

## Autocratic Disaster Management in Russia: How the Russian State Reacts on Forest Fires - A Case Study

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**Arbeitsbereich Politik**

Fiete Lembeck

Autocratic Disaster Management in  
Russia

How the Russian State Reacts on Forest Fires – A  
Case Study

88/2023

**Freie Universität Berlin**

# **Autocratic Disaster Management in Russia. How the Russian State Reacts on Forest Fires – A Case Study**

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## **Abstract:**

The paper investigates how the Russian authoritarian regime managed two disastrous forest fires episodes Russia experienced in 2010 and 2021. It identifies key characteristics of the authoritarian forest fires management, as well as performs content analysis in order to identify the common features and the peculiarities of the forest fires management in both cases. It covers both response to disasters and the subsequent recovery. The paper both identifies the key characteristics of the official communication regarding forest fire management and looks at the general discourse about two forest fires episodes in the Russian media, including the role of different levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy in combatting forest fires and organizing recovery.

## **Keywords:**

Authoritarian regimes; natural disasters; Russia; center-periphery relations; discourse analysis.

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## List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
EMERCOM / MČS	Ministry of the Russian Federation for Civil Defense, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters
Minoborony	Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation
Minprirody	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation
Rosleskhoz	Federal Agency for Forestry
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis

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## **1. Introduction**

Every year, Russia faces severe and various natural disasters. Driven through and reinforced by climate change, weather extremes and human factors, these disasters pose a challenge for the population, the infrastructure, and the political system as a whole. Last year, Russia experienced a record high of forest-destruction through wildfires in Siberia, accompanied by devastating floodings in the Far East and Black Sea regions. Despite the increasing number of serious natural disasters in Russia, scientific literature has not yet researched phenomena and questions connected to the latest events.

This master thesis aims to shed light on the autocratic disaster management in Russia, focusing on the states' management during two disasters: the forest fires in 2010 and in 2021. It therefore seeks to close the gap between research on disaster management and authoritarianism, combining analysis of the former with theoretical approaches from the latter. Beside other factors, the Russian regimes' stability is based on its popularity, which makes the official dealing with and communication about disasters a crucial variable for the manifestation of power. Previous crises were characterized by delayed responses and uncoordinated action by the authorities. Moreover, the state sought to promote a successful management-picture, while centralizing its power and strengthen its rule. Based on the assumptions of an extensive literature review carried out, the following research question can be derived: How does the Russian regime react to natural disasters?

The chosen research design is a case comparison of wildfires in 2010 and 2021. As a method, a content analysis is applied for each case, analyzing the actions of central political actors and institutions, and the regime's measures during two disaster-phases of response and recovery. Used data will be official governmental text documents and statements from state officials, combined with news reports, articles and NGO-reports. For the two cases the disaster phases response and recovery will be analyzed, highlighting the states' reaction to the outbreak of the disaster, during its climax and the beginning of the post-disaster phase.

After this introduction, chapter two presents the results of the literature review and the theoretical framework, followed by chapter three which introduces the applied methodology, including the structure of the analysis. Chapter four comprises firstly part comprises the analysis itself, and secondly presents the results. In chapter five, the case comparison is conducted, followed by chapter six, which draws a conclusion and presents final remarks.

## 2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, a natural disaster is defined as “a natural event such as a flood, earthquake, or tsunami that kills or injures a lot of people“ (Cambridge Dictionary).

From a social science perspective, natural disasters can be defined as external shocks for a political system and societies, emphasizing the crisis and political implications connected with it. Schneider & Hwang describe natural disasters as “not merely natural phenomena, but political events in and of themselves.” (Schneider & Hwang 2014: 637) and emphasize the political scope, describing them as “[...]symbols which can be used by various actors in order to serve their respective interests.” (Hoffman & Button 2007; Schneider & Hwang 2014). In the following the term forest fires – which are natural disasters – will be primarily used. They are defined as natural burnings, covering a forest area<sup>1</sup>. However, in this thesis this term also finds application for events which can be counted to the same disaster – and often are cause or result thereof, such as wildfires or peat fires.

While natural disasters are shocks for all types of political systems, the dealing with it can be dependent on the regime type and political system of the affected state or region. Thus, disasters can pose risks and opportunities for a political system, by representing an exogenous shock that affects a large part of the population and requiring comprehensive action to protect them and the political system itself.

However, natural disasters in certain aspects seem to pose a higher risk for authoritarian than for democratic systems. Autocracies tend to experience a higher mortality rate than democracies (cf. Busygina 2012: 59), which are also performing better in preparedness and emergency response for natural disasters, by having a high state capacity (cf. Lin 2015: 1268) – what makes autocracies an even more interesting research objective. Although a higher damage- or mortality-rate could be interpreted as strong drivers for political changes and pressure on the regime, history shows that the effect of natural disasters on autocratic leadership, in particular on regime-change, seems to be negligible (cf. Dahlberg 2016: 90). While natural disasters can have severe impact on political processes, major macro-shifts remain absent. Nevertheless, exogenous shocks won't pass a political system without a trace.

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, in Russia the official definition for ‘forest fire’ (‘lesnoj požar’) stems from the former Russian minister for emergency situations Sergei Shoigu (Shoigu (2009); Finnish Institute of International Affairs (2012))

Quotations are transliterated according to ISO 9-standard, names and places are transliterated in a non-scientific way.

A key aspect seems to be the management of the disasters, pointing to the question, how autocracies deal with such events.

The scope of scholarly literature on disaster management is extensive. Recent work e.g. addresses the politicization (and media coverage) of natural disasters regarding floodings in the United Kingdom (Albrecht 2022), many studies have tackled the management of natural disasters in China – especially the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 found scholarly attention (e.g. (Schneider & Hwang 2014) –, and also the USA is subject of intensive research, being the most popular example in democracy-affiliated research.

## **2.1 Russian disaster management**

The scholarly literature on disaster management in Russia is diverse. In the Russian case, scientific literature has analyzed natural disasters and the political processes by whom they are surrounded in various regards. The own extensive literature review conducted for this thesis reveals that a substantial part of literature is written by Russian authors. Nevertheless, the most cited work consists of English literature, of which the following reveals important insights in the effects of natural disasters and the respective dealing with it. A list of authors contribute insights about general crisis communication and -management in Russia (Porfir'ev & Simons 2012; Samoilenko 2016), while others shed light on the political effects, concentrating on forest- and wildfire-related disasters (Szakonyi 2011; Bertrand 2012, 2013; Lazarev et al. 2014; Schultz & Libman 2015).

In terms of natural disaster management, Russia offers sufficient research opportunities. In literature, inter alia Russia is being described as a risk society: in comparison to other industrialized countries, suffering from a natural disaster has on average a higher risk for the Russian population, as Sergei Samoilenko points out (cf. Samoilenko 2016: 398).

It is argued, that as a hybrid regime (neither purely autocratic, nor democratic) Russia is of special vulnerability, e.g. when it comes to threats to critical infrastructures by natural disasters, since it lacks leverage of government and control – attributes, which can be applied by 'pure' types of political regimes (cf. Finnish Institute of International Affairs 2012: 75). Compared to other natural disasters, forest fires in Russia yet have experienced most scholarly attention, as shown by the findings below. However, with special regard to the phases of a disaster (below defined in the “disaster cycle” on P. 9), history shows important commonalities among the variety of exogenous shocks.

The Russian disaster management still has its roots in the Soviet past, characterized by dependencies of state control, such as disinformation, distrust, accountability, patron-client relationship and a centralized system of decision- and policymaking (cf. Porfir'ev & Simons 2012: 6 ff.; Samoilenko 2016: 406). These attributes have influenced the management of several disasters in the early years of the Russian Federation. The Neftegorsk Earthquake Disaster (1995) revealed a soviet-pattern of disaster-management; a centre-administrated strategy – implemented by local and regional forces (a ‘balanced’ model) –, low media coverage, furthermore a poor preparedness and poor coordination of governmental bodies through all phases of the disaster (cf. Porfir'ev & Simons 2012: 108). Nevertheless, a main characteristic of Russian disaster management is the authorities focus on short-term political issues and disaster-events “at the expense of long-term social and environmental concerns” (Samoilenko 2016: 401).

The history of poor coordination and late response is a common threat through the disaster management-story and later events show a similar pattern, e.g. the submarine-accidents of the early 2000's, where late response activities, ignorance of warnings and no resignation of responsible officials after the disaster were described as characteristic (cf. Porfir'ev & Simons 2012: 139ff.). The management is also described as “poor leadership practices” (Samoilenko 2016: 400), when it comes to the often stated disregard for human life, which the regime showed during occasions as the *Kursk*-sinking (2000) or the flooding in the city of Krymsk (2012) – events, where the leadership preferred economic as well as technical damage limitation over humanitarian security (cf. Samoilenko 2016: 400).

A lack of coordination as well as incoherent action has also already been identified in the 2010 fire-disaster, induced by a “logic of subordination in terms of command and communication” (Finnish Institute of International Affairs 2012: 75). This refers to the Russian construct of political subordination: federal leaders control of regional leaders, as the “power vertical” revived from President Vladimir Putin in the 2000's (cf. Bertrand 2012: 36) – and visible in various meetings/conferences, where regional officials have to answer the prime ministers or president's questions.

Part of the more recent research has focused on the political effects of natural disasters, with a focus on the effects of wildfires. For example, the impact on the support for the state (Szakonyi 2011; Lazarev et al. 2014) was analyzed, revealing different results. The political consequences of exogenous shocks in Russia can be severe. An analysis of the effects of the

2010 forest fires shows, that in areas particularly affected by the fires, voters tended to punish the ruling party for its mismanagement of the crisis, partly by not participating in the election (cf. Szakonyi 2011). Furthermore, electoral institutions in and after natural disasters can serve as instruments for citizens to express their dissatisfaction with the politics: the ruling party “United Russia” at that time removed incumbents from electoral lists in affected areas, in order to win back voters voices (cf. *ibid.*). However, natural disasters can also have power-consolidating effects for the regime, as shown below.

By comparing the level of destruction induced through wildfires and the results of local elections, Lazarev (2014) manages to show, that the authorities benefited from the exogenous shock: after the 2010 wildfires, villages in central Russia, which suffered from the fires, showed a higher approval rate for the authorities (at all levels) than in less-affected villages (cf. *ibid.*). This is explained by the massive financial aid the state was willing to pay. Speaking of a “demonstration effect” (cf. Lazarev et al. 2014: 663), the authors furthermore show an unexpected high approval rate from people who were not strongly affected by the fires, which is explained by the impact of a perception of governmental presence and competence (cf. Lazarev et al. 2014: 664). The result: active government performance and generous aid increased loyalty – although the people in Russia blamed the government for the disaster. Thus, evidence seems high that the Russian regime manages – whether unintended or not – also to gain advantages from the disasters.

Beside findings about political consequences, research reveals important aspects of the state’s performance while managing fire-disasters. As Schultz and Libman (2015) with an analysis of the 2010 forest fires show, the performance of disaster management in Russia highly depends on the local knowledge of relevant actors (cf. *ibid.*). Accordingly, the gubernatorial performance in combating forest fires was higher, when the respective governors had local knowledge (and local origin) in conjunction with federal connections (and resources) (cf. Schultz & Libman 2015: 39–40). However, efficient disaster management also requires expertise and local knowledge of regional actors because the practical work is not done by governors, but by regional officials and experts, which in turn need to be equipped with an effective strategy from the administrative level (cf. *ibid.*: 35).

While quantitative research highlighted the effects of forest fires, qualitative work has focused on analysis of communication strategies and questions of legitimization and power consolidation connected with the disasters (Bertrand 2012, 2013), enriching the debate with

insights about political motivations of Russian disaster management and the regimes strategy behind it. Findings show that the state can be attributed a personalistic approach, since it rather seems to act as a construction helper than a guarantor for security, shaping a definition of power and effective control in times of crisis (cf. Bertrand 2012: 39). Bertrand states that the communication strategy of the Russian state “suggests that the idea of a technological state able to control disasters, exemplified by the Ministry of Emergency Situations, has failed.” (ibid.). In a later work, the author highlights a restoration of normality and thus political stability and legitimacy after the same disaster arguing that this has resulted in a overrepresentation of the president in the media – and that this process is based on “the idea of a leader’s protection of, or proximity to, the population; on the idea of power euergetism, or donations, and on the definition of a reestablished normality” (Bertrand 2013: 260).

Concluding, natural disasters in Russia play a crucial role when analyzing the regimes perceived and actual disaster management and performance.

## **2.2 Pattern of disaster management: Approaches**

Based on the scholarly literature and theory outlined above, the following approaches and ‘pattern of disaster management’ to be researched can be summarized for the applied case-analysis. Fires as long-lasting disasters provide many opportunities for the state to act in a specific way and promote a certain picture. Consequently, the research question is: How does the Russian state react to fire disasters? This research question will be explored by analyzing the contemporary Russian disaster management during the fire disaster 2010 and 2021.

Based on the literature review and theory, the following conclusions can be summarized, which serve as a hypothetical framework.

Previous crises were characterized by late response and attention from the authorities and the disaster management is characterized by a typical style of communication about it. The picture of a strong state dominates the governmental communication, as well as a restoration of a state of normality and political stability. Furthermore, uncoordinated action and a continuous shifting of responsibility to the federal level is characteristic. A similar pattern is expected here: The state responds lately and inadequate and promotes a legitimizing successful picture of a “strong state” and shapes a definition of power and effective control. Since autocratic legitimacy in many cases is built on the perception of a strong government, which is taking care of its population (cf. Dahlberg 2016: 89) and since research showed,

that wildfires have political consequences in Russia, it can furthermore be expected, that the Russian disaster management is shaped by generous financial aid.

Having defined and highlighted the theoretical frame, the next chapter presents the research design and methodology, which will then be applied in chapter four.

### **3. Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter comprises the presentation of the research design, the methodological part as well as the analytical concept of the thesis.

#### **3.1 Comparative case study**

In this thesis, the Russian disaster management of the forest fires in the past decade are observed as classical small-N case studies, from the qualitative research school being described as “a well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis” (George & Bennett 2005: 24). Although scientific literature seeks to differentiate between the comparative method and case study method, George and Bennet define case study methods to include both: within-case analysis of single cases and also comparisons of a small number of cases – “since there is a growing consensus that the strongest means of drawing inferences from case studies is the use of a combination of within-case analysis and cross-case comparisons within a single study or research program” (George & Bennett 2005: 24). This thesis makes use of a cross case comparison between the case of the Wildfires and the respective disaster management in 2010 and in 2021.

First, the cases will be summarized and analyzed by applying a content analysis before the case-comparison is being conducted. The comparative part looks at the results of both analysis and compares the main outcomes; what are the similarities, and what the differences between the regimes reaction to the disasters in both decades, respectively both cases? What distinguishes them? And finally, what is the main conclusion and result?

The case comparison is based on the main characteristics of both cases and on the categories structuring the analysis, which form the comparative structure.

General strengths of case study methods are “their potential for achieving high conceptual validity; their strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses; their value as a useful means to closely examine the hypothesized role of causal mechanisms in the context of individual cases; and their capacity for addressing causal complexity.” (George & Bennett 2005: 25).



