



RESOLUTION No 1.

Adopted by the Congress convened by the
“Maria Tsakos” Foundation –International
Center of Maritime Research and Tradition
N.G.O.”

(Chios - 15 and 16 October 2012)

The CONGRESS,

HELD under the auspices of the Minister of
Mercantile Marine and the Aegean of
Greece, Mr. Kostis Moussouroulis, in
cooperation with the Regional Unit and
Municipality of Chios, and in cooperation
with related entities of Chios, by the “Maria
Tsakos” Foundation – International Center
of Maritime Research and Tradition

N.G.O.” (hereinafter referred to as the “Maria Tsakos” Foundation) for the purpose of providing a forum aiming to discuss, examine and provide recommendations towards the recovery of the Island of Chios and healing of the wounds it suffered from the devastating fires of August 2012 and, in parallel, establishing the foundations of the sound infrastructures necessitated for the prevention, response to, and elimination of, similar disasters in the future, as well as for the reconstruction, further development and economic growth of the island,

BEING ADVISED on the magnitude of the devastation caused by the fires in rural Chios and its agriculture (with a special effect upon the mastic producing villages and mastic production); the impact they have had on the local transportation network; and the subsequent landslide risks to the deforested areas,

HAVING CONSIDERED the scientific facts and evidence, the related recommendations and the substantive proposals made during the Congress by speakers, panelists and the audience,

TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION that, amongst others, the causes of forestry fires are related to:

- a. The recently observed urbanization trend, resulting in the accumulation of combustible materials in forests areas,
- b. The insufficient preventive clearing of the forests,
- c. Climatic changes and the negative impact they may have in the future,
- d. The escalating value of land, in conjunction with the absence of forest charting and associated Registries,
- e. and the autumn fires, particularly those attributed to negligence on the part of farmers and breeders,

RECOGNIZING that the restoration of all damages suffered should be carried out only in accordance with strict scientific criteria,

RESOLVES TO:

1. EXPRESS its deep grief for the devastation caused to the flora and economy of Chios by the fires – particularly, to the mastic producing villages and the mastic production of the island, the worldwide uniqueness of which should be sustained and preserved for the present and future generations;
2. SHARE the grief and STAND BY the people of Chios, who have been affected by the fires in any way;
3. RECOGNIZE the urgent character of reviving economy of Chios; the reinforcement of the mastic villages aiming to their resurgence; and the revitalization of the island's flora;

4. CONGRATULATE the “Maria Tsakos” Foundation for its prompt initiative to convene this Congress and related entities (governmental and non-governmental), which have co-operated in its organization,
5. EXPRESS warm thanks to Prime Minister Antonis Samaras, to the Ministries concerned and, in particular, to the Minister of Mercantile Marine and the Aegean Kostis Moussouroulis, for the immediate response and effective coordination and mobilization of all competent public and private bodies to eliminate the destructive effects of the fires and for undertaking all urgently needed measures to that effect;
6. CONGRATULATE and PRAISE the representatives of the Armed Forces and Security Services for effectively organizing and actively participating in the fire extinguishing operations;
7. CONGRATULATE and PRAISE all volunteers both from Chios and other Aegean Sea islands, who selflessly participated in the firefighting operations;
8. WARMLY THANK the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and the European Union Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mr. Johannes Hahn, for delegating their representatives to the Congress, as a true expression of their support and solidarity towards the people of Chios;
9. ALSO EXPRESS warm thanks to His All Holiness the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and His designated representative to the Congress, His Eminence Markos, Bishop of Chios, Psara and Oinousses, for their support, affection and blessings demonstrated, in various ways, to those affected by the fires;
10. THANK the representatives of the Ministry of Merchant Marine and the Aegean, the Ministry of Development, Competitiveness, Infrastructure, Transport and

Communications, the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Climate Change and the, Ministry of Rural Development and Food for their substantial contribution to the successful running of the Congress and the adoption of pertinent recommendations aiming at promoting its set objectives;

11. ALSO THANK the chairpersons and speakers for delivering appropriate lectures as well as the participants who actively contributed to the presentation of the fire-related problems and the subsequent success of the Congress,

12. ADOPT the Conclusions and Recommendations of the Congress (as shown in the Annex) and, for the purpose of their implementation:

INVITES the competent Ministries, the local Authorities of Chios and the relevant public and private sector bodies to take as soon as possible appropriate and necessary action, within the framework of the attached recommendations, towards strengthening and revitalizing the economy of Chios; the recovery and further development of its qualitative and quantitative productivity and trade; the modernization of means and procedures of agricultural and rural development; and the promotion and implementation of relevant educational programmes;

13. EXPRESS grateful thanks to the “Maria Tsakos” Foundation for convening, organizing and running the Congress, inviting distinguished personalities and high-level speakers from Greece and abroad; and for the overall financial support provided; and

14. EXPRESS warm thanks to the Homerion Cultural Center of Chios (donation of the late Michael and Stamatia Xyla) for hosting the event and providing excellent facilities for its smooth running.

