The EARSeL Special Interest Group (SIG) on Forest Fires acknowledges the growing interest of the research community in using Earth Observation data for deriving critical information for fire prevention and fire effects assessment. The number of projects and publications completed in the last decade has been steadily increasing, as well as the use of these data for operational applications at regional, national and international scales.

To maintain and enrich this steady flow of research and operational studies, the Forest Fire SIG, recognizes the need of addressing the following four critical issues:

1) Encourage the maintenance of Earth Observation platforms that assure a global and systematic 5 day coverage at medium-high spatial resolution (30 m). We believe that international organizations programs (e.g EARSEL, CEOS, IGOL, GOFC-GOLD, GEO) should encourage the space agencies to work in concert to provide the necessary global acquisition strategy to achieve this goal and assure long term data continuity and archival, as well as free, timely and open access to data.

2) Extend the participation of European researchers in international programs addressing the role of fire in global climate and land cover change.

3) Strengthen support for research in the use of remotely sensed data for fire-related applications. Operational uses of these data should be based on proven methodologies and current uncertainties need to be addressed.

4) Promote the creation of a network of validation sites to be used for accuracy assessment of fire-related research, as well as to validate the various semi-operational products currently available. These sites should have common field protocols and metadata, and include both the reference information (e.g., burned perimeters, burn severity plots, etc.), and the raw images used to create that information.

Thessaloniki, Greece, September 28th, 2007.

Emilio Chuvieco
Chairman of the Forest Fires SIG.