Particular strong is the conceptual validity, since the case study creates the necessary preconditions “to identify and measure the indicators that best represent the theoretical concepts the researcher intends to measure” (George & Bennett 2005: 26). The variables to be researched are often difficult to measure and require the consideration of contextual factors, for which a case study provides the appropriate structure: “case studies allow for conceptual refinements with a higher level of validity over a smaller number of cases.” (ibid.) In this case the application of a case study-design reveals important details about e.g. the variety of measures as part of the disaster management, as well as their contextual background. Taking individual circumstances into account and explaining complex causal relations in the cases is therefore an expected strength of the case study in this work. Nevertheless, the method has its limitations and potential biases. Starting with the right selection of the case(s) appears to be a main challenge: a ‘case selection bias’ can occur when “cases or subjects are selfselected or when the researcher unwittingly selects cases that represent a truncated sample along the dependent variable of the relevant population of cases” (George & Bennett 2005: 31). Choosing the right case is therefore of great importance, which is why the case selection is dealt with in a separate section.

A limitation of this research design – by George Bennet (George & Bennett 2005: 30) ascribed to “inherent limitations”, – is “a relative inability to render judgments on the frequency or representativeness of particular cases and a weak capability for estimating the average “causal effect” of variables for a sample” (ibid.). This methodological weakness is also accompanied by a risk of overgeneralization, researchers tend to apply from their result to other objects. It therefore needs to be highlighted, that in this thesis the observed cases and the result of their comparison stand for themselves, which, of course, does not prevent the further development of theoretical assumptions and outlooks.

### **3.2 Case selection**

Selecting the right cases is a substantial important part for the case analysis. Regarding the number of natural disasters in Russia every year, one needs to differentiate and precisely define the criteria of the research objective in order to find the right sample out of a vast number of fires, floodings and even earthquakes, which are annually recurring challenges for the country. In addition to a subjective, interest-driven selection of cases, this should definitely be done according to further criteria: the main focus is on the relevance to the

research objective of the study, followed by the right kind of variation and control which is required by the research problem (cf. George & Bennett 2005: 67). Since the research objective is the answer on the question for patterns of Russian disaster management for natural disasters – and the underlying interest in and importance of the reaction of a nondemocratic state on an exogenous shock –, a first distinction has been made. This subclass of events needs to be further distinguished, since the frame of the thesis as well as its design are focused on two cases.

Several features influenced the selection of the 2010 and 2021 forest fire cases. On the one hand, the size of the disasters is decisive. Both disasters were extreme, regarding numbers (2021) or political attention and media coverage (2010), which is the main argument for choosing them. Both events have been mentioned intensively in national and regional media, which increases the pool of potential sources. Both cases are also well-suited for comparison because, in addition to the similarities, they have differences that are crucial for the research question. At the time of the first disaster, the Russian political system was different. For example, Vladimir Putin was prime minister, and there had been decisive changes to the Russian forestry law (a new Forest Code implemented in 2007) a few years earlier. Furthermore, the state of research is very different; while extensive research exists for objects around the 2010 fires, the fires in 2021 experienced less scientific attention yet, which is useful to that extent, that the existing theory both helps constructing a proper theoretical concept and frame, and leaves space for the development of new theoretical aspects.

The table below shows the chosen cases and gives an overview over key data such as disaster duration, most affected areas, caused damage and the material to be analyzed.

According to the estimation by the Annual Disaster Statistical Review 2010, extreme temperatures and wildfires caused over 55.700 deaths in that year, due to extreme heat and air pollution (cf. Guha-Sapir et al. 2011: 15). These numbers seem overestimated and do not show the share of deaths exclusively caused by fire (drought and heat alone strongly affected people as well). State-reports named a dramatic smaller number of 60 deaths caused by fires, which needs to be seen critically as well – since official data normally underestimates the scale of destruction and casualties, which can be explained by both objective reasons (huge and sparsely populated country, protection and monitoring not available for all forests) and political ones (officials understating the effects on purpose). Also, data for the burned area

varies greatly. Authorities published numbers of 2 million hectares (cf. TASS 2022), while used satellite data suggests 10 million hectares of burned area (cf. Nefedova 2021). Overall, a lack of reliable information can be stated for 2010, which to some extent applies to the 2021 disaster as well.

However, the extreme conditions raised attention from media and political actors, resulting in higher politicization of the event, qualifying it for analysis. According to the NASA FIRMS (Fire Information for Resource Management System) information system (cf. NASA 2022), fire season started already in early May (2010) and June (2021) and lasted until September. Media reports prescribe the beginnings in both cases for early July, focusing on the first effects on the population. The 2021 fires were record breaking in terms of the area burned (18 million hectares) as well as the tree cover loss due to fires (cf. Greenpeace 2021). Interestingly, the official state report about emergency situations 2021 does not name any number of victims who died by fire and numbers of victims were not found at all (cf. EMERCOM 2021), which is why this comparative variable between the cases is omitted.

**Table 1**

Cases of Russian Disaster Management		
Case	Fires 2010	Fires 2021
Disaster duration	May – September	June – September
Most affected regions	Regions of Moscow, Vladimir, Ryazan, Voronezh, Novgorod and the Republics of Mordovia and Marii-El.  (cf. Odynova 2010a)	Regions of Irkutsk, Novgorod, Tyumen and Chelyabinsk, Republic of Karelia.  (cf. EMERCOM 2021: 50; 216)
Damage		
a) Burned area	a) 10 mln. Hectares	a) 18,13 mln. Hectares
b) Tree cover loss due to fires	b) 811 Kilohectare (Kha)  (cf. Global Forest Watch 2021)	b) 5,36 Megahectare (Mha)  (cf. Global Forest Watch 2021)
Material Analyzed	Federal and regional Media, NGO- and Government-Reports	
Number of documents being observed	60	54
Observed time	July – August (Response); September – October (Recovery)	

A further theoretical concept helps to determine the relevant period within the chosen cases.

The further narrowing of the cases is oriented on the most common theoretical-structured concept of disaster management, the “disaster cycle” (Oxford University Press 2017), proposed by the Oxford Dictionary of Disaster Management and stemming from a US National Governors’ Association report from 1979. Widely used foremost for managing than

for the accurate representation of disaster-dynamics, it helps structuring and phasing the observed cases and units in this thesis. The cycle consists of five phases, which are 1. – prevention or mitigation, 2. – preparedness, 3. – response and 4. – the recovery-phase (cf. Oxford University Press 2017, entry 'disaster cycle'). In this case-analysis, the focus is on the latter two phases: response and recovery. However, “In practice all four phases are closely interlinked“ (cf. *ibid.*). These phases help defining the period relevant for the research question and additionally serve as a frame of reference. In the disaster management-theory, the aim of disaster-response is characterized by efforts to minimize the disaster-hazards, such as emergency-relief and immediate assistance to the population. “The focus in the response phase is on meeting the basic needs of the people until more permanent and sustainable solutions can be found.“ (Oxford University Press 2017, entry 'response'). The recovery-phase aims at restoring normal living-conditions, restoration of damaged (infra)structures, and prepares for long-term development. It is also a transition-phase between the immediate response and emergency-relief – and future prevention and preparedness (cf. Oxford University Press 2017, entry 'recovery').

While the beginning of the response-phase in this case can easily be determined with the outbreak of the first fire-event, the transition to the recovery-phase remained more difficult, and oriented to the decreasing fire frequency was set as the transition between the months of August and September.

Furthermore, these phases are of particular interest, because the exogenous shocks force the regime to show its real character of response and recovery, while the phases of prevention and mitigation are politically less relevant – although they paradoxically have the strongest influence on the management of the subsequent disaster event. The peak fire season in Russia ranges from spring to autumn, more specifically it is typically beginning “in late May and lasts around 17 weeks.” (Global Forest Watch 2021) – until the end of September, as the open-source web application [globalforestwatch.org](https://globalforestwatch.org) states.

The case of the 2010 fires began in May, when the first fires were registered. Only in July the government started to report about, it when the disaster got out of control and reached densely populated areas. The fires lasted until September. Thus, for the response phase the period of interest ranges from the beginning of July to the end of August, while the second part – the recovery phase – will be observed as a period from the beginning of September

until the end of October. Excluding the first months May and June helps to narrow the frame of analysis.

Last year's fire-case began in last days of June and lasted until late September (cf. Nasa Earth Observatory 2021). In order to limit the time frame and create a better comparability, as in the first case, material from the two peak-months July and August will be analyzed as the phase of response, followed by the phase of recovery in September and October. Since the phases proposed by the disaster cycle are intertwined, a point of change needs to be determined and these time windows are most suitable for the frame of this analysis.

After describing the sampling unit and case selection and defining the cases, the next chapter introduces the content analysis and its relevant features.

### **3.3 Content Analysis**

The research-method used for this comparative case study is a qualitative content analysis, which will be introduced in the following section. Some of the following steps will be conducted without being further depicted (e.g. marking the text and coding with the software). For clarity, other steps, such as the categorization, will be extensively mentioned even before the analytical part, which is about their active application and elaboration later on. The work of Udo Kuckartz serves as a (role) model for the analysis and is extensively applied. Using a qualitative content analysis in this thesis comprises various advantages. One is the openness to diverse types of material which can be analyzed – ranging from newspaper articles to tweets, government documents or interviews.

Another advantage is, that it is providing structure and systematization by following a category-based procedure (cf. Kuckartz 2018: 26).

Following the approach introduced by Udo Kuckartz (Kuckartz 2018), the analysis is oriented on one of his three analysis-types, the “content structuring content analysis” (cf. *ibid.*: 48, 97ff.). Kuckartz's approach suggests to follow a guideline of seven steps, which he names as follows: 1. – reading and interpreting the text, 2. – developing main thematic categories, 3. – coding all material with the main categories, 4. – Compilation of all (with the same main category) coded text passages, 5. inductive determination of subcategories on the material, 6. – coding all the material with a differentiated system of categories and in the final step 7 analyses (and visualisations) – presenting the results (cf. *ibid.*: 100). Serving as a main structure for text- and content-analysis, these steps will be supplemented by further details below. Being faced with the reality of the research and writing process, the sequence

of the first steps may vary or repeat accordingly. However, the methodological part seeks to follow the structural propositions.

The content analysis – i.e., in particular categorization and coding (phases 1 to 6) – as well as the description and documentation of their procedure is dealt with in one part in the analysis section for both cases. This is done in order to structure the data-based categorization as early as possible. The subsequent case and phase evaluation deals with the cases separately, before the case-comparison is being conducted.

In order to read and interpret the material, it is necessary to first define and choose the relevant data/texts, described by Kuckartz as “Sampling Unit” (Kuckartz 2018: 30) and “Unit of Analysis” (ibid). The sampling unit is the basic unit and needs to be chosen from the population of all potentially relevant data. In this case, this applies to all newspapers, NGO- and government-documents out of all data dealing with the topic. While the sampling unit thus comprises a limited data set (text-documents, such as newspaper editions from the Russian newspaper “Argumenty i Fakty”) which are relevant for the study, the unit of analysis comprises a smaller set of texts out of the sampling unit: particular articles of the newspaper. The unit of analysis is the final data used for the analysis. Since it is no part of the analysis itself, the relevant selection of data and units will be further mentioned in this explanatory part.

After filtering the relevant material and units, **the first step** – reading and interpreting the text – will be carried out. Special attention is paid to the initiating text work: screening the texts, marking important text passages, and especially comparing the content to research question and theory. One could also describe it as ‘careful reading’ with an important interpretive character, serving as a basis for the second step: interpreting categories.

Therefore, when approaching **step two**, the next relevant term – and as a central element the basic framework of this content analysis – is the forming and application of categories. Scholarly literature is struggling to find a common term that is easy to use (cf. Kuckartz 2018: 30), but categories can also be described as classifications, which are delimited from each other – a definition that for this purpose sufficiently complements the largely self-explanatory word. First of all, categories can be divided into different types. There are various types, such as factual categories (referring to a certain objective or supposedly

objective situation) or evaluative categories (referring to external evaluation standards), up to natural categories, the in-vivo-codes (terminology used by actors in the field themselves) (cf. Kuckartz 2018: 34ff.). The totality of all categories forms the category-system, also known as coding frame. Beside other structures, it can be organized as a hierarchical system, a construct this thesis makes use of. A hierarchical system differentiates between main and subcategories. The first one defines the superordinate level and is more comprehensive, while the latter is more specific – but not less significant. Subcategories can have their own subcategories; theoretically, the hierarchical system has no limit of levels.

In the scientific community the terms ‘code’ and ‘category’ are used synonymously (cf. *ibid*: 36). In this thesis the usage of the word ‘code’ is used for the process of assigning certain text passages to categories, while ‘category’ stands for itself. However, an alternating use is possible.

The used category- and code-system is built by making use of both, deductive predetermined categories (concept-driven), and categories inductively developed from the text (data-driven). In general, the categories can be derived from the research-question. When asking for the states’ reaction to the natural disasters in Russia, it seems logical to divide the reaction into several categories, which are completed by subcategories – both developed concept- and data-driven.<sup>2</sup> Regardless their different nature/origins, both types are applied equally.

“It is characteristic of content analysis as a whole that the entire material is coded, i.e. systematically processed on the basis of a category system. The same rules and standards always apply to the application of a category system, regardless of whether the categories were formed directly on the material or independently of the empirical material.” (Kuckartz 2018: 64)

According to Kuckartz, the category system should meet the following important criteria: "disjunctive, plausible, exhaustive, easily presentable and communicable" (Kuckartz 2018: 85). The forming of categories in the second part therefore structures the text-data and prepares/includes for a next step, the first coding process of a test-set of the data – which can be best described as a ‘test run’. In order to test, whether the developed categories are useful, reasonable and research-guiding, part of the material will be coded with the respective codes

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<sup>2</sup> (a comprehensively set of the definition of categories can be found in the appendix, Table 3 and 4)



and assigned to categories (cf. Kuckartz 2018: 102). Coding a text passage with different categories is possible and often useful.

**Step three** then leads over to the practical work with the analytical tool: marking all relevant text-passages and assigning them to the respective categories, while irrelevant text-passages remain uncoded (cf. *ibid.*). Since a passage – or even one sentence – can contain several topics, it thus can be coded with several categories. Text passages coded in this way can overlap or be nested (as further examples will show). Kuckartz has defined a set of rules for the allocation of text passages to categories, which serve as an orientation (-except rule number 3, which only applies to interviews – but can be applied to headlines, which are of great significance for the meaning of a text):

“

1. As a rule, sense units are coded, but at least one complete sentence.
2. If the sense unit comprises several sentences or paragraphs, these are coded.
3. If the introductory (or interposed) interviewer question is necessary for understanding, it will also be coded.
4. When assigning categories, it is important to find a good measure of how much text is coded around the relevant information. The most important criterion is that the text passage is sufficiently understandable on its own without the surrounding.”  
(Kuckartz 2018: 104)

Furthermore, also headlines will be coded since they define an important part of the text.

According to the predetermined steps, the next two steps first require a compilation of all text-passages which have been coded with the same category (**step four**), and then an inductive determination of subcategories on the material (**step five**) (cf. *ibid.*: 106).

However, already while the process of defining the main categories goes on, a determination of subcategories may take place. Regarding the number of texts being coded and analyzed and the need for efficiency connected to it, it is aimed to determine an adequate number of final categories already during the first steps.

**Step six** then requires the coding of the complete material by using the differentiated categories. The seventh step finally contends the evaluation, subdivided according to the

cases and their subordinated disaster-phases. After the case-related evaluation the case-comparison will be conducted, comparing both the cases and the sub-phases, drawing the analytical results visualized and in text-form.

