Call for papers

Mediterranean Great Wildfires
Which reply to environmental disasters?

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Regular years: under the boiling heat of the Mediterranean summer, unconcerned tourists and residents look at the ballet of fire units to stop the progression of ordinary land fires. The same scene takes place each summer. Of course, extended areas of vegetation are wiped out, leaving unpleasant ashes landscapes behind them. But who cares? Next year will see the renewal of the entire ecosystem, hoping that next damages will occur farther. Some campsite might be ruined, yet it probably follows some building irregularity or planning mistake. Wildfires are part of the Mediterranean landscapes. No disaster, simple common fate. Forest keepers shall manage…

Black years: the 2000 and 2007 summers may figure among the worst memories of Mediterranean people. While millions of tourists enjoy the sandy beaches of the big blue, entire regions are eaten up by flames. Huge wildfires deploy their devastating wings in France, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Spain, Turkey and Algeria, destroying or damaging hundreds of houses, licking the suburbs of many capital cities hurt by the violence of the attack. The danger is no more limited to remote places. Panic reactions of residents are shown on all TVs of the world. Unfortunately dozens of casualties are left behind. The disaster is no more theoretical concept. Anarchy in building activities, passivity of the political assemblies, misleading forest and land management are immediately pointed out. Geographical and environmental knowledge enter discussions and people discover they have applied counterparts. Were these dates exceptional? The 2009 and 2010 black episodes seem to introduce great fires as recurrent phenomena always more threatening and questioning the human land occupation and its relation to its immediate “natural” environment.

The vol.1/2014 of Méditerranée intends to focus upon the wildfire disasters that left their mark on last decade in the Mediterranean, with peculiar attention paid to the forest-city interface. Behind the necessary diagnosis, the authors are invited to focus upon both upstream conditions and downstream issues of such dramatic events, i.e. prior territorial “disorders”, damages’ extent, spatial and social consequences of the crisis.

The exposure of human settlements shall be seen through the prism of official and/or unofficial land planning policies. Far behind the well-worn subject of environmental associations challenging with political-economical authorities, the contributors are
called to investigate underneath power contests and practical conflicting interests on land.

This volume is not dedicated to the climatic changes that allow such disasters to appear, even if such input is essential. The vulnerability of Mediterranean environment is also a known deed we will accept per se.

A general hypothesis is to be discussed: are “great events” necessary to bring official institutions revise their practical planning policies and modify territorial legislations? To put it otherwise, are disasters the only way to question territorial “orders”, playing the same function as crisis in the economic field? Are territorial institutions and actors permanently failing? Obviously, many prevention plans have to be improved or revised. Which new strategy should be adopted?

As usual, Méditerranée welcomes proposals of scientists coming from various fields: geography, forestry, political science, urban and rural planning, as well as economy. The editorial team shall gladly receive located studies of all circum-Mediterranean countries as well as comparative works at lower scales. A special importance is granted to mapping works.

We also call for proposals that deal with the Russian wildfires of 2010, Australian bushfires of 2009 and Californian disaster of 2007 to mirror the Mediterranean situations to other exterior yet similar events.

For more information and submissions, please contact:

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**Deadline for submissions: June 2013**