

TO Deputy Minister of Civil Protection and Crisis Management
mr. Nikos CHARDALIAS
SECRETARY GENERAL FOR CIVIL PROTECTION
mr. Vasileios PAPAGEORGIOU

*Reference: article of the website **Militaire.gr***

Dear mister deputy minister/secretary general,

I would like to express my deepest regrets about the wrong message that came out of the article realized by the **Militaire.gr** website and posted in the 10th of August 2021, at 20:13.

I assure you of my whole availability in dismantling this huge lie that is affecting our great collaboration and our joint efforts to suppress the fires, for which we were requested through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

The written article has nothing in common to what me and my colleagues stated. When giving an interview (*video, voice, short notices*) I was accompanied at least by one of my two cell management officers (*operations officer and liaison officer*), who can confirm that nothing mentioned in that article fits to what we declared.

We have never been in contact and never gave interviews to anybody representing the **Militaire.gr** website.

In addition, I would like to dismiss the article point by point, as following:

- Me and my colleagues didn't state that the forest fires developed in the region where we were operating, under the guidance of our greek liaison officer designated for our module, can be extinguished in one day. We are operating in the area between Spathari and Kalivia located in Evia island, in order to maintain the line for suppressing the fire.

- Our module has a very good collaboration with the greek firefighters, as well as with the local authorities, stating this idea each time we had the opportunity to do it. In the time when we worked together in the field we always noticed their devotion and commitment for fighting against the forest fires, so we could have never stated that they weren't trying to put out the fire.

- We are here to support the greek authorities and greek firefighters in this tough moments they are facing. EU Civil Protection Mechanism is about

solidarity and helping affected countries in challenging times. That was one of the principles on which all participants agreed in the last videoconference with the Emergency Response Coordination Centre liaison officer, from Brussels.

- Our mission is to suppress and extinguish forest fires, not having competence regarding fire prevention.

As for some posts coming from Facebook that states we ask "*why you don't put up a fire by fire?*", it is also a big lie. We use similar methods to extinguish forestfires in Romania like the greek firefighters, this method "*fire by fire*" is used in our country as a very last option and in almost all cases it is not recommended.

Media coverage from Romania are available for you at any time.

In the hope that our point of view will confirm the honest position of Romanian firefighters in relation to the joint and sustained effort of all forces engaged in managing this difficult situation for the host country, we assure you of our full support and appreciation for the professionalism you show.

With respect,
Team leader of the
Ground forest fire – fighting with vehicles Romanian module

Colonel
POP Florin

11th of August 2021