As mentioned above, part of the used categories is deductive and – before starting with the analysis – will be defined and explained in this section. The theory-led formation of categories reveals challenges: on the one hand, the categories should be formulated sufficiently close to theory in order to facilitate the theoretical classification and the answering of theses during the evaluation. On the other hand, the categories should be defined sufficiently close to reality and practice to ensure an effective and efficient coding process. These remarks were considered in the formation of the following predefined categories.

### ***Power Vertical***

Consolidated by the Russian system of subordination and defined as follows: Shifting responsibility to the federal executive, and/or reporting to the president or prime minister. In general: federal leaders who control regional officials. This can be seen in the following examples, among others: President Putin asking the governors in a conference controlling questions to which they try to give the most positive answers possible, an example of the power vertical.

### ***Communication (> e.g., successful reconstruction / stabilization / strong state)***

Including all means of official state-communication, that are meaningful and likely to tend to portray events in such a way that the actions of state actors appear in a positive light. Conceivable examples are the communicated image of a successful reconstruction or the image of a strong state, which is characteristic of authoritarian Russia and was formulated as an assumption because the literature attests to the intended role of a state in Russian actions in past disasters, which is seeking to appear as powerful and exercising effective control in times of crisis.

### ***Means of aid***

A rather objective category – most likely to be classified as a factual category –, referring to objective actions; the means of aid, which the state undertakes to react to the disaster. Possible means have a financial or technical nature. This category exists to define the general reaction in the respective phases (e.g., at what time was financial aid mostly provided or

guaranteed, and to what extent). The correspondence with the patterned responses for the phases of the disaster cycle is an important parameter for the empirical answer to the research question. Furthermore, the category can serve as a benchmark for other categories.

### ***Timing***

As pointed out in the theoretical part, the factor of timing is a central category when analyzing the regime's reaction on the forest fires. A rather late response is characteristic for Russia's reaction on previous disasters. In order to control this correspondence, the timing-category is divided into the subcategories *late reaction* and *timely response*.

### ***Critic***

A broad term, which needs to be further defined and supplemented by a range of subcategories, such as *false* or *no information*, or *not admitting mistakes*. The category comprises both, the critic within the state-bodies/regime, (revealing insights e.g., about the strategy and internal measures taken by the regime) and critic coming from outside, which is also expected to contribute to a comprehensive picture of the disaster management.

### ***Personal involvement***

The personal involvement of leaders appears to be a crucial factor in disaster management. Particularly the Russian autocratic system benefits from and is legitimized by the picture of a strong leader, whose person is projected during crisis-situations even more. The *personal involvement* also serves as an indicator for the importance the state attaches to an event. This category seeks to reveal the interference and participation from the highest political leaders (prime minister and president), but also other high ranked state officials, in order to show the level of involvement and in which way this is communicated. *Personal involvement* comprises all situations/text passages, where the president, the prime minister or other high ranked state officials personally engage in the disaster response, or their personality is presented in a special light.

Connecting the deductive approach with the theoretical frame and its assumptions, these categories will be further developed and reorganized while analyzing the text and creating inductively new categories, as the following chapters show.

The analysis is conducted through the QDA-Tool MAXQDA (VERBI Software 2022), which will be further mentioned, since it makes a significant contribution to the analytical part of the thesis. The analysis will be applied equally to both cases. Regarding the diversity of the analyzed material (both a strength and limitation of the research design), it is predetermined that the analysis will be conducted with different foci – without leaving the methodological construct and goal of high comparability and answering the research question.

### 3.4 Selection of Data

The selection of relevant data is being conducted through the Integrum-Database (Integrum World Wide), the largest full-text database in Russia and the CIS, providing electronic full texts in Russian and English language. It serves as a main source for data-selection. Additionally, generic search was conducted as well as research of the Russian government- and NGO's- websites.

For the integrum-database, the following query was being used to filter the database for suitable contributions. For Russian sources:

*(лесные :0 пожары or пожар :0 в :0 лесу or борьбы :0 с :0 пожарами or огонь :0 в :0 лесу) and (россия or россии) and (государство or правительство or власть or контрол or помощь)<sup>3</sup>.*

Since in Russian 'lesnoj požar' ('лесной пожар') describes both wildfire and forest fire, in the search for and work with Russian sources this one version meets the requirements.

English sources were found by applying the following query:

*(Wildfire or forestfire) and (Russia) and (government or regime).*

In a next step, a limitation of the media sources was made. For both cases, the most relevant federal and regional newspapers were scanned and a selection was conducted. The following newspapers served as a main source: Argumenty i Fakty (online and print version), Kommersant, Novaya gazeta, Izvestya, Novye Izvestya, Vedomosti and The Moscow Times

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<sup>3</sup> (lesnye :0 požary or požar :0 v :0 lesu or bor'by :0 s :0 požarami or ogon' :0 v :0 lesu) and (rossiâ or rossii) and (gosudarstvo or pravitel'stvo or vlast' or kontrol or pomoč').

as federal information sources. The federal media is complemented by different regional newspapers; Nizhegorodskye Novosti, Ryazanskye Vedomosti, SachaMedia and NewsYkt.

Further data was sampled by searching the Russian government websites of the Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) and the Kremlin (President of the Russian Federation), furthermore the website of Greenpeace Russia (Greenpeace Russia). Unfortunately, the website of the then-prime minister Vladimir Putin was taken down after his reelection as president in 2012, which made the search for government-statements from 2010 more difficult. With a few exceptions, the search-parameters for all sources were the above defined disaster periods of interest: for the response-phase the months July and August, and for the recovery-phase September and October.

Media sources from these time windows are meant to illuminate the timeliness, and the unbiased reaction at the given moment. Government and NGO reports, on the other hand, also reflect the state's reaction to the case in question at a later point in time, if they (like the media reports) are sufficiently critically classified. Russian language sources are preferred, since it is expected that they reveal more detailed information. However, the factor of state media bias is reflected and should be balanced with the comparison of further, as well as objective sources.

The whole sample is recorded in Table 2 (see appendix).

A total number of 113 documents have been sampled and analyzed. The sampling revealed that in both cases less relevant material was found for the recovery-phase. This can be explained by two factors: on the one hand, more information is being published in the beginning of a disaster. Also, news is being repeated over the time and part of them is related to the same event or situation, but only explains its further course, without providing new insights. Additionally, basic explanations of the cases are helpful in the course of the sampling. The chronological collection (and first review) of the material therefore resulted in a larger amount being collected at the beginning.

#### **4. Analysis**

The following section describes the phase-structured categorization and coding work, in short: the main part of analysis for both cases. This is done for both cases at the same time, so that the steps one to six represent the work with the entire sampling of data. In the

subsequent case- and phase-summary, which simultaneously describes the main evaluation, the cases are treated separately.

#### **4.1 Development of the category system**

##### **4.1.1 Reading and interpreting the text**

Best being described as ‘careful reading’ and interpreting the sample, this first step still revealed several challenges. Even the reading was done with the help of and in the MAXQDA-Software, using helpful commentary functions (with special regard to the work with Russian Language, which requires additional attention as a non-native speaker). In fact, only the texts which haven’t been read during the sampling process were carefully read in in this step, since the other documents had been scanned for the selection. Given the huge number of sources in the sample, during this step – and the subsequent steps as well – efficiency played a significant role. Another challenge appeared with a comprehensive reading without being tempted to start with unorganized categorization in the beginning, but to remember the potential category-system.

##### **4.1.2 Developing main thematic categories**

Following Kuckartz’s „Guideline for the formation of categories on the material” (Kuckartz 2018: 83) (and the approach of inductive categorization) the formulation of categories was conducted close to the text, paying attention that it seems advisable to form and code not only individual words but also units of meaning (cf. *ibid.*).

Beside the theory-driven categories which are mentioned above, the first categorization steps revealed further (types of) main categories, which will be explained in the following. Already in the first round it becomes apparent that some of the theory-driven categories need to be revised or reclassified. In practice, e.g., the category of power vertical determined at the beginning shows the significance and presence of the underlying power structures. The allocation and distribution of competences between the federal and regional level (which will be more extensively mentioned later) is characteristic for the management of forest fires. Beside the factor/indicator of power vertical, other power-relations define the regimes reaction on the disaster, existing beside the relationship between the president and those subordinated to him. For example, the demonstration of federal – and not only presidential – power emerges when looking at a news report of weekly newspaper *Argumenty i Fakty*. The report describes an announcement of the Râzán' Oblast-Governor, that the region will receive about 500 million roubles of federal funds and that the Vorónež region will receive

just over a billion roubles from the federal budget (cf. Argumenty i Fakty 2010a), highlighting the financial strength behind the regionally organised financial aid packages for those affected by the fire damage. Also proving financial aid measures, the situation shows a circumstance of federal power, which is reflected in the federal budget. Federal power also becomes visible in an article of the newspaper Kommersant: The source quotes Emergency-Minister Shoigu and his call for more federal power regarding the aviation forest guard institution, which, he was demanding, should be transferred to the federal subordination “as the regions "are not able to maintain an aviation forest guard base with 15-20 aircraft", and to give "more powers to the supervisory bodies regarding the frequency of fire safety inspections".” (Ivanov 2010)<sup>4</sup>.

Especially the relation between the center and the regions generally appears to be a crucial variable when analyzing and led to the forming of the main category *Center and the regions*. The initial main category *Power Vertical* was subordinated to this category as a sub-category, as it became clear that further sub-categories on the topic of *Centre and the regions* would emerge. Other newly formed main categories were developed: *Performance*, *Localization* and *Undefined*. The latter two categories were formed to have an own section and summary for the spatial classification (*Localization*) and a main category for other important, but not (yet) useful information to be assigned or classified. At this point, the description and definition of the categories had to be added, in the QDA-software possible by assigning folders to the category-fields.

The following set shows the newly defined main-categories which are the result of the combination of concept- with data-driven categories, to be extend with sub-categories in the subsequent steps.

1. *Center and the regions*
2. *Performance*
3. *Communication*
4. *Means of aid*
5. *Timing*
6. *Critic*
7. *Personal involvement*
8. *Localization*

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<sup>4</sup> “tak kak regiony "ne v sostoânii sodержat' bazu avialesoohrany s 15-20 samoletami", i predostavit' "bol'she polnomočij nadzornym organam v otnošenii periodičnosti proverok sostoâniâ požarnoj bezopasnosti".”

## 9. Undefined

A comprehensive and complete category-set can be found in Table 3, while all relevant categories are defined in table 4 (Appendix).

It is important to note that the categories vary greatly in scope. For example, the number of sub-categories ranges from one (*Prime Minister/President < Personal Involvement*) to nine sub-categories and three sub-subcategories for the main category *Communication*. At this point, the number of categories was assessed as sufficient and has not been expanded.

### 4.1.3 Coding all material with the main categories

In this step the sampling was analyzed and coded with main categories. Assigning the text-passages to categories in the QDA-Software was done by simply marking the respective part of the text and drag it to the respective category-anchor. At least whole sentences or longer sentence-segments were always marked and assigned. The spectrum of codes therefore ranges from short sentences or sentence segments to entire paragraphs. A positive effect of the structured classification and subdivision of the data into thematic areas was the promotion of a pure understanding of the case for further analysis. In fact, this step and the following sub-categorization were closely intertwined. Whenever a segment seemed to show a certain compatibility with an existing category, which did not yet have a more precise definition – or qualified by a thematically appropriate reference or provided sufficient evidence (whether through thematic depth or frequent repetition), then a new sub-category was added.

### 4.1.4 Compilation and sub-categorization

This step was planned to include both the compilation of all (with the same main category) coded text passages (Phase 4 after Kuckartz) and the inductive determination of subcategories on the material (Phase 5). Since the analyses was being conducted with the MAXQDA-Software, the compilation was done automatically by the software. The further categorization and a deeper differentiation required the use of further analysis tools such as writing code-specific memos or a logbook. Especially when coding longer segments in Russian, writing short memos was a time-saving step for further analysis and turned out to



be useful for weighting the text passages. (Further useful tools proposed by Rädiker and Kuckartz in “Analyse qualitativer Daten mit MAXQDA“ (cf. Rädiker & Kuckartz 2019)). An example for the formation of a sub-category exists with the forming of the sub-categories assigned to the main category *Communication*. As mentioned in the methodological part, this originally theory-driven category was meant to reveal specific features and pattern of the Russian regime’s disaster communication, such as the strongly promoted picture of a strong state or successful reconstruction. Beside these two aspects a row of other topics had the potential to develop as sub-categories and were included in the portfolio accordingly.

For example, the following subcategory, which was developed, because the used terminology which it reflects appeared sufficiently often during the analysis. *Uncontrollable Event* comprises all official statements from the states site, which ascribe the disaster a high level of uncontrollability, such as the paraphrase of the fight against the fires as a real war – or the description of the event as an ‘abnormal’ situation (or anomalous heat – ‚anomal'naâ žara’ in Russian).

“It was a very serious battle, like a war. It has already been dubbed "the battle for the taiga". In order to win the war, we certainly need to increase our troops. [...]” (NewsYkt 2021a)<sup>5</sup> said the head of Sakha Republic Aysen Nikolayev in a talk with the Newspaper RBK in September 2021.

The state uses this terminology to describe a picture of a catastrophe which is beyond the control of its structures and management abilities – and needs to be fought with all possible means. This classification as an uncontrollable event seems to serve as legitimizing any difficulties, mistakes or mismanagement which was made, and – regarding the used war-terminology – the demonstration of both the need for financial aid from the center and the effort it undertakes to win the fight.

#### **4.1.5 coding all the material with a differentiated system of categories**

The penultimate step comprised the coding-process of all material which has not been coded until that point. Important to mention is, that analysis of the main categories *Localization* and *Undefined* plays a subordinated role in the evaluation and thus will not be presented as a result.

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<sup>5</sup> “Èto byla očen' ser'eznaâ bitva, kak vojna. Ee uže prozvali «bitva za tajgu». Dlå togo čtoby vyigrat' vojnu, nam, konečno, nužno uveličivat' vojska.”

Table 3 shows the systematized and differentiated category-system.

The next part is devoted to the presentation of the results. The presentation of the results will be done by looking at both respective phases, while evaluating for each phase the prevailing categories and characteristics oriented on the number of coded segments (first), before highlighting the remaining categories and circumstances (second).

The reproduction of the frequencies of analyzed codes serves as a guide for further evaluation. This quantifiability primarily creates a framework for further analysis and, used as a mix with certain categories, serves as indicator and contributes to evaluation and classification. The results are presented in a separated section (chapters 4.2 (Case I) and 4.3 (Case II)).

#### **4.2 Case I: Fires 2010**

Based on the evaluated data and previous research the following case-summary can be drawn, also including relevant basic information for the analysis of both cases. The forest fires in 2010 can be described as a natural disaster with technically far-reaching consequences, which, however, gained in drama through its reporting and the politics and subsequently became much more significant. The fires were to some extent unprecedented, although the country had seen bad fires before. The affected area covered a total of approximately 6 million hectares and affected 7 regions. In the beginning, almost all the regions in central and the southern European part of Russia and the Urals were strongly affected. The affection of the Moscow region and the capital itself evoked a strong response from the central media which was transmitted to the political level soon. During the disaster, the management, and in particular the style of response, disclosed a largely disorganized system with regions being unprepared and struggling with the fire wave. The lack of coordination, but also of material resources and good equipment, runs like a red thread through the case of the 2010 forest fires. One example of the great inattention of the authorities is the disaster that occurred in the village of Verkhnjaja Vereja: the village burned to the ground, as all help came too late.

