

# ERADICATING AND CONTROLLING THE SPREAD OF WILDFIRES: AERIAL FIREFIGHTING IN EUROPE



## CIVIL AVIATION SERVICES

Longer fire seasons are the new normal around the world. New records are set each year as countries grapple with extreme heat, challenging wind conditions, and droughts, which leads to more frequent, intense wildfires. In the last three years, we've seen the wildfire landscape change significantly around the world and the entities responsible for eradicating and controlling the spread of wildfires have the additional challenge of predicting the unpredictable with the new normal. It takes an incredible amount of experience, knowledge and planning to prepare for the unknown of a fire season.



Aerial firefighting is a significant tool when battling wildfires. Operators around the world are supporting agencies in their efforts to protect their nation's citizens and property with safe, effective aerial assets. According to the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) the United States saw a reduction in the total number of fires and acres burned in 2019; however, the European Union (EU) saw a substantial increase. Agencies and organizations within the EU were battling a 283% increase in total acres from 2018. While the increase was significant, the total acres burned in 2019

equated to 56% of the total acres burned in 2017, indicating the unpredictability of fire seasons and the need for aerial assets to scale with acres burned each season.

Erickson has been supporting agencies around the world for decades. That experience has given us the unique opportunity to identify and develop methodologies and innovations that enable agencies predictable operations and results within an unpredictable and ever-changing environment. Technological innovations that increase safety and save lives are at the forefront of Erickson's Research and Development team, led by Jeffrey Baxter.

While headquartered in the United States, Erickson has been supporting agencies within the EU for more than twenty years and continues to support individual member states in their service to constituents supporting more than 13 S-64 Air Crane® Helicopters throughout the region in their aerial firefighting efforts. Erickson begins preparations and planning for the EU fire season months in advance. Aircraft are mobilized from different locations throughout the world. Crews are positioned to load and unload aircraft from boats or airplanes. Pilots transition from servicing one customer to another, in addition to maintaining proficiency. Each logistical element perfectly choreographed by our teams to ensure operational success and guided by safety. It is truly an incredible sight to watch an operator prepare for a fire season and selflessly support the agencies they serve.



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