ANNEX

Conclusions and Recommendations of the Congress

Conclusions

- In the course of the second half of the last century and thereafter, an alarming upward trend has been evidenced in Greece, both in terms of the burnt area outliers and the number of forest fires.
- The number of forest fires and the total burnt area appears to be highly correlated to a new climate index defined as the ratio of the average temperature to the average relative humidity during the months of July and August.
- The average summer temperature in the Greek region and, in particular, the eastern Aegean Sea, has increased over the last 50 years by about 0.5 degree Celsius per decade, while it is anticipated that, in the forthcoming decades, this trend will continue, with a respective decrease of relative humidity and increase of wind force in the Aegean.
- By the end of the 21st century, it is expected that these variations will eventually increase the duration of the hazard period by more than a month per year.

Recommendations

- Immediate declaration of disaster stricken areas as reforest able.
- Immediate declaration of the Island of Chios as a fire-ravaged area and subsequent submission of a relevant application to the European Solidarity Fund.
- Close and continuous monitoring of the regeneration of the burnt areas by competent authorities. No intervention should be allowed to the burnt mastic trees

and forests up to the beginning of spring 2013, when an accurate assessment of their revegetation will be possible.

- Immediate redesign of preventive plans and fire protection strategies should be undertaken. Thus, the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Congress will provide guidance for a more effective prevention of hazards and protection of the remaining forests.
- Taking into account that the forest areas of the island not be burnt in the last 20 years will regenerate by natural processes, there is no need of any additional action of reforestation. However, a scientific depiction of the regeneration capacity in disaster stricken areas is required in order to establish whether there is a need for intervention. Scientific substantiation can be performed by methods successfully applied in the past, both in Greece and in other Mediterranean countries, e.g. Spain.
- Any antiflood/ antierosion works, if and when decided, must be executed under strict criteria and with due respect for the affected environment, taking into consideration the existing biodiversity. Such works are recommended to be undertaken using – where possible bigger materials and resources locally available thereby avoiding further damage to the natural environment.
- Under the provisions of the applicable law, concerning forests, widespread logging should be prohibited, as this causes soil compaction, destruction of the structure of the ground and of its biological elements, and alteration of the hydrological conditions - while the existence of trees helps the retention of the soil and its regeneration. The selective removal of burnt trees is recommended.
- There is no need for the construction of bundles of logs and of grids of branches on flat or rocky areas.
- With respect to the mastic trees (originating from the variety of the species (*Pistacia lentiscus* var. Chia) “schinos”, which regenerates by itself), it is expected that such regeneration will take place, unless their root system has been damaged. This must be ascertained on the spot and per site, depending on the severity of the damage. What is not easy to ascertain is the time frame within which the reborn sprouts will evolve. An initial assessment is that trees whose trunks are not completely destroyed may regenerate in a faster pace than expected. It is further

- recommended to avoid the removal of burnt mastic branches or of the fallen branches in order to avoid erosion.
- The grazing and hunting must be prohibited as natural regeneration is hindered by grazing. Consequently, in order to minimize the load on burnt sites, non productive animals must be curtailed; cattle should be herd to adjacent unburnt areas and alternative food animal feeding sourced.
 - The creation of a grazing management plan is necessary not only in order to minimize any negative impacts but also in order to benefit the animals themselves (for example, the improvement of the abandoned fields and the potential fertilization of unburnt areas) is recommended.
 - The qualitative and quantitative monitoring of the water resources throughout the island and their efficient management should be undertaken.
 - Measures must be taken for the protection and restoration of apiculture, while ensuring that the production is adequate and quality of honey is not affected.
 - Special care must be taken by expert bodies towards the relief of victims of possible psychosomatic effects arising in some groups of the population from the devastating fires.
 - The establishment and completion of a Land Registry and forest maps is necessary.
 - The creation of a hiking path network, spread out to the whole of Chios, by opening, maintaining, upgrading and signaling existing, abandoned routes and historical paths, is also recommended.
 - The local creation of “natural parks” for scientific research and education purposes, as well as for the promotion of public awareness on environmental protection in conjunction with the materialization of sport and environmental activities, should be encouraged.
 - A general and specific spatial urban design with the zoning of mixed-use structures, through the processing of a wide range of disciplines, taking into consideration local community approaches, should be sought.

The Congress was informed by the North Aegean Prefecture Authorities that their strategy for the reconstruction of the stricken areas of Chios will aim at:

- Administrative proceedings and measures towards the immediate support and relief of affected citizens;
- Medium-term infrastructure reconstruction of the local economy and the production structure; and
- Long-term planning for the completion and full utilization of the existing infrastructure aiming at the revival of the local economy.

Essential means in this planning will be:

- The use of existing financial resources (Finance Ministries, the National Strategic Reference Framework and private donations);
- The declaration and affirmation of the areas concerned as fire-affected; and
- The exploration of potential funding from the European Solidarity Fund.