Politicians ended their holidays earlier, among them also former President Medvedev, who decided to interrupt his holiday in Sochi and returned to smog-covered Moscow, immediately dismissing military officials for not preventing wildfires (cf. Odynova 2010b). The poor coordination on the one hand and the overburdening of the regions on the other was a reaction of those responsible to the Forest Code, which had been amended a few years

earlier and which gave the regions significantly more responsibility and competences. In 2006, the Russian government under Vladimir Putin decided to reform the forest code (implemented in 2007). This included far-reaching changes to the legislation; responsibility for a large part of the forests was transferred to the regional level (this included supervisory and thus also protection competences), as well as comprehensive privatization. After the reforms, main actors in the Russian firefighting-structure were the following:

The aerial forest guard (putting out fires all over the country for money, without own aviation and therefore renting helicopters from the EMERCOM or private companies – services need to be paid by the regions), the regional forest fire services (existing in few places and financed from local coffers), EMERCOM-Firefighters (specialized in cities and directed by law to extinguish forests only when fires threaten a dwelling – by special order active in the nature, when state of emergency is declared) and military firefighters (dealing with forests adjacent to Ministry of Defence facilities) (cf. Adamovich 2021).

The analysis comprised material from the state, media and nongovernmental. In the first case, a number of 61 documents have been analyzed, with 40 texts for the response-, and 21 texts for the recovery-phase.

This net diagram identifies the number of coded segments for both phases. The categories *Performance*, *Communication* and *Critic* clearly prevailed in number of coding's and therefore dominate the evaluation.

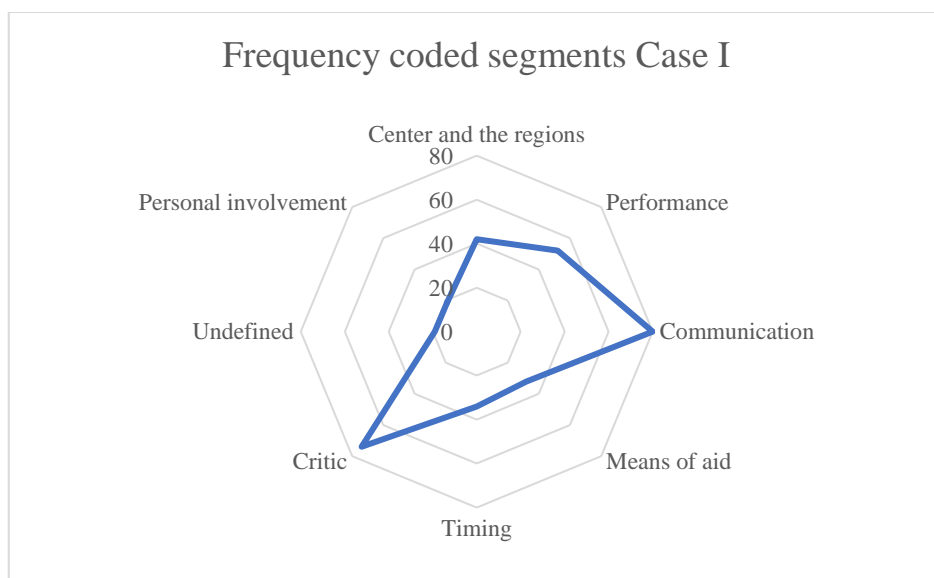


Figure 1  
(Own Illustration)

#### 4.2.1 Response

To begin with the depiction of the most striking categories, attention is first drawn to the following categories which have the most coded segments: *Communication* (54 codes), *Critic* (49) and *Performance* (36), followed by *Center and the regions* (31 codes), *Timing* and *Means of Aid* (both 28). *Personal involvement* remained the least coded category (17 codes).

When looking at the used *communication*, two aspects were found by far the most frequently: segments matching with the subcategory *Reestablished normality* and its sub-subcategory *Optimism and promises*.

The related segments range from the early promise of finishing reconstruction work in a short time, to the repeatedly strong guarantee of the provision of financial assistance. The active players here are in particular the president and the prime minister. "I want to tell you that you are heard. All the houses will be standing until winter. I promise you: the village will be rebuilt." (Chuguj 2010a)<sup>6</sup> – Putin promised during a visit to Vyksa-District in the Nizhny Novgorod Oblast in the beginning of August. Deputy governor of Belgorod Region Vladimir Borovik promised in the end of August the completion of houses even before the deadline of 1. October ends: "[...] in reality, everything will be completed on September 25" (Argumenty i Fakty 2010b).

The state – and foremost its leaders Putin and Medvedev – strongly engaged in constructing a picture of unconditional state aid, which also promotes the image of a strong state. The optimism transported by the leaders can be found at another level too, revealing insights about the inner-governmental communication. For example, the residents of Nizhny Novgorod criticized the regional authorities for mismanagement – in particular their governor Valery Shantsev –, "who a few days before the tragedy assured Sergei Shoigu, head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, that the region would cope by its own means" (Vovk 2010)<sup>7</sup> with the fire-threat, which seemed apparently not to be the case. Trying to reestablish normality at an early stage appears to be an influential measure at both levels, from political leaders addressed at the society, and within the political system. The analysis of the communication categories in this response phase of the first case also indicates that

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<sup>6</sup> "Â hoču vam skizat', čto vy uslyšany. Do zimy vse doma budut stoât'. Â obešaũ vam: derevnâ budet vosstanovlena"

<sup>7</sup> „Po obšemu mneniũ pogorel'cev, glavnaâ vina ležit na gubernatore oblasti Valerii Šanceve, kotoryj za neskol'ko dnej do tragedii zaverâl glavu MČS Sergeâ Šojgu, čto region spravitsâ svoimi silami. Čto iz ètogo polučilos' – vsem âsno bez slov“

official communication started relatively late in relation to the earlier disaster onset in early July, which also points to a generally late management response.

*Criticism* of the authorities' response is as varied as it is frequent, which is why a closer analysis of the category requires a differentiated view of its subcategories. A significant part of the criticism is directed at the organization and coordination of disaster management, which provides revealing insights.

The coordination of fire-fighting troops became the target of extensive criticism. Difficult to measure as a response because it was controlled by the state, which made it difficult to obtain information, the coded passages identify a high level of uncoordination combined with a huge lack of resources and staff. Greenpeace Forest-Expert Alexei Yaroshenko attested the management a poorly organized reaction, providing important expert insights (cf. Yaroshenko 2010). To prevent the spreading fires in the European part of Russia, the government sent hundreds of qualified specialists from Siberia to the burning western regions – “but this happened too late and was poorly organized.” (ibid.), the environmentalist points out in an article for the media platform openDemocracy. Following Yaroshenko, a general lack of experienced experts was one of the main problems, leading to a “complete chaos in many areas” (ibid.), or, as the military expert Anatolij Cyganok presented it dramatically: “The forest firefighting system in Russia today has completely collapsed.” (Cyganok 2010)<sup>8</sup>. How did the authorities react to these problems?

The state then also reacted to the criticism with a reflection on organizational and coordination-problems. As a reaction, Medvedev called for a detailed review of the formerly reformed forest code (cf. The Moscow Times 2010).

Unlike the state and its fire-fighting system has reacted on precedent natural disasters, in this case it did not use its Soviet experience of firefighting, as Cyganok describes: “In Soviet times, all forests were divided into blocks for the passage of machinery and for containment of top fires, plus harrowing (ploughing). Around any village are fields of crops, not hay as now.” (Cyganok 2010)<sup>9</sup>. In this respect, the reaction in the first phase also shows a certain reflection on the former structures. The will to reactivate these formerly successful structures, however, appears as a reaction only later, as further analysis shows.

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<sup>8</sup> “Sistema tušeniâ lesnyh požarov segodnâ v Rossii razvalena polnost'û.”

<sup>9</sup> “Sovetskij opyt bor'by s požarami ne ispol'zuetsâ. V sovetskie vremena vse lesa byli razdeleny na kvartaly dlâ proezda tehniki i dlâ lokalizacii verhovogo požara, plûs boronovanie (opaška). Vokrug lûboj derevni - polâ s posevami, a ne seno, kak sejčas.”

Analysis of the critic furthermore revealed, that in some cases the reaction of emergency services was no reaction: Partly as a result of personnel shortages and organizational failures, and partly intentionally planned and advised (e.g., emergency forces which had to choose between rescuing a hospital or extinguishing fires at dwellings and gave the order to the firefighters for rescuing the first mentioned). In this case, the sub-category has no overlap with the *performance* sub-category *Purposeful neglect: no firefighting*, which could have provided clues to an underlying strategic approach to non-firefighting, in addition to the pure criticism of inaction (a type of response in its own right).

At the same time, it shows that another reaction from the center was the harsh criticism of the regions.

Indeed, the fight against the fires turned out to be tough for all groups involved, from full-time firefighters (by profession) to volunteers. In addition to the coordination problems mentioned above, the struggle was visibly hampered by a widespread lack of material and human resources, all of which had a negative impact on the *Performance*.

In fact, being one explanation, why coordination and shortage of resources became a problem, was the conceal of the issues by responsible officials. However, several segments prove that demand was – although to a small extent and at a late stage – being communicated; e.g., a shortage of fuel for airplanes and helicopters of the fire-aviation fleet in the Moscow region (cf. Odynova 2010a) or lack of functional equipment, as Rafail Zakirov, the Head of Department of Aviation and Aviation Rescue Technologies of the EMERCOM, stated in the beginning of August (cf. EMERCOM).

Nevertheless, demand, which was not exactly communicated, but stated by media reports, or other third parties was found more often, as the subcategory *lack of resources and staff* shows (10 vs. 13 coded segments). That leaves the impression, that a public admission or request for help as a reflected reaction took place far less often than was actually the case. Another present dynamic appeared to be the shifting of responsibility, foremost between regional officials. A conflict between the mayor of Moscow, Yury Luzhkov, and Moscow Region officials became symbolic for the denial of responsibility. Luzhkov's accusation: earlier protective measures (against peat bog fires) were drafted, but not fulfilled. Luzhkov himself came under criticism for returning late from his private holiday to Moscow, which was badly affected by the smoke from surrounding fires.

Nevertheless, the state also managed to activate and implement effective instruments, such as the promotion of a volunteering-system. Alexei Yaroshenko from Greenpeace Russia highlighted the extensive use from public organizations and the local population – volunteers, without which the task forces would have reached their limits even more: „The lack of forestry professionals, the lack of organizational control of the Emergency Ministry, and the tardiness of their response means that fires are often only put out thanks to the efforts of volunteers from the local population and public organizations.” (Yaroshenko 2010). In the disaster management strategy, the use of volunteers plays an important role and was intensively promoted in the response phase analyzed, even if the impression is given that this was done in particular after, or in the course of, voluntary participation. In the beginning of September, the Ministry of Emergency Situations did start to recruit volunteers, as daily newspaper Kommersant reported on 7. August (cf. Kommersant 2010a). Indeed, once on the table, the recruitment-process and advertisement were pushed forward intensively.

“Volunteers can put their efforts into firefighting, and we are very grateful to them for that.” (EMERCOM 2010b)<sup>10</sup>, head of EMERCOM-National Crisis Management Centre Vladimir Stepanov commented on the Ministry-Website in the beginning of August, citing one example of many appeals to the population. A vast part of the appeals included a call for behaving carefully in the forest. As the head of Emercom Sergei Shoigu on a press conference underlined, the Ministry missed no opportunity to communicate the need for support from the population: “Virtually all publications came out with an appeal to citizens to behave more carefully in the forest. We have increased the number of volunteers, we have increased the number of students.” (EMERCOM 2010a)<sup>11</sup>.

Looking at the relation between the *center and the regions* strongly underlines the active role the federal institutions played during the response-phase. The texts being analyzed confirm in various regards, that the management is to a large extent driven from the federal level. Whether shown by decisions regarding the financial support (direct or via regional institutions) or organizational and administrative questions: compared to the regional actors the federal level plays a much more significant role. A central example is the decision of President Medvedev, who has ordered the transfer of the Federal Forestry Agency to the direct control of the government, a step which was justified with a lack of sufficient authority

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<sup>10</sup> “Mogut priložit' svoi sily k tušeníu požarov dobrovol'cy, i my za èto im očen' blagodarny.”

<sup>11</sup> “Praktičeski vse izdaniâ vyšli s prizyvom k graždanam vesti sebâ akkuratnee v lesu. U nas uveličilos' količestvo dobrovol'cev, u nas uveličilos' količestvo studentov.”

(cf. The Moscow Times 2010), as an article in the Moscow Times described it (Headline: “Medvedev Gives Forestry Agency to Putin” (ibid.)). This step shows an important management decision on the federal level to centralize competences during the first phase of the disaster.

A process of centralization was developing, which, however, was also reinforced by the stronger focus on the center and the actors being active. Part of that was the broad involvement of all available groups, which included also troops/soldiers subordinated to the Ministry of Defence (Minoborony). In the beginning of August, a number of 11.000 people were allocated to the EMERCOM, among them 1.700 soldiers and officers (cf. Kommersant). With them, heavy material such as 160 vehicles were provided.

Besides the prevailing federal structures, the power vertical-concept repeatedly appears and finds expression in various meetings with governors and local authorities. For instance, already at the end of August, the Ministry for Regional Development announced that a meeting between Putin and the representatives of regional administrations would take place in autumn (on 1. November) (cf. Chuguj 2010b). According to the announcement, all governors were to present the results of the reconstruction work there and indicate how and in what time the reconstruction succeeded. In addition to Putin, President Medvedev is also at the top of the chain of power and subordination – and as president actually in charge of setting the policy – but during the first phase it becomes apparent in comparison with the activities of Prime Minister Putin that the latter nevertheless had a prominent role in his person, which had an impact on the policymaking during the disaster: the control function was largely assumed by Putin.

Regardless the general critical and controlling attitude from federal leaders towards the regional officials, the latter (and, more general, regional administration and sub entities as well) received trust and praise from the federal level, as another subcategory reveals. The recognition was expressed through the praise of the officials involved in the fight against the fires (e.g., on a working trip to Mari El region on August 9., the president presented state decorations to civil servants (cf. President of Russia 2010)).

When it comes to the actual *means* which were taken, *technical* aid-means lead in terms of coded segments (12), followed by means of *financial aid* (11) and *reconstruction* (5). While technical aid was provided by sending troops and material to extinguish burning fires, financial aid and measures of reconstruction were comprehensively announced. When



visiting the Ryazan-region in the beginning of August, Putin, e.g., pledged, that all residents who had lost a home would receive cash compensation or a new house – “Regardless of the size of the burned house, claimants can only collect up to 2 million rubles” (Odynova 2010d), as an article described Putin’s announcement.

Looking at the numbers, the *timing-category* reveals an insignificant larger number of segments coded with the category *Late reaction* (16) than a *Timely/rapid response* (12). The numbers alone – and here (again) the advantage of the qualitative view becomes apparent – do not yet provide any information about the chronology of what happened. For both categories, sufficient evidence was found to confirm their respective assumptions.

Late action was particularly evident in the example of the burnt village of Verhnjaja Vereja in Vyksa District, where 19 people died. As a result, the responsible Nizhny Novgorod Region Prosecutor's Office assumed control over the case and started investigations on officials, which failed to take necessary preventive measures of evacuation or fire-prevention. The example may be a particular extreme case. However, it shows a certain pattern of mismanagement and late response which is reflected during the response-phase, especially when comparing the measures being taken to the timely frame: “Despite almost a month of abnormal heatwaves and an extremely high risk of fire spread, no one was prepared for such consequences.” (Kommersant 2010c)<sup>12</sup>, Kommersant printed on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Reports about a timely response are – and on the one hand this is also due to the greater success of negative news – fundamentally less popular.

