

Forest fires in Portugal FIRESORB® put the flames in their place

In the glowing heat of the past weeks thousands of yards of forest have been burned in Europe. The Iberian Coast was the one hit the worst. In Portugal alone 2150 square kilometres of forest have been fallen victim to the flames. Thanks to the use of FIRESORB®, an extinguishing device from the Creavis Technology & Innovation (belonging to the Degussa AG) some fires could be limited to a minimum in time.

Product manager Ralf Röhlen reports: "At the beginning of August we took up contact to the federal border protection and to the European commission to ensure the use of our product in Portugal". Already on the 10th of August 1,8 tons of FIRESORB® were brought to Portugal from the warehouse in Spain. Only one day later a Degussa Team flew to the Algarve.

FIRESORB® in combat

The Portuguese fire department provided the equipment, vehicles and firemen needed. Röhlen reports: "Because the biggest fires were happening just 30 kilometres from the base station in Monchique in the back country of the Algarve, the water supply was realised through special tank vehicles." The dosage of FIRESORB® happened straight at the water take-up, partly through common Venturi - mixers or through direct mixing in the water tank.

Water - Gel mixture

With FIRESORB in the extinguishing water a water- gel mixture is created, which even sticks to ceilings and vertical surfaces. This heat absorbing gel forms a barrier which the fire can hardly cross. Also, through the use of FIRESORB® the extinguishing time is drastically reduced. Because of the gel like substance the product is excellently suitable for preventive fire protection. FIRESORB® forms a protective coat around objects which have not yet been affected by fire. This way forests, tanks or buildings can be coated with the water-gel mixture to avoid a spreading of the flames.

No spreading of the flames

The product manager reports: "In Portugal we were able to extinguish the fires very well with a FIRESORB® concentration of just 1 to 1,5%. The laying of fire-lanes also functioned excellently. The ground was coated with FIRESORB® gel so that the flames were smothered immediately when they reached the fire lane. 50cm wide fire lanes were enough to stop the ground fire. In the areas that were covered with gel there were no ignitions through sparks or radiating heat. For preventive fire protection various tree tops were sprayed with FIRESORB® so that the flames were prevented from spreading. When using just plain water a repeated extinguishing was necessary whereas when using the water-FIRESORB® mixture a single extinguishing of the flames was enough. FIRESORB® was so effective in Portugal that the fire department in Monchique decided to work with the product exclusively in the future. We are holding talks at the moment with the people responsible in Portugal in order to use our product more often."

Pictures of the use of the product in Portugal are available in the department of location communication.

Degussa is a multi-national company with consequential arrangement on profitable special chemistry. With a turnover of 11,8 milliard. Euro and about 48000 workers Degussa is the third biggest German chemical company and is the world wide number one in special chemistry. In the working year of 2002 the company achieved an economic operative result (EBIT) of more than 900 million Euro. The strengths of Degussa are detailed system solutions with high effectiveness for its clients in over 100 countries in the world. The activities of Degussa follow the vision "a Degussa product is of use to each and every person -very day and everywhere."

FIRESORB®

One look: data and facts

FIRESORB® is an extinguishing device which, when mixed into the extinguishing water changes into a fire preventing and heat absorbing gel.

FIRESORB® is used in fighting forest fires and for preventive fire protection.

Through the use of FIRESORB® the extinguishing time is drastically reduced. Fires can be put out much faster and the water is less polluted afterwards which usually had to be cleaned at much cost.

Because of the gel like substance the product is excellently suitable for the preventive fire - protection. FIRESORB® forms a protective coat around objects that have not yet been affected by fire. This way forests, tanks or buildings can be coated with the water-gel mixture to avoid a spreading of the flames.

The product is meant for the use of company-, professional- and voluntary fire departments in order to protect normal or forest fires. Even fire extinguishing planes can be equipped with the product.

FIRESORB® has been tested in regards to its chemical and physical characteristics according to the German fire- and environmental regulations and has been approved as extinguishing device for the fire- grade A.