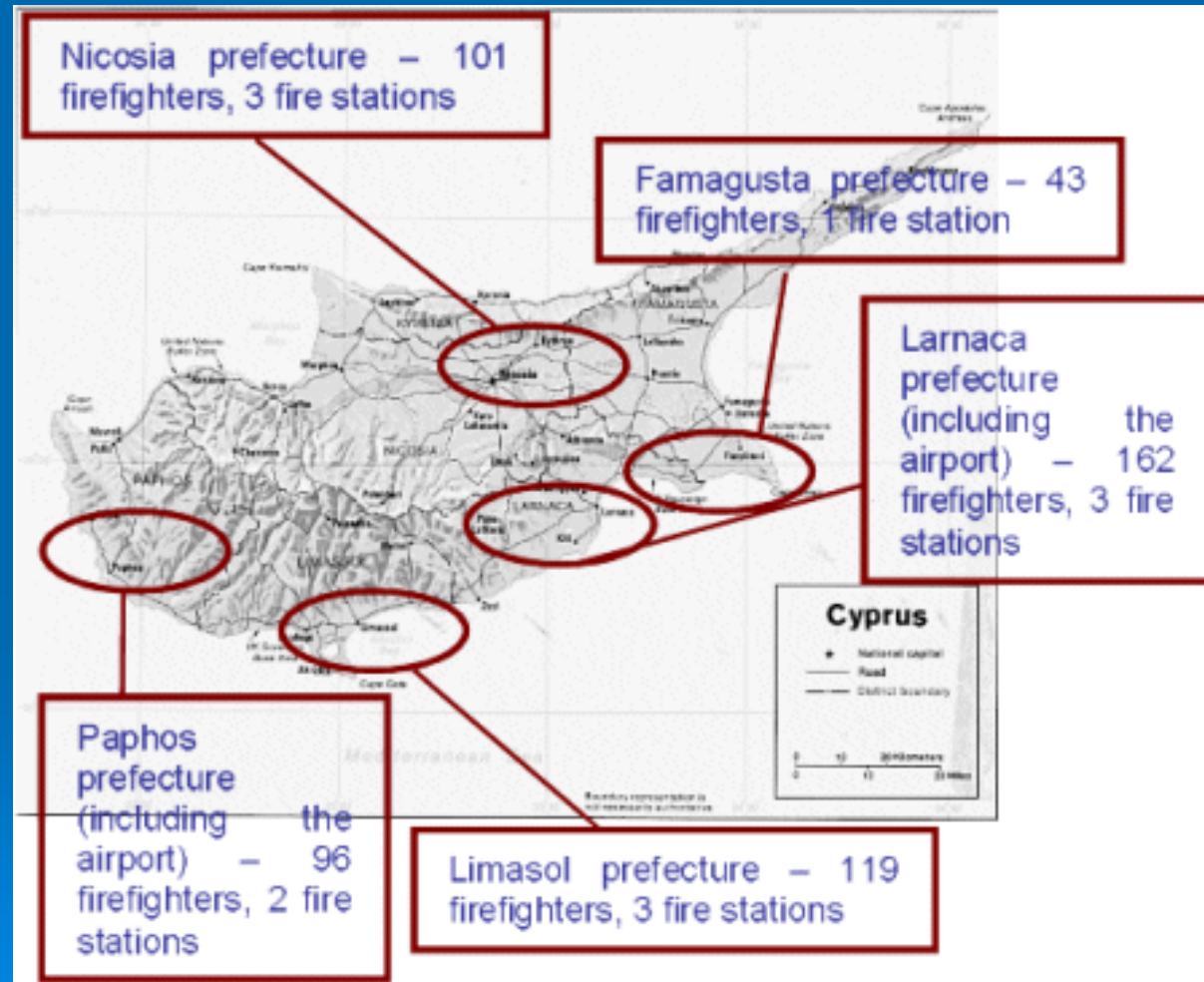
The major players

- The main mission of the Civil Defense Force is the performance of various humanitarian tasks intended to protect the civilian population and help it recover from the immediate effects of hostilities or disaster as well as to provide the conditions necessary for its survival.
- The Game Reserve Agency is responsible for preserving the wild life in Cyprus.
- The District Offices are responsible for coordinating the fire fighting efforts in their respective districts as well as providing auxiliary personnel and means.

Forests in Cyprus: The area of jurisdiction of the Forestry Department



The Cyprus Fire Service: Stations are located primarily in the 5 major towns



The area between the Forests and the Towns. A cooperation challenge put to test in every rural fire.

- The Forestry Department focuses on the Forests and
- The Fire Service focuses on the towns and other urban areas like villages, industrial areas etc.

When a fire breaks in a rural area, usually, both the F.D. and the F.S. respond.

If the fire is within a kilometer from the forest, then a F.D. Officer takes command.

If the fire is off the limits of the forests, then a F.S. Officer takes command.

All other agencies which respond to assist operate under the command of the respective officer of either the F.D. or the F.S.

Coordination and logistic support

- The Ministry of Interior operates as the overall coordinator and provides logistic support.

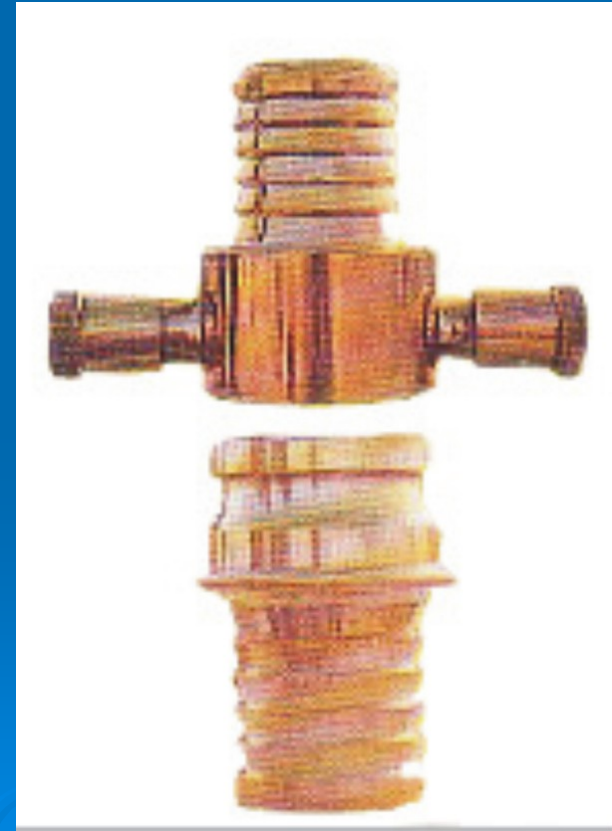
Challenges

- The Forestry Department uses primarily Storz couplings
- Storz coupling is a "quarter turn coupling", or "sexless coupling", commonly used to connect to fire hydrants, easy to connect, no particular male or female end, lugs are on inside of coupling. The standard coupling on fire hoses in Germany.



Challenges

- The Fire Service uses the British type fire hose couplings



Civil Defence, Games Reserve, District Offices, others

- The other smaller “fire services” use much smaller engines, hoses and different couplings, Quick Release - Quick Disconnect Hose Couplings



Challenges

- At the moment, fire crews on the ground find it difficult to share equipment, especially to interconnect using the different types of couplings used by the different agencies.

The future

- Cooperation and coordination between the agencies involved in rural firefighting in Cyprus need to be improved and this could easily start by all agencies deciding to incorporate a single hose coupling.