Foremost segments with a relation to reconstruction and financial aid – and the preparation (purchasing material and technical equipment, e.g.), as a preventive step – were coded as timely response.

A rapid disaster response can thus be identified especially with regard to the (announcement of the) provision of financial aid and reconstruction work. The segments coded as positive show little correspondence with information on evacuation or successful firefighting. An example of aid money distributed at short notice is the message about a first compensation which was given to the fire victims of the Voronezh Region in the early days of August: 203 residents received 20 thousand roubles each (cf. Argumenty i Fakty 2010a). Not being a huge amount (compared to other sums being promised to the residents in other places), the

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<sup>12</sup> „Nesmotrâ na prodolžaušuûsâ počti mesâc anomal'nuû žaru i črezvyčajno vysokij risk rasprostraneniâ ognâ, k takim posledstviâm okazalsâ nikto ne gotov.”

fast realization can be assessed as a significant reaction. Moreover, it is evident that conclusions have been drawn from the mistakes and – even if possibly too late for the current catastrophe – are to be implemented as preventive measures in future events, at least according to the announcements. This also includes Medvedev's instruction to prepare proposals on the order and purchase of aircraft equipment used in firefighting, and on the development of a comprehensive program of prompt response to such situations (cf. *Argumenty i Fakty* 2010a).

Nevertheless, positive reports – and especially announcements such as the one above – should be viewed critically with regard to their future implementation.

Looking at the last main category *Personal Involvement* in the respective phase: prime minister Putin as well as President Medvedev engaged personally. One striking factor were their visits to affected places, e.g., Putin visiting the Nizhny Novgorod region, and Medvedev the republic of Mari El. The analysis shows, that the visits were presented in a very media-effective way. Pictures from Putin, personally engaging in the fight against fires by sitting in an aircraft and dumping water on the fires speak for themselves and contribute to the personal cult around the then-prime minister. Together with personal engagement in form of e.g., donating their monthly salary (Putin) that promoted the image of an effective disaster management, in form of a state that is quick to respond.

#### 4.2.2. Recovery

Analysis of the second phase again showed a high number of codes in the main category *Communication* (26), followed by *Critic* (25), *Performance* (16) and *Center and the regions* (11). *Timing* (6), *Means of aid* (4) and *Personal involvement* (2) were coded less often.

Analyzing the *Communication* category shows that the state conducted a certain way of reappraisal. The picture of a strong state determined the communication. Exemplified, e.g., by the second visit of Putin to Verhnjaja Vereja (the village which burned down to the ground) in the Vyksa-District, controlling the situation and reconstruction work, promoting the picture of a state which is taking care (– de facto also applicable). Speaking to members of the State Duma on results of the forest-fire period, Sergei Shoigu described the state-efforts to combat fires as “”Colossal”” (Ivanov 2010)<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>13</sup> "kolossal'nyimi"

At the same time, public justification was also pushed further with the continuing description of the disaster as 'uncontrollable'. Already apparent in the response-phase, although less frequent and clear, it appeared increasingly with official justifications.

As pointed out from minister Shoigu in his speech to the State Duma (mentioned above), the state saw three main reasons which led to emergency situations in the Central and the Volga District: “[...] an abnormally long stay of anticyclone in the European part [...]” (EMERCOM 2010c)<sup>14</sup>, “[...] abnormally high temperatures [...]”<sup>15</sup> (ibid.) and strong storm winds – “The combination of all these anomalies created unprecedented conditions for a large-scale fire attack on forests, fields and settlements.” (ibid)<sup>16</sup>. The abnormal character is being highlighted the most and is used as a general explanation for the whole disaster and its consequences. Despite the fact, that an abnormal heat wave certainly was a crucial factor for the development and spread of the fires, the recurring wording was established and used as legitimization to explain vast consequences.

Contrary to the theoretical assumption, segments matching to the subcategory *Reestablished normality* were found rarely. The findings are limited to a report by Deputy Gouverneur Anton Averin in the regional newspaper Nižegorodskie Novosti from October 2<sup>nd</sup>, describing the successful reconstruction work going on in Vyksa District: “See for yourself: as of 29 September in Verkhnyaya Vereya 401 house lots had already been cleared and the foundations had been laid on each one of them [...]” (Suhonin 2010)<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, this segment was coded with the subcategory *Effectivity (< Performance)*, since it indeed shows an effective reaction in terms of the implemented construction work.

On the other hand, the Kremlin dealt out against the governors by pledging to crack down on regional governors who performed bad in managing their forests (cf. Reuters 2010). Before the first parliament-meeting after summer holidays, politicians from government party “United Russia” called for cohesion on the federal level, after oppositional politicians repeatedly criticized the regimes management and subsequent reappraisal, stating that the situation was only indirectly caused by nature. United Russia-leader Boris Gryzlov was

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<sup>14</sup> „anomal'no dolgoe nahoždenie anticiklona v evropejskoj časti“

<sup>15</sup> „anomal'no vysokie temperatury“

<sup>16</sup> „Sočetanie vseh ètih anomalij sozdalo besprecedentnye usloviâ dlâ masštabnogo nastupleniâ ognâ na lesa, polâ i naselennye punkty.“

<sup>17</sup> „Smotrite sami: po sostoâniû na 29 sentâbrâ v Verhnej Veree uže rasčišen 401 učastok pod stroitel'stvo domov i na každom iz nih sdelany fundamenty“

quoted by saying that the party intended to propose to “all political forces to unite” and not “seek to improve its rating by criticising and disparaging the actions of the United Russia party and the government.””(Kommersant 2010b)<sup>18</sup> and “demanding that the Prosecutor-General’s Office should bring those federal and regional officials responsible for the fires to justice.”(ibid.)<sup>19</sup>.

The search for and identification of people responsible for the consequences of the disaster – scapegoats – were found in the regional governors, which was communicated openly.

The comprehensive picture of the accusations from the federal level of the regions is drawn by consulting the *critic*-category, e.g., within the subcategory *Center criticizes the regions*.

Instructed by President Medvedev, the demanded prosecutions were taken up and finished by September 7<sup>th</sup>, as the Kremlin reported (cf. Odynova 2010c), to be brought to court afterwards. As a consequence of the political pressure, three Volgograd regional officials resigned, two of them heads of the most affected Rudnya and Kotovo districts.

"I think I had no choice. Seven dead people is too high a price for negligence,"(ibid.) justified the one who resigned third, Igor Pikalov, until then head of the emergency situations commission in Volgograd. Until that time, only one other official resigned as a consequence – the head of strongly affected Vyksa District, Alexei Sokolov, who was the first. The responsibility and consequences were borne when pressure was high. An analyst from the Institute of Regional Politics described the resignations as a “ [...] chance to show that the federal authorities are keeping an eye on the situation,”” (ibid.).

Officially, the resignations can be seen as the logical consequence of bad regional management – however, they could also be interpreted as scapegoating for federal mismanagement. Admitting mistakes therefore took place, apparently also on the federal level. Assigned to and matching with several categories, there is also a rudimentary reference to the federal’s own mistakes, revealing crucial facts about the management:

“We believe that we should have raised aircraft en masse a day or two earlier and sent federal forces to the Nizhny Novgorod, Voronezh and Ryazan Regions, despite the reassuring reports from the constituent entities of the Russian Federation.” (EMERCOM 2010c)<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> „vsem političeskim silam ob"edinit'sâ", a ne stremit'sâ "povysit' svoj rejting za sčet kritiki i priniženîa dejstvîj vlasti "Edinoj Rossii" i pravitel'stva“

<sup>19</sup> „prokuroram poručeno stavit' vopros ob otvetstvennosti vplot' do osvoboždenîa ot zanimaemyh dolžnostej rukovoditelej organov gosvlasti mestnogo samoupravlenîa“.

<sup>20</sup> „My sčitajem, što nado bylo na den'-dva ran'se massovo podnât' aviaciû i napravit' federal'nye sily v Nižegorodskuû, Voronežskuû i Râzanskuû oblasti, nesmotrâ na uspokaivaûšie doklady sub"ektov Rossijskoj Federacii.“

admitted Shoigu (during his speech in front of the Federal Assembly in the Duma), continuing to say that “It is obvious that the intervention of the federal forces should have been carried out despite the lack of applications from the local authorities and the declaration of the state of emergency from the center, without regard for the division of powers.” (ibid.)<sup>21</sup>. This is tackling both, the regional underreporting which took place, including downplay of the crucial situation to the federal forces, and the federal trust/ good faith in the regional management abilities.

Central part of the state’s reaction in the recovery-phase appears to be the question for responsibility, which is answered partly by admitting mistakes and finding the guilty/responsible, or scapegoats. A shift of responsibility to the federal level – as assumed – can’t be stated clearly. The defined picture of power and effective control is at stake and can be questioned.

The regional underreporting, and lack of information in general, seemed to be a crucial factor with negative influence on the effectivity in the earlier phase, as Shoigu pointed out:

“And, of course, there should have been more precise information about the duration of the anticyclone and the abnormal temperatures.” (EMERCOM 2010c)<sup>22</sup>. Identified by the *Critic*-category, the flow of information between the federal and the regional level is less obvious, although a limited flow seemed likely. However, the government itself was more than frugal with information, not publishing details of actual developments, as media reports from the end of October stated: ““It’s been almost three months, but all the information we have about the fires is only what was heard in the first few days. [...] The fires were forgotten. As if they had never happened.”” (Latynina 2010)<sup>23</sup>.

The federal level was poorly informed (especially in the run-up), which seemed to be a structural problem and confirms the assumption that in the response phase – at both levels – good faith was played. Moreover, the government, for its part, informed the public late and incompletely, as the analysis showed.

The critic also developed in a reflection that became particularly visible with an increasing will to reform particular structures, which is one result of analyzing the *Performance*-

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<sup>21</sup> „Očevidno, čto vmešatel'stvo federal'nyh sil nado bylo osušestvlât', nesmotrâ na otsutstvie zaâvok s mest i vvodit' režim črezvyčajnoj situacii iz centra, ne sčitaâs' s razdeleniem polnomočij.“

<sup>22</sup> „I, konečno, nado bylo imet' bolee točnye svedeniâ o dlitel'nosti anticiklona i anomal'nyh temperaturah.“

<sup>23</sup> „Prošlo uže počti tri mesâca, no vsâ informaciâ, kotoruû my imeem o požarah, èto tol'ko to, čto prozvučalo v pervye že dni. [...] O požarah zabyli. Kak ne bylo.“

category. During the recovery-phase, a debate developed around the reform of the forest code.

Presented in the Duma by President Medvedev, the draft introduced several measures, among them suggestions to establish voluntary fire protection in Russia, granting more powers to oversight bodies, streamlining the involvement of federal forces and obliging local authorities to address preventive measures, also modernization of material and technical re-equipment. (cf. EMERCOM 2010c) For example, the draft places greater responsibility on the regions and provides for comprehensive modernization. The empowerment of oversight bodies meant the expansion of the Federal Forest Agency's authority, theoretically a shifting of power to the federal level. In a parliamentary hearing in the State Duma on September 23, participants (representatives of federal and regional authorities) confirmed the central reform-ideas, underlining, that urgent reforms and transformations are needed, and stating a "[...] systemic crisis in the forestry sector in Russia, exacerbated by the adoption of the new Forest Code in 2006" (WWF Russia 2010)<sup>24</sup>.

The statement was adopted, and, as a federal law, was promising to scrutinize the current legislation. Criticism was expressed by NGO's like WWF Russia, saying that an open discussion about changes in the forest legislation between the public and the forest sector was missing (cf. Forest.ru 2010). Furthermore, forestry-experts classified the reforms as inadequate and less promising, stating, that Putin's centralized reforms from 2007 would not be changed to a better in that way (cf. *ibid.*). However, the reform-approaches can be seen as preventive measures in order to minimize the likelihood of a repeated fire-disaster.

When looking at the *center-region*-relationship, the strong federal influence is shown by several examples, partly outlined above. Although the central government was strongly dependent on the cooperation and collaboration from regional forces/governors, the power vertical determines and prevails in the recovery-phase in different regards. This appeared centrally through the removal of regional governors by the president, as Medvedev did in this case. A critical reaction to the vertically enforced policy came with the call of CPRF's (Communist Party of the Russian Federation)-leader Sergei Obukhov, who told Kommersant-Newspaper that "'The government has created a power vertical that has burned itself up in fires, and now it's calling for unification, not to criticize itself.'" (Kommersant

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<sup>24</sup> "[...] sistemnyj krizis lesnogo hozâjstva Rossii, usugubivšijsâ prinâtiem v 2006 g. novogo Lesnogo kodeksa"

2010b)<sup>25</sup>. The deputy continued to explain, that the CPRF had prepared a deputy enquiry for Prosecutor General Alexander Bastrykin and Prosecutor General Yury Chaika “to bring criminal charges against Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the heads of the Emergencies Ministry[...]” (ibid.)<sup>26</sup> and other governmental bodies. This can be seen as a rudimentary protest against the existing disaster management, which was, however, not discussed further. Another expression of vertical power appeared with the prosecutor general’s observation and check regarding the readiness of the regional and municipal authorities to implement fire-fighting measures.

How can *Timing* in this phase be evaluated? The category *Timely/rapid response* (5) was coded more often than *Late reaction* (2). Overall, a comparatively low number of coded segments show, that this category played a less significant role compared to the response-phase. One explanation is the smaller number of texts which were analyzed.

Timely recovery in this phase would theoretically be the timely and quickly implemented reconstruction support, as well as the preparation and implementation of the 'lessons-learned'. A (political) reappraisal is also conceivable, or at least the impetus for one. In this respect, the state management in the second phase can be attested to some extent a committed approach to procurement policy. The extensive criticisms expressed in previous categories, which make the overall response seem rather badly timed, are contrasted by two examples that also show a positive side. Technical re-equipment, e.g., was purchased and reached the city of Ryazan in the end of October (cf. Ivanova 2010).

Reconstruction in the Vyksa-District was organized in a short time and with presentable results (mentioned above) and also the strongly affected Lukhovitsy district in the Moscow Region (where another three villages almost burned down), a report states, received fast and effective means of reconstruction. Following the report, as early as August 6th reconstructions began in one village and one month later, 149 houses had a basic structure (cf. Semenova 2010). This was made possible by a general reserve fund set up by the regional government, as the Minister of Construction of the Moscow Region, Pavel Perepelitsa, praised the regions efforts. Following the report, the respective Governor Boris Gromov and

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<sup>25</sup> Pravitel'stvo sozdalo vertikal' vlasti, kotoraâ sgorela v požarah, a teper' prizyvaet ob"edinit'sâ, da eše ne kritikovat' sebâ

<sup>26</sup> “o privlečenii k ugovolnoj otvetstvennosti za gibel' lûdej i uničtoženie imušestva graždan prem'era Vladimira Putina, glav MČS”

other high-ranking officials have visited the areas several times and supervised the work. Perepelitsa was quoted by stating: ““[...] all those affected by the fires received their compensation and payments quickly and without delay, everyone was fed, clothed and footed.”” (ibid.)<sup>27</sup>. Despite the all-encompassing self-congratulation, it reveals the political will for a functioning and quickly implemented construction-work. Interestingly, in both cases the personal involvement of political leaders, both regional and federal, was present and influential, as it seems.

