

CROATIA

2. DROUGHT

Data show that in Croatia draught occurs in the average every three to five years, and depending on its intensity and duration it may reduce the yield of various agricultural crops from 20 to 80 %. In 2000 and 2003 all counties in Croatia reported damage, and only in agriculture the confirmed damage due to draught amounted to more than 3.4 billion kuna. Besides classical draught phenomena in terms of reduced annual quantity of precipitations, a change in the perennial average of precipitation distribution during the year has been observed. According to these observations, the quantity of precipitations over the period September _ November decreased, and increased in July and August. This has been particularly observed in the Adriatic area.

Summer draughts are the cause of increasingly often forest fires. In the period 1992-2004 each year an average of 16 200 hectares of forests and macchia burn in forest fires, and a trend of increase of the areas caught by fire is observed. Some 90% of the area caught by fire is in the karst region (coastal zone), which also otherwise, due to the very shallow soils and their slow formation, is among the environmentally most sensitive areas.

As already mentioned, part of the measures for mitigating the effects caused by draught has mainly been integrated in and implemented through sectoral programmes of agriculture, forestry, water management, etc., whereas an integral solution will be proposed in the NAP (National Plan for Mitigating the Effects of Draughts and Preventing Land Damage) and through cooperation within the framework of the newly established Drought Management Centre for South Eastern Europe (DMCSEE).

The Centre is a project which has resulted from the conclusions on cooperation among the Parties to the Convention at the regional level. Part of the Parties to the UNCCD from Annex IV and Annex V is involved in this cooperation, furthermore the UNCCD Secretariat and WMO representatives. The Centre's significance lies in the establishment of requirements and acceleration of the procedure of forecasting the occurrence of draughts at the regional level, as well as in the faster coordination, establishment of balanced monitoring, information, warning, and other activities at the national level. For more information on the Centre and project status please refer to www.dmcsee.org.