



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 24 June 2016
(OR. en)

10657/16

AGRI 373
AGRIFIN 79

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Catastrophic fire in Cyprus <i>- Information from the Cyprus delegation</i>

In view of the "Agriculture and Fisheries" Council of 27 June 2016, delegations will find attached a document provided by the Cyprus delegation on the above-mentioned subject, presented under Any Other Business.

Catastrophic Forest Fires in Cyprus

Starting on Saturday 18 June 2016, a number of wildfires broke out at different places in Cyprus. The worst and most destructive one broke out on Sunday the 19th in the sub-mountainous area of Solea, at the northern foot of the Troodos mountain range. Aided by the extremely hot and dry weather and prevailing strong winds, the fire grew quickly out of control, notwithstanding the immediate mobilization of strong firefighting forces moving to the area.

It is to be noted that on the 14th of June it was officially confirmed and announced that a severe drought is taking place in Cyprus.

The Solea area wildfire is the worst recorded in Cyprus for several decades. Cyprus sought assistance and aerial support, from a number of other countries and was able to deploy a total of 20 airplanes and helicopters in fighting the fire. The Government reiterates its deep appreciation and gratitude to Greece, Israel, France, Italy and the UK for their prompt response in providing air support to aid the operation.

After five days of tremendous effort during which two firemen of the Cyprus Forestry Department lost their lives and three more were seriously injured, the fire was put under control on Wednesday the 22nd, having reduced to ashes in total over 20 square kilometers of forest, hundreds of years old, arable land, and other ecologically valuable land. The loss of biodiversity was complete. Besides a number of villages faced imminent danger of being burned to the ground and their inhabitants suffered considerable material damage.

Forces are still patrolling the area to prevent any resurgence of the fire.

Accurate assessment of the damage and loss to property has been initiated. Losses are certainly in the order of millions.

Cyprus needs the support and solidarity of Member States and the Commission Services, to start as soon as possible the effort of restoring the damage caused to infrastructure, the environment, forest and production potential and to bring life back to the area.