The *Means of Aid* being implemented (also) played a less central role in the analysis. Regarding the coded segments, means of *financial aid* were found more often (3 coded segments) than *reconstruction* and *technical* means (both 1). Reconstruction was pushed forward in certain areas, as the parts written above showed. Although a vast part of the reconstruction work started to be implemented during the recovery-phase – and, by nature, is a longer process – sources for the second phase revealed less information. This can be explained by the fact, that the decision to implement reconstruction-aid (and this applies to both other means of aid too) were taken earlier and therefore evoked more attention when they were announced. Here another limitation of the category-system becomes visible: its focus on the announcement, which is due to the fact that a vast part of the material are media-reports.

The same applies for technical means, although their less frequent appearance should be foremost explained by a rarer use of technical equipment compared to the heavy material used during the firefight.

It seemed that the financial aid provided in the recovery-phase was paid quickly at least in one case, as a report of the Moscow Region shows. By the middle of September, ““All residents who suffered from fires received monetary compensation,”[...]” (Andreev 2010)<sup>28</sup> said Igor Parkhomenko, First Deputy Prime Minister of the Moscow Region. The sums being paid for injured people and their relatives ranged from 10 to 15 thousand rubles, which is comparable to the 20 thousand rubles victims received in the Voronezh-Region during the first phase. Residents who lost their permanent housings received 200 thousand rubles, and a total of 70 million rubles was allocated from the reserve fund of the Moscow Region Government.

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<sup>27</sup> „[...]vse postradavšie ot požarov bystro i bez provoloček polučili polagaûšiesâ im kompensacii i vyplaty, vse syty, odety i obuty.””

<sup>28</sup> ““Vse ŝiteli oblasti, postradavšie ot požarov, polučili deneznuû kompensaciû,”[...]”



The *Personal involvement* in this phase has already appeared several times in the categories presented so far. Here too, the effect of involvement seems greater than the coded segments make it appear (only 2 coded segments). The most striking personal involvement was that of the second visit of Prime Minister Putin to the Vyksa-District in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast by the middle of September. Also the often visited Lukhovitsy district in the Moscow Region became a destination for political visitors, highlighted by Roman Kuskov, head of the neighbouring Beloomut urban settlement: “How many times did Governor Boris Gromov come to us to personally supervise what was going on,” “not to mention other high officials.” (Semenova 2010)<sup>29</sup>. In this case, the proximity to Moscow could have been an explanatory factor. The category has many overlaps with the discussed power vertical, as well as the communication segments. However, personal investigation seemed to be a booster for reconstruction work and measures were being taken to push the recovery-process.

#### 4.3 Case II: Fires 2021

Ten years later, the country again faced a disastrous wave of forest fires, although to a totally unprecedented extent. The Russian state visibly reacted on the disaster throughout the whole country, showing a characteristic pattern of management-reaction, which is presented in the following. Unlike in the first case, the most affected regions were mostly in the eastern part localized, such as Yakutia and the Far East region. But also the Ural (Chelyabinsk) then north-western part (Karelia) were affected.

Eleven years after the first case, Vladimir Putin held the office as President again and the disaster management even more revolved around the Kremlin. Among other patterns, the state’s reaction on the fires was characterized by a strongly identified approach of reforms and will to change its environmental policy. A rethink of environmental policy affecting the, and influenced by forest fire protection took place, with the state following new technical approaches and rational economic concepts. In this second case, 54 documents have been analyzed, with 36 texts covering the response-, and 18 texts for the recovery-phase.

The number of coded segments for both phases identified in Figure 2 shows again prevalence of the categories *Performance* und *Communication*, while *Critic* remained less coded.

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<sup>29</sup> “«Skol'ko raz k nam priezžal gubernator Boris Gromov, čtoby lično kurirovat' proishodâšee, - govorit Roman Kuskov, - ne govorať uže o drugih vysokih činovnikah. ”

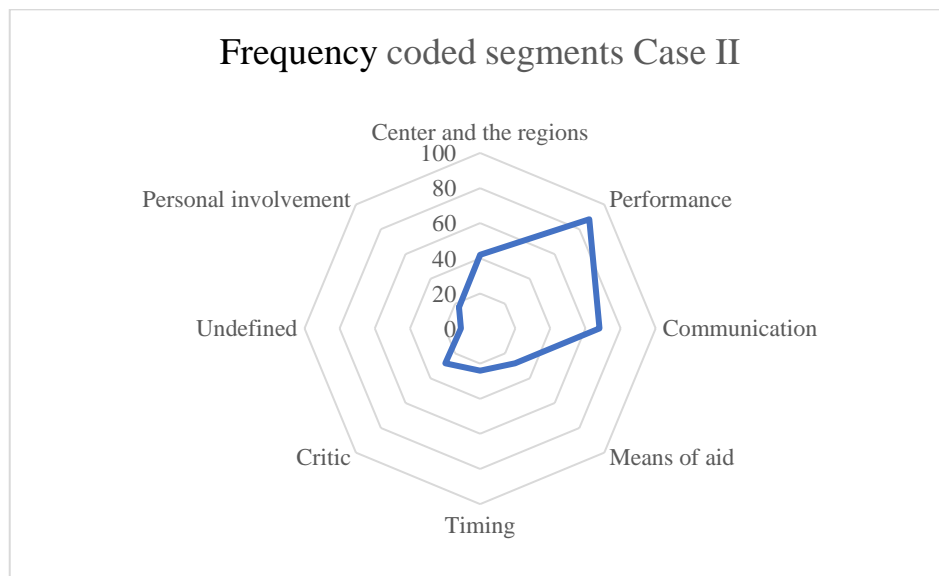


Figure 2

(Own Illustration)

#### 4.3.1 Response

The analysis begins with the depiction of the most striking categories. The following topics were the most coded ones. The *Performance*-Category was coded most often (67 codes), followed by *Communication* (48) and *Center and the regions* (37). *Means of aid* received 23 codes, *Critic* (19) and *Timing* (17) were coded less often, as well as *Personal involvement* (14).

When looking at the used *Communication*, a confidently communicated reestablished normality stands out. Already in the end of July, governors optimistically reported about a stabilized situation in their regions, also promoting pictures of an early re-established normality.

In a meeting with members of the government on July 21<sup>st</sup>, head of the Republic of Karelia, Artur Parfenchikov, positively responded on Putin's questions for the progress in firefighting: the fires were expected to be closed down and contained by the end of the week (cf. Kremlin 2021b). Also, the situation in strongly affected Yakutia was described and communicated as under control. The governor of Yakutia, Ajsen Nikolaev, highlighted in an Kommersant-interview about the difficulties of fighting fires and the caused damage (in the end of July), positive trends in certain areas of the republic (cf. Kommersant 2021b). With help of aircraft and people on the ground, the situation was stabilizing: "If we hold Western

and Central Yakutia together, this positive trend will only continue.” (ibid.)<sup>30</sup>. Further underlining the effective response in his region, Nikolaev went on to explain that in Yakutia, compared to the previous year, one and a half times more fires were extinguished by number, which was five and a half times more by area (cf. ibid.).

At the federal level too, the fight against the fires was summed up intensively with optimism. An example of this is a statement by Putin, who on a visit to Magnitogorsk emphasized (where also a government-meeting was conducted), that the authorities had learned to respond to natural disasters quickly enough, although sometimes there were failures (cf. Argumenty i Fakty 2021a).

At the same time, the picture of a strong state was being communicated, on the one hand with reports about stabilization, and additionally by promoting certain events. An event in the early days of the disaster, which was widely spread through the media was the evacuation of children from the Chelyabinsk region to the black sea coast, giving them special holidays (cf. Micih 2021).

Especially in the beginning, the early days of July, reports about preventive measures, of both financial and technical nature (Camera-surveillance-system and new Forest Fire Center – to be mentioned more extensively in *Means of aid*) contributed to the promotion of an active and strong state’s picture, distributing optimism. The picture of a *strong state* connected with effective disaster management was communicated.

Additionally, the framing of the disaster as an uncontrollable situation found further usage. The natural causes for the fires were repeatedly mentioned, again classifying it as ‘abnormal’. Again, politicians repeatedly classified the situation as a war-like event (head of Yakutia: “We have a real war on fires.” (Kommersant 2021b)<sup>31</sup>). However, potential causes were named more clearly. An official debate about climate change as a driver for fires developed, revealing that no consensus was found so far. ““We are living in the hottest and driest summer in the history of Yakutia's meteorological observations. [...]Dry thunderstorms are a big front in the republic, setting forests on fire,””<sup>32</sup> (Kommersant 2021b) mentioned head of Yakutia Nikolaev. Nikolaev insisted in this approach also in front of President Putin and other members of the government: “The most difficult situation with

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<sup>30</sup> „Esli my Zapadnuû i Central'nuû Âkutiû uderžim, ètot trend položitel'nyj budet i dal'se zakreplât'sâ tol'ko“

<sup>31</sup> „U nas s požarami - nastoâšaâ vojna.“

<sup>32</sup> „«My živem v samoe žarkoe i zasušlivoe leto, kotoroe bylo v istorii meteonablûdenij Âkutii [...] Bol'sim frontom v respublike idut suhie grozy, podžigaûšie les»,“

natural fires in our country is of course primarily due to the unprecedented hot and dry weather.”<sup>33</sup> (Kremlin 2021b) as he underlined it in an official videoconference on July 21<sup>st</sup>, on the one hand explaining rationally, on the other rejecting responsibility. Putin officially acknowledged the climate problem and its consequences, and in the context of the fire-disaster underlined the importance of dealing with the climate and environmental agenda in a "profound and systematic way for the future" (Kommersant 2021c)<sup>34</sup>.

Being the most striking category, analysis of the *Performance*-related characteristics shows an active response-phase with a strong drive of *reform efforts*. During the response phase, especially politicians from the Yakutia-region and the Far East of Russia constructively proposed infrastructural changes and reforms for the structure of firefighting. The head of Yakutia, again appearing an active player, started reform-efforts by presenting several ideas to strengthen forest fire safety in the region to President Putin in the middle of July. Most attention was paid to his proposition of establishing a regional center to fight forest fires in Yakutia. Furthermore the governor asked for new technical equipment and a change of the procedure of financing forest protection (cf. yakutia.info 2021). Putin promptly supported the suggestions and instructed the government to work on these. The Government did so and approached the President with a call for more professional staff, equipment – also in other Far East regions – and to “[...] bring forest fire protection financing to 100% and increase the number of forest guards in the Far Eastern Federal District [...]” (Kremlin 2021a)<sup>35</sup>, said Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Aleksandr Koslov at a meeting on the ongoing natural disasters at August 6<sup>th</sup>.

Beside the founding of a forest fire center in Yakutia, the meeting protocol revealed that a decision was made to establish a similar institution in the Krasnojarsk-Krai, a special northern forest-fire center in the city of Krasnojarsk (cf. *ibid.*).

In conversation with the president, Nikolaev seized the opportunity to demand the abolition of 'short' working hours for firefighters. Reform-suggestions were also made by Putin himself, by focusing on the federal power structure. By the media described as a “real systemic solution” (yakutia.info 2021)<sup>36</sup> to the problem of forest fires, the president proposed

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<sup>33</sup> „Složnejšaâ situaciâ s prirodnyimi požarami u nas složilas', konečno že, v pervuû očered' iz-za nebyvalo žarkoj i suhoj pogody.“

<sup>34</sup> „gluboko i sistemno na perspektivu»”

<sup>35</sup> „dovesti finansirovanie rabot po ohrane lesov ot požarov do 100-procentnogo normativa i uveličit' čislennost' lesoohrany v Dal'nevostočnom federal'nom okruge“

<sup>36</sup> „real'nym sistemnym rešeniem“

to transfer the responsibility for forest protection in sparsely populated areas (and with a lot of forest) to the federal level.

Similar ideas to shift power to the federal – ministry – -level came from EMERCOM-head Yevgeny Zinichev, who proposed to strengthen the Ministry by re-equipping its mobile units and establish permanent operative headquarters in each region, which are managed by territorial units of the Ministry: “In order to ensure the unity of management during emergency response[...] (Kommersant 2021a)”<sup>37</sup>. Zinichev questioned the existing management-structure and distribution of competences between the federal and the regional level, demanding a more centralist approach regarding the management-steps being taken when a fire approaches a populated area: “[...] it seems to us that in this case, of course, there should be very strict one-man rule by the Ministry of Emergency Situations regarding all those activities that should be carried out as part of fire suppression [...]” (Kremlin 2021b)<sup>38</sup> stated Zinichev, suggesting to change the legal framework accordingly and pointing to the ever-present problem of the division of competences in this case.

Most of the important efforts pointed out above can be viewed as sharing of demands and need for funding, which is why several segments have been double-coded and meet the assumptions/ fulfill requirements of those other categories.

Overall, the reform-oriented reaction of both governmental and regional actors gives the impression that the state reacted constructively and solution-oriented on the structural deficits. The measured performance was also shaped by effective means of response in the actual fight against the fires. Officials never tired of explaining, that an important factor of effective firefight in the first phase was the prevention of letting the fires spread to populated areas, which was achieved thanks to coordinated work and fast reaction, e.g., the use of controlled ‘counterfires’ (aerial fires were prevented by heating up another fire and let it crash with the initial one, making it stop) (cf. Adamovich 2021).

### ***Center and the regions***

Although (analysis yet identified, that) regional actors – and foremost officials from the Far East – shaped the pattern of disaster management, the federal level still strongly influenced both the management-process and the dialogue during the response-phase, playing a major

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<sup>37</sup> „«V celâh obespečeniâ edinstva upravleniâ pri likvidacii““

<sup>38</sup> „No zdes' nam predstavljâetsâ, čto v dannom slučae, konečno, dolžno byt' obespečeno očen' žestkoe edinonačalie so storony MČS po vsem tem meropriâtiâm, kotorye dolžny provodit'sâ v ramkah likvidacii požara“

role in the response-approach. The federal power appeared evidently in the regions' dependence on central funding, which repeatedly played an important role in and was precondition for the reform efforts. Additionally, the repeatedly shared demand for more federal competences shows the strong consensus on greater centralization of management.

“And if from top to bottom there were one federal structure, the federal "Avialesokhrana" with its own people, with its own aircraft, ground equipment, then of course this would be much easier.” (Kommersant 2021b)<sup>39</sup> stated governor Nikolaev. Analyzing the power-structures furthermore underlined the still relevant and omnipresent concept of subordination and the *power vertical* in Russian disaster management. A substantial part of the information generated and analyzed above stems from meeting protocols, in which the fundamental power of the President prevails. The power vertical strongly shaped decisions and the interaction between the relevant actors, foremost the President and governors. Given the circumstances of the Covid-Pandemic – and technical progress – several meetings between Putin, the government and governors were held online, which, however, did not appear to influence the usual model of reports to the president after the question-answer game, followed by instructions on how to proceed.

At the same time, negative consequences of the vertical power construct appeared when looking at the flow of information to the Kremlin. Following media reports, in Yakutia the emergency mode was only introduced on August 8<sup>th</sup>, despite the fact that the region fought an underfinanced fight against the fires since June and the emergency mode would have opened up new opportunities for funding (cf. Novye izvestija 2021). Only on August 9<sup>th</sup> then, the problem was raised to President Putin who assessed the need to involve the EMERCOM, forces of the Defense-Ministry and instructed to allocate additional funds. “It was as if the problem had never happened; it was hushed up.” (ibid.)<sup>40</sup> the article reproaches.

Although the fight against forest fires in the region seems to have been conducted effectively, the disaster management was characterized by an inefficient response with a long delay. This is not necessarily a logical consequence of the power vertical system, but presumably was influenced by it.