Moreover, the Congress noted the following proposals seeking governmental support:

1. Establishment of an institutional network under the legal entity of a Non-Profit Organization, in accordance with article 101 of Law 3852/20012 (KALLIKRATIS), providing for a joint participation of the Chios Municipality and District authorities, the University of the Aegean, the Chios Mastic Producers Union, the Chamber of Chios and the Regional Development Company of Chios aiming at the reconstruction management of the region.
2. Strengthening support and provision of incentives towards distinct business and manufacturing clusters, such as the tourism industry and local agricultural producers (mastic-tree growers, apiculture and farming).

3. Elaboration and implementation of developmental projects for the tourism industry and promulgation of awareness campaigns of local unique qualities, both domestically and internationally.
4. Upgrading and reconstruction of existing production infrastructures.

Specific proposals concerning impending actions were adopted as follows:

1. Compensation to all affected Gum Mastic Growers, not only in terms of this year's production, but on a 5-year timeline horizon.
2. Full recuperation of the affected mastic cultivation and production.
3. Governmental and associated authorities support towards the creation of a mastic trees seedling plant.
4. The design and implementation of appropriate European Union (EU) legislation and policies related to the protection of unique remote areas and/or islands, regardless of the EU country they belong to.
5. Volunteer action acknowledgement and reward, both of local groups and from areas beyond Chios, such as Mytilini, Samos and Ikaria (See resolution 2)
6. Declaration of certain unique trees and flora, in specific areas of Chios, as monuments of natural heritage (See Resolution 3)
7. Design and establishment of a holistic business plan by and under the supervision of the General Secretariat of Aegean and Island Policy (Ministry of Merchant Marine and the Aegean) for the actual implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Congress.
8. The "Maria Tsakos" Foundation to undertake a follow-up process, at regular time intervals (e.g. 3 months), to monitor the progress, execution and implementation of the aforementioned business plan, in cooperation with competent entities.





RESOLUTION No 2.

The CONGRESS,

HAVING BEEN INFORMED about the wide-ranging acts of volunteerism committed during the August 2012 fires on the island of Chios, and

RECOGNIZING the immense and critical contribution to the extinction of the said fires by volunteers from the islands of Chios, Lesbos, Samos and Ikaria, in support of the substantial efforts of local authorities and agencies.

RESOLVES TO:

1. ACKNOWLEDGE AND CONGRATULATE all volunteers, especially those who placed their lives at risk while offering valuable preventive and fire combating services;
2. ENCOURAGE AND REWARD such acts of volunteerism;
3. EXPRESS THE WISH that the very notion of volunteerism be spread and extended throughout the country; and
4. INVITE the “Maria Tsakos” Foundation to establish annual Volunteerism Awards and take all necessary measures to support the establishment of networks of volunteers so that they may expand their activities to arising needs all over the country.



RESOLUTION No 3.

The CONGRESS,

HAVING BEEN INFORMED, by the Federation of Cultural Association Settlements of Southern Chios, of the existence of trees, many of which, according to experts, exceed the age of one thousand years,

RECOGNIZING the specificity of these trees, together with “Prina” and “Shina”, in the overall cultural heritage of Chios and their contribution to the development of the island’s tourism,

DESIRING to contribute to the protection of the flora of Chios,

RESOLVES TO:

DECLARE the trees, ‘Prina’ and ‘Shina’ (as they are described in the attached letter of the said Federation of 16th October 2012) as Monuments of Natural Interest and

INVITE the appropriate authorities to adopt all measures necessary to ensure that, henceforth, such Monuments are treated with appropriate care and are preserved.

ANNEX

Federation of Cultural Associations of Settlements of South Chios

To: The Committee of the Congress
“Our response to the fires”
In Homerion Cultural Center of Chios

CC: “Maria Tsakos Foundation”

Sirs,

The Federation of Cultural Associations of Settlements of South Chios (O.P.S.O.N.CH.) greets the convergence of the international conference on countering the effects of the fires, which affected the island of Chios, causing disasters among others and to the mastic trees.

The O.P.S.O.N.CH., wishing to contribute to the protection of the flora of the island notifies about the existence of trees, some of which, according to the opinion of experts, exceed the age of 1000 years:

1. Olive (Liverani) in Pera Mylos of Kallimasia, height perimeter of the parapet: 12.50 meters
2. Oak (Orphanides) in St. John of Sklavia, minimum perimeter: 8.20 m
3. Prina of gigantic dimensions in the areas of St. George Kydiantas and of Flori at Epos.
4. Shina that survived from the low temperatures of 1850 near Tholopotami.
5. Tsikoudia (pistachia terebinthus atlantica) in Kambia of Kallimasia

A relevant resolution, by your committee, concerning their declaration as Monuments of Nature, would not only contribute to their protection but also to the development of tourism of the island.

Chios October 16, 2012

Upon instruction of the President of
O.P.S.O.N.CH

Dim. Melachroinoudis, Secretary