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<sup>39</sup> „A esli by sverhu do-nizu byla odna struktura federal'-naâ, federal'naâ «Avialesoohrana» so svoimi lûd'mi, so svoej aviaci-ej, nazemnoj tehnikoj, to, konečno, èto bylo by gorazdo proše.“

<sup>40</sup> „Problemy kak budto i ne bylo, ona staratel'no zamalčivalas'.”

With regard to the role of the regions, besides the active role of the Far East, the strong passivity of other regions such as Karelia is also striking. On the one hand, the Far East had an omnipresent role also because of the heavy floods (which were a second major natural disaster of the summer besides the fires and caused heavy damage in the region). On the other hand, the political influence, or at least the presence, of the Far Eastern officials seems greater.

Main *Critic* during the response-phase was aimed at the lack of resources and staff. It was argued that although the funding for firefighting is substantial, it is not commensurate with the respective forest size of the regions. The government only wants to put out fires where people live, everything else is “economically unprofitable“ (Novye izvestija 2021). This matches with other reports (and the *purposeful neglect*-subcategory), which state the controlled burning of the forest, especially in densely populated areas. This seems to be a reaction along the lines of economic viability, since the costs for extinguishing fires exceeded the costs to let certain areas burn.

When looking at the *Means of aid* being provided, the aid-category *Technical aid* was coded most often (13 codes), followed by *Financial aid* (6) and *Reconstruction* (4).

Technical aid in the response-phase was characterized by the use of new technologies, with special regard to the technique provided for the fight against or the prevention of fires. For example, causing a stir in the media in the early days of July, when the fires just began to being mentioned by the state, was the installation of a camera-surveillance-system in the Permsky Krai called “Lesozhranitel” (‘Forest Guard’), able to detect forest fires within a radius of 18 kilometers (cf. Kalmackij 2021).

Furthermore, the use of artificial rain appeared an effective instrument of response, used in Karelia and three Districts of Yakutia (cf. Argumenty i Fakty 2021b). Thus, the technical measures which were introduced in the response-phase had both a responsive and a preventive character. The financial aid provided to the people did not exceed an exceptional level. People in Yakutia, e.g., received 30 thousand rubles, as a report in an official meeting on August 14<sup>th</sup> revealed. Additionally, people in the Chelyabinsk region who engaged in the fires were compensated with a lump sum of 10 thousand rubles. Financial measures for infrastructural reforms, such as the founding of forest fire centers caused higher costs, the regions were willing to take from the budget. For the Northern Fire Center, five billion rubles were allocated for the purchase of vehicles, recruitment of personnel and equipment for the

paratroopers (cf. Kalmackij 2021). Extensive funding was also received by the “Conversation of Forests” project, part of the „Ecology“ national project and aimed at expanding forest plantations.

Reports about reconstruction measures remained scarce. However, few examples underline the states effort to actively push the reconstruction and promote the image of a generous state. For example, in the Chelyabinsk-region, decision was taken to build new houses which are at least the same size as the old dwelling: “In other words, many affected citizens, for whom this was their only housing, will improve their living conditions.” (Kremlin 2021a)<sup>41</sup>, as Chelyabinsk-governor Aleksey Teksler pointed out at the governmental meeting in the beginning of August.

The evaluation of *Timing* in the response-phase reveals a difficult picture. The number of coded segments for *Timely/rapid response* (15) is much higher than for *Late reaction and unpreparedness* (2). Following the reports pointed out above, response-measures were imposed, and even preventive steps were undertaken timely. Officials in the affected regions reported about timely measures that led to a quick containment of the fires, also the federal level largely agreed on a rapid response. Following the President, the management has learned, and the reaction time has been improved. Also, afforestation appeared to play a greater role, contributing to a timely response as a preventive measure.

Russian political analyst Sergei Schmidt was cited, saying: ““The timely reaction of the head of the region to fires in the region is already half of the success in fighting them.”” (IrkutskMedia.ru 2021)<sup>42</sup>. However, it seems that an economic trade-off led to a prioritization of the firefighting work. With regard to the protection of the population – meeting the needs of the people, as defined in the response phase – action seemed to have been taken quickly (and appropriately). Regarding the forest-protection, reaction and management-action, partly on purpose, lacked effectivity.

The *personal involvement* of politicians, again, appeared as a measurable result of the analysis. Visits of Putin to Chelyabinsk and Magnitogorsk in the beginning of August gave rise to a stronger political and media debate on the forest and the role of the state. Meetings between Ministers (foremost EMERCOM-head Zinichev and the Minister for Defence, Shoigu) and governors, and visits of governors to the affected areas – without delays from

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<sup>41</sup> “To est' mnogie postradavšie graždane, dlâ kogo èto bylo edinstvennoe žil'ë, ulučšat žilišnye usloviâ.”

<sup>42</sup> „Svoevremennost' reagirovaniâ glavy regiona na požary v oblasti èto uže polovina uspeha v bor'be snimi.“



holidays spent – contributed to successful management measures, as political analyst Schmidt stated. Evaluating on the personal involvement and meeting of Shoigu and governor of Irkutsk-region Kobsev in the region, Schmidt concluded: “We can see that the personal involvement of the head of the region increases the effectiveness of solving the problem” (IrkutskMedia.ru 2021)<sup>43</sup>.

### 4.3.2 Recovery

Category-wise, the recovery-phase was characterized foremost by findings for *Performance* (coded 21 times) and *Communication* (20), while *Critic and Timing* (9) as well as *Means of aid* (5) played a minor role, followed by *Center and the regions* (5) and *Personal involvement* (3).

Looking at the official *communication* in the recovery phase emphasizes the following characteristics. Various perspectives show that the topic of future-oriented management of forests and the environment – and climate change in general – played a major role. An example is the national campaign „Let’s save the Forest“ (“*Sohranim les*”) which was nationwide launched and took place throughout the country on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Launched by the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (Minprirody) and federal agencies and foundations in 2019, the campaign was invented to restore forests after fires and to reduce the negative effects of climate change, while involving the society and volunteers who plant trees (cf. *Sohranim les* 2021). The Irkutsk-Region appeared to be an active player, promoting the event actively and in March 2021 topping the forest restoration rating compiled by the Federal Forestry Agency. “We intend to continue to maintain a leading position on this indicator in order to achieve a 100 percent replacement-to-depletion ratio of forests by 2024.” (Irkutsk.news 2021)<sup>44</sup> said Governor Igor Kobzev on the event-day, commenting on the importance of the action: “Nature, the forest must be treated with care. And, most importantly, with an understanding of what will happen in decades to come. So that our descendants could estimate what we have done, and further preserve this unique nature,” (ibid.)<sup>45</sup>. The image being promoted not only matches to a reestablished, but an improved normality of a healthy environment, to be achieved with a clear agenda of saving the forest.

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<sup>43</sup> „My vidim, čto ličnaâ vključennost' glavy regiona povyšâet èffektivnost' rešeniâ problemy”

<sup>44</sup> “My i dal'se namereny sohranât' lideruúšie pozicii po ètomu pokazatelû, čtoby k 2024 godu dobit'sâ stoprocentnogo otnošeniâ vosproizvodstva lesov k ih vybyvaniû.”

<sup>45</sup> “K prirode, k lesu nužno odnosit'sâ berežno. I, samoe glavnoe, – s ponimaniem, čto budet čerez neskol'ko desâtkov let. Čtoby naši potomki mogli ocenit', čto my sdělali, i dal'se sohranât' ètu unikal'nuû prirodu,”

The way the state and the regions deal with the population shows a more sensitive approach to the whole issue. On the one hand, involvement of the people – volunteers – was effusively praised, as the case of Yakutia showed. President Putin awarded firefighters in Yakutia with Medals for ‘Courage on Fire’ and signed a decree to confer state awards of the Russian Federation on residents of Yakutia and employees of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, who worked on extinguishing forest fires in the republic. Instituted by Governor Nikolaev, 25.000 people received a badge of participation in forest firefighting (cf. NewsYkt 2021b). On the other hand, the government in the end of October announced to toughen penalties for forest destruction, raising (the highest possible) fines for significantly damaging the forest from 400.000 to 500.000, and imprisonment from three to four years (cf. SachaMedia 2021). The increasingly communicated importance of awareness regarding forest protection shaped the official communication.

Analysis of the *Performance*-category revealed that the institutional changes and reform efforts, which characterized the response-phase did not cease during the second phase. In this respect, the announcement of plans by Putin after a government meeting on 5 October can be seen as a clear reaction: As part of the fight against climate catastrophe, the President revealed plans for Russia’s socio-economic strategy to 2050, which were manifested in the same month.

The government in the matter of October 29<sup>th</sup> passed a ruling on the “Strategy for socio-economic development of the Russian Federation with low greenhouse gas emissions until 2050” (Government of the Russian Federation 29/19/2021), stipulating in two chapters certain steps for the protection against forest fires: improving and changing management practices in forestry, measures to increase the forests uptake of greenhouse gas, additional measures for reforestation and afforestation, protection of forests from fires and pest, and increasing costs for effective management and aviation forces (cf. *ibid.*: 21-22; 32).

The law fits into the overall picture of the government's increased awareness of climate protection, which – presumably also as a reaction to the forest fires (see Putin's statements on this) – is increasingly addressing climate change as a problem, and, in the recovery phase, taking it up to a national target, while implementing crucial steps for the fire-prevention.

Furthermore, intense efforts to push afforestation forward (matching with both timely – or not-timely response and performance) increased the performance.

Despite the reformational efforts, the state was sharply *criticized* for failures of emergency forces, organizational problems, and underfinanced forest-protection. Vast part of the critique in the analyzed material was addressed by non-governmental actors, thus being classified as external critic. A rather non- than late reaction of emergency forces is indicated by reports from the Urals, where the village of Dzhabyk was hit hard by forest fires in the beginning of August, as an article indicated:

“Some of the firefighters said they wouldn’t extinguish the houses, and that their orders were only to put out the forest fires,” (Light 2021) a resident of the village was quoted, adding that “Many people blame the emergency services for not doing their job,” – “Some of them just stood around, doing nothing.” (ibid.). Unlike previous information regarding the prioritization of populated places against forest and controlled burning of forest in the firefight, here the opposite seemed to be the case. The report suggests uncoordinated behavior of the emergency forces.

The criticism was met promptly, and in the days after the fires burned themselves out, a stream of politicians and top officials visited the place, including the governor and personal envoy of Putin to the Urals. Also, the regional prosecutor’s office reacted and announced that it has opened three criminal cases into potential arsons charges. Additionally, President Putin himself visited the region on August 6<sup>th</sup> and took a flight over the burned village, giving instructions to the regional governor (cf. ibid.). The official reaction which was revealed by the incident in general, and critic connected to it in particular, showed a hasty approach, aimed at a quick resolution and the identification of culprits, which in turn confirmed the image of a state disaster-manager who takes care but (at the same time) rejects responsibility.

Demonstration of federal power in the recovery-phase was indicated less often as in previous phases, which is the main result of analyzing the *Center and the regions*-relationship.

Analysis of the actual imposed *Means of aid* in the recovery-phase indicates, that *Financial aid* (4) and *Technical help* (3) prevailed over *Reconstruction* (1). The technical means being conducted were, for example, the creation of a special firefighting squadron, consisting of 22 aircraft and several helicopters – its purchase instructed by President Putin. After the fire-season came to an end, the used (or mentioned) technology can be described as limited to purchase of new material. Although well-equipped with new machinery financed by federal

fonds, shortage of people to work with it still posed a problem, how an expert article summed it up (cf. forestcomplex.ru 2021).

“Yakutia, for example, does have machines, but there's no one to drive them: there are no specialists, because the salaries are so low.” (ibid.)<sup>46</sup> states the article, underlining, that without more or better invested finances, the technical measures are useless.

In September Putin instructed the government to allocate 8 billion additional rubles annually to each region to protect forests from fires – almost doubling the funding under the forestry powers which are delegated to the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Greenpeace commented on the decision, saying that the doubling is “certainly not enough, although it is an important step in the right direction.” (Greenpeace 2021)<sup>47</sup>. The financial aid which was provided for reforms and infrastructural changes, and this is not only shown by the latter example, remained too low.

How can the *Timing* be assessed in the respective phase? The coded segments suggest that a *Timely/rapid response* (4) exceeded a *late reaction* (3) in significance. While the addressed example of Dzhabyk-village is an isolated example, it highlights a fundamental coordination problem, which has negative implications for the disaster response as a whole. The continued reform efforts and especially the constitutionalization of environmental and forest protection can be seen as an appropriate response in that it contained forward-looking elements that contributed to stabilizing the situation and was also intended to have a preventive effect. Procurement of new equipment and extensive funding also contribute to the image of effective preventive measures.

### ***Personal involvement***

With a decreasing number of fires (check the table and temporal highlights of the fire-season) the personal involvement in the form of visits of political leaders decreased gradually. However, the case of Dzhabyk in the Urals clearly showed, that the personal visits of both regional and federal leaders increased attention and as a consequence improvement of constructional work and infrastructure.

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<sup>46</sup> „V toj že Âkutii mašiny est', no posadit' za rul' nekogo — net specialistov, potomu čto očen' malen'kie zarplaty.”

<sup>47</sup> „Deneg, kotorye vydelâutsâ, konečno nedostatočno, hotâ èto važnyj šag v nužnom napravlenii.”

## 5. Comparison and Discussion

After presenting results of the case analysis, this part conducts the case-comparison and discussion of the results. As trivial as it seems, both cases presented a challenge for the Russian state and its disaster-management, leaving vast parts of the forest and populated areas burnt. In both cases states of emergency were announced and the consequences of the disaster were severe, including not only high economic losses for the population and the state, but also large-scale destruction of the nature. The 2010 fires hit the country with an unprecedented power, which revealed infrastructural as well as organizational deficits in an unknown manner. In 2021, the authorities – to some extent – had experience with large-scale fires, since the first case happened a decade before and was followed by large-scale fires in the preceding years, thus being a crucial difference to case I. Another fundamental difference between the results in both cases comes with their different spatial locations. The center of the 2010 fires was primarily the center of Russia, while in 2021 the strongest forest fires – and thus the strongest response – were in Siberia and the Far East.

The analysis of the response-phase revealed, that in both cases a pattern of communication dominated, which was shaped by a maintained communicated reestablished normality, no matter how severe either the disaster itself or the management-measures were. While the official communication about the fires in the first Case began comparatively late and was rather shaped by the approach of covering up uncoordinated action and mismanagement with promises of quick reconstruction assistance and internal criticism, the authorities in Case II did not hesitate to proclaim their successes in firefighting and management early on and highlighted their learning success. The creation of the image of a strong state was pursued in both cases, as was the portrayal of the disaster as an uncontrollable event with war-like conditions. In case two, however, the state defined the uncontrollability more precisely and named the universal problem of climate change as a main driver. In both cases that confirms the assumption of self-representation as a strong state in need, which provides for the basic needs of the people in the response phase, embellished with the projection of a fight against a superior opponent.

A common feature of both cases can furthermore be identified in a manifold uncoordinated approach by the emergency forces, which was at the expense of management efficiency, albeit more evident in the first case.

The official reaction during the response phase differs in the first case from that in the second one in so far as it was much more characterized by an attempt to comprehensively hold the management accountable that acted late: the search for culprits led to the regions and local

officials had to step back and admit their mistakes. In the second case, on the other hand, the reappraisal of mistakes played a minor role. In the first phase, the authorities already were involved with the elaboration of reform proposals for disaster management as well as environmental policy.

The comparison of the (internal) distribution of power between the center and the regions in the response phase reveals in both cases, that the center and its federal institutions were the determining and driving force. Both cases also clearly showed the power vertical. In the analysis of the second case, the will – both at federal and regional level – to expand federal competences and to centralize disaster management again was even stronger than in the first case. On the one hand, this can be seen as a central generation of power in a general political sense, but in terms of disaster management seems to be influenced in particular by pragmatic organizational considerations and to be classified as a reaction to systemic structural deficits. Personal involvement also played a decisive role in both cases and had a positive influence on the implementation of acute aid-provision, as well as long-term preventive measures. However, it also contributed to the personal publicity and portrayal of leaders as successful and active crisis managers. In both cases, timely-reaction in the response-phase can be described as rather late, although the first case showed a slower response in terms of providing technical and reconstructive means of aid, while their announcement was carried out quickly. Financial aid was promised extensively and quickly. In the second case, more generally, assessment of the timely response was more difficult. Compared to 2010, the authorities in 2021 seemed to pursue a more rational economically oriented approach of saving the forest, motivated by environmental issues, which had a positive influence on preventive measures.

Comparing the recovery-phase of both cases reveals a similar pattern, with few differences. In 2010, the state exemplary pursued the enforcement of legal consequences for the accused regional officials, continuing to shape its image of a strong state and – where possible – successful construction helper. In 2021, however, the official communication rather emphasized a future-oriented approach, pursuing increased awareness for environmental issues and promoting the forest as a natural asset to be protected.

Another difference can be found in the behavior of officially admitting mistakes which – presumably due to a higher politicization of the first event in general – in the first case kept appearing, while the fault-management in the second phase was significantly less present. In both cases, the concept of subordination and the power-vertical were identified in the control

of subordinated work in the regions by the political leaders (foremost Putin), although less present in the second Case. In the first case it was expressed and carried out as the vertical enforcement of the removal of regional officials, while in the second case foremost visible through hearings in the meetings which took place around the fire-situation. In both cases, the control of reconstructions was in some places conducted by the President himself, matching with elements of personal involvement. In both cases, the means of aid being provided appeared in less examples as in the response-phase. Ongoing support of reconstruction was identified (as proposed in the disaster cycle), although in both cases to the same small extent. Financial aid-measures were identified, considering financial support from the state and the regions to the residents, as well as federal funding of the regions and local actors. Financial assistance for the federation subjects in both cases was from nongovernmental actors classified as insufficient. Financial aid for affected residents in the first case seems to have been provided extensively, while significantly less mentioned in the second case.

## **6. Conclusion**

A main finding is that the data on the classification of disasters is poor. An objective classification remains difficult when analyzing government sources, for example, if these are the only ones that contain information on a fire and the progress of fighting it. The qualitative design managed to draw the necessary explanatory framework and to classify information. The analysis clearly shows that in the case of Russia, elements of federal as well as regional and local policy are conducive to a comprehensive examination of disaster management.

The case comparison made it possible to compare the different characteristics and thus draw better conclusions for the management of natural disasters. Applying a content analysis had the advantage of going into detail about the contexts and characteristics and giving the various pieces of information in the documents a subjective weighting.

With regard to the theoretical considerations formulated at the beginning, the case-comparison indicates the following findings. In both cases, strong evidence exists for the late reaction of the disaster management. While this applies even more to the first case, the imposed management in the second case showed a stronger preventive character, and therefore a more appropriate reaction with respect to the recovery-phase.

Moreover, both analyzed cases reveal a largely unorganized reaction, which is, inter alia, explained by structural deficits in the disaster management. Furthermore, organizational

deficits in this regard are a result of the country's vast territory, which seems to negatively influence the management performance.

The characteristics of the official communication used to meet the expected assumptions. In both cases, the official actors painted the picture of a strong, because active state and promoted views of a reestablished normality. However, mistakes were admitted, and failures had been addressed. Moreover, with regard to a rather late official communication compared to the time of disaster-beginnings, to some extent an informational gap can be attested, applying to both the flow of information from the government to the people, and reports from the regional authorities towards the political center. An unexpected trend, demonstrated especially in the 2021 fires, was the reform-oriented approach as main reaction, largely affecting other expressions of the reaction.

A shift of responsibility to the federal level is shown to a limited extent. A centralization of power, demanded by both federal and regional actors, constituted a shift of competences in the management-approach. Responsibility for failures, however, was shifted to the regional level. The assumption of the provision of generous financial aid can only be confirmed to a limited extent based on the results. In the first case, extensive and rapid aid was announced for the population (in both phases), but its actual provision cannot be conclusively verified. For 2021, observed data shows less strong indications of generous financial aid, but here too the sampled data must be correctly classified as insufficient.

This insufficiency is part of two limitations of the analysis. First, the sampled data proved insufficient, although only regarding the latter example. Second, the categories focus on announcements – which is due to the focus on media reports – partly made the comprehensive evaluation difficult, since it required a complex evaluation of the statements, at the expense of a more detailed look on the cases.

However, the analysis proved to be suitable and purposeful for answering the research question. Beyond the defined expectations the analysis additionally indicated certain characteristics, which had been developed during the analysis-process and were taken up again in the evaluation. For example, in both disasters the state assigned the fires an abnormal character and war-related conditions, the fight against which on the one hand was supposed to legitimize the concentration of all state forces on the event, but beyond that also seemed to justify mistakes and failures. Another result is that the patterns is not significantly changing over the disaster phases.



Defining a general picture of the pattern of Russian disaster management leads to the following conclusion: Russia is a state that reacts actively, but belatedly and uncoordinatedly to natural disasters, the effects of which it has difficulty controlling and which it tries to use in part to legitimize its own power. Pattern of Russian disaster management show autocratic elements, as they are – to some extent – characterized by information-gaps between the state and its people, have strong elements of a centralized power structure, including the Russia-specific power vertical, and – although that is not limited to non-democratic structures – legitimize power through the positive portrayal of actions that have only been successful to a limited extent. These pattern, however, are the result of a case comparison between two forest fire disasters in Russia and to a limited extent comparable to other disasters. Due to scarcity of time and resources, only two cases from different periods could be reviewed for this study. However, the results indicate that a thorough investigation of developmental patterns in Russian crisis-management over a longer period of time and with a larger sample can be a promising endeavor for future research.

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## Appendix

### Table 2

Title	Source	Date of Publication	Link	Document type
<b>Case I</b>				
Едкий смог парализовал российскую столицу: о страшных пожарах ученые предупреждали власти уже давно	Argumenty i Fakty	04/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/19700">https://aif.ru/incidents/19700</a>	News report
Путин пообещал жертвам природных пожаров новые дома и финпомощь	Argumenty i Fakty	30/07/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/19616">https://aif.ru/incidents/19616</a>	News report
«Они не хотели нас тушить». Как борются с нынешними пожарами в России	Argumenty i Fakty	02/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/oni_ne_hoteli_nas_tushit_kak_boryutsya_s_nyneshnimi_p_ozharami_v_rossii">https://aif.ru/incidents/oni_ne_hoteli_nas_tushit_kak_boryutsya_s_nyneshnimi_p_ozharami_v_rossii</a>	News report
В Нижегородской области погорельцам начали выплачивать по 10 тысяч рублей	Argumenty i Fakty	01/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/amp/incidents/19618">https://aif.ru/amp/incidents/19618</a>	News report
Путин пообещал отстроить новые дома пострадавшим от пожаров	Argumenty i Fakty	02/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/money/19624">https://aif.ru/money/19624</a>	News report
АИФ №31	Argumenty i Fakty	04/08/2010	Access via integrum	News report
Российская столица дымила по вине чиновников	Argumenty i Fakty	25/08/2010	Access via integrum	News report
Пылающая Россия заставила президента пойти на жесткие меры	Argumenty i Fakty	05/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/19745">https://aif.ru/incidents/19745</a>	News report
Губернаторские пятнашки. Назван преемник главы Калининградской области	Argumenty i Fakty	23/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/amp/society/20114">https://aif.ru/amp/society/20114</a>	News report
Акция «АиФ» в поддержку детей, пострадавших от пожара	Argumenty i Fakty	17/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/society/20008">https://aif.ru/society/20008</a>	News report
1 ноября строительство жилья для погорельцев должно быть закончено	Argumenty i Fakty	30/08/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/20256?ysclid=las1ala5nk547394872">https://aif.ru/incidents/20256?ysclid=las1ala5nk547394872</a>	News report
Кто ответить за пожары?	Argumenty i Fakty	15/09/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/20557?ysclid=lb23ki7mgy538063828">https://aif.ru/incidents/20557?ysclid=lb23ki7mgy538063828</a>	News report
«Горячее лето-2010». Оно унесло больше жизней, чем афганская	Argumenty i Fakty	28/10/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/21470">https://aif.ru/incidents/21470</a>	News report

кампания и две войны в Чечне				
Что нам показали лесоторфяные пожары?	Argumenty i Fakty	15/09/2010	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/20555?ysclid=lb19qipv79816738492">https://aif.ru/incidents/20555?ysclid=lb19qipv79816738492</a>	News report
Дума объявила пожарную тревогу	Известия	08/09/2010	<a href="https://iz.ru/news/365640?ysclid=la45hp2ey6233757243">https://iz.ru/news/365640?ysclid=la45hp2ey6233757243</a>	News report
Environmentalists Blame Fires on Policies	The Moscow Times	03/08/2010	<a href="https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/02/environmentalists-blame-fires-on-policies-a340">https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/02/environmentalists-blame-fires-on-policies-a340</a>	News report
Medvedev Gives Forestry Agency to Putin	The Moscow Times	30/08/2010	<a href="https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/29/medvedev-gives-forestry-agency-to-putin-a956">https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/29/medvedev-gives-forestry-agency-to-putin-a956</a>	News report
Medvedev Fires 5 as Moscow Chokes	The Moscow Times	04/08/2010	<a href="https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/04/medvedev-fires-5-as-moscow-chokes-a415">https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/04/medvedev-fires-5-as-moscow-chokes-a415</a>	News report
Co-Pilot Putin Helps Put Out Wildfires	The Moscow Times	10/08/2010	<a href="https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/10/co-pilot-putin-helps-put-out-wildfires-a556">https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/08/10/co-pilot-putin-helps-put-out-wildfires-a556</a>	News report
Kremlin eyes forest management reform after fires	Reuters	08/09/2010	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-51369720100908">https://www.reuters.com/article/idINIndia-51369720100908</a>	News report
Пожарная тревога	Polit.ru	04/08/2010	<a href="https://polit.ru/article/2010/08/04/pozary/">https://polit.ru/article/2010/08/04/pozary/</a>	News report
Единороссы ответили за пожары	Kommersant	17/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1488857">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1488857</a>	News report
Чиновники еще погорят на плохой работе	Kommersant	5/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1482225">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1482225</a>	News report
Россия пышет жаром	Kommersant	06/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/gallery/1482664">https://www.kommersant.ru/gallery/1482664</a>	News report
Пожары угасают, но не сдаются	Kommersant	13/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1486262">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1486262</a>	News report
МЧС сбило пламя	Kommersant	07/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1484274">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1484274</a>	News report
Губернаторы собрались как на пожар	Kommersant	02/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1480948">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1480948</a>	News report
Гореть от ума	Kommersant	31/07/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1480578">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1480578</a>	News report
Глава Рослесхоза разделил судьбу леса	Kommersant	21/08/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1491680">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1491680</a>	News report
Юрия Лужкова поздравили по протоколу	Kommersant	22/09/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1508191">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1508191</a>	News report
Огонь перекинулся на осень	Kommersant	22/09/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1508236">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1508236</a>	News report
Нет Думы без огня	Kommersant	07/09/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1499436?muid=15eUMmCUQzQj">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1499436?muid=15eUMmCUQzQj</a>	News report
"Колоссальные усилия" победили "аномальные условия"	Kommersant	08/09/2010	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1499766">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/1499766</a>	News report
Путин распорядился выделить 5 млрд рублей гражданам, пострадавшим от пожаров	Vedomosti	30/07/2010	<a href="https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2010/07/30/putin_rasporyadilsya_vydelit_5_mlrdrub_pomoschi_postradavshim_ot_pozharov">https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2010/07/30/putin_rasporyadilsya_vydelit_5_mlrdrub_pomoschi_postradavshim_ot_pozharov</a>	News report

СТРАНА ГОРИТ И ТУШИТ СЕБЯ ТАЗИКАМИ	Novaya Gaseta	04/08/2010	<a href="https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2010/08/04/2183-strana-gorit-i-tushit-sebya-tazikami">https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2010/08/04/2183-strana-gorit-i-tushit-sebya-tazikami</a>	News report
СТАБИЛЬНОСТЬ С ПОМПОЙ	Novaya Gaseta	11/08/2010	<a href="https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2010/08/11/2102-stabilnost-s-pompoy">https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2010/08/11/2102-stabilnost-s-pompoy</a>	News report
БЕЗОТЧЕТНАЯ ВЛАСТЬ	Novaya Gaseta	27/10/2010	<a href="https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2010/10/26/940-bezotchetnaya-vlast?ysclid=la44o19wv2104644947">https://novayagazeta.ru/articles/2010/10/26/940-bezotchetnaya-vlast?ysclid=la44o19wv2104644947</a>	News report
Прокуратура начинает расследование действий должностных лиц в связи с катастрофическими лесными пожарами	Forest.ru	07/09/2010	Access via integrum	News report
Путин ликвидировал последние надежды на улучшение ситуации в лесном хозяйстве	Forest.ru	29/09/2010	<a href="http://old.forest.ru/rus/news/index.php?id=1011">http://old.forest.ru/rus/news/index.php?id=1011</a>	News report
Президент России утвердил перечень поручений по итогам совещания по лесному хозяйству	Forest.ru	21/09/2010	Access via integrum	News report
Кто больше всего виноват в пожарной катастрофе 2010 года? Результаты социологического опроса	Forest.ru / 0-1.ru	25/10/2010	<a href="http://www.0-1.ru/default.asp?id=30965">http://www.0-1.ru/default.asp?id=30965</a>	News report
Чтобы «горящее» лето не повторилось...	Рязанские ведомости	30/10/2010	<a href="https://rv-ryazan.ru/old/news/5165.html">https://rv-ryazan.ru/old/news/5165.html</a>	News report
Борцы с огнем получили награды	Рязанские ведомости	11/09/2010	Access via integrum	News report
Кто чем может	Нижегородские Новости	12/08/2010	Access via integrum	News report
Проверит на месте	Нижегородские новости	14/09/2010	<a href="https://nnews.nnov.ru/posts/8669">https://nnews.nnov.ru/posts/8669</a>	News report
Russia burns: an update	Open Democracy / WWF	12/08/2010	<a href="https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/russia-burns-update/">https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/russia-burns-update/</a>	NGO-Report
WWF: Лесное хозяйство России в кризисе, что делать?	wwf.ru	28/09/2010	<a href="https://wwf.ru/resources/news/lesa/lesnoe-khozyaystvo-rossii-v-krizise-cto-delat/">https://wwf.ru/resources/news/lesa/lesnoe-khozyaystvo-rossii-v-krizise-cto-delat/</a>	NGO-Report
Площадь торфяных пожаров в Подмосковье в этом году увеличилась в четыре раза	EMERCOM	16/07/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442591">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442591</a>	Government report
Ситуация с природными пожарами на территории Российской Федерации по состоянию на 6 августа 2010 года	EMERCOM	06/08/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442550">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442550</a>	Government report
Площадь природных пожаров в 2010 году сократилась в два раза	EMERCOM	27/07/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442575">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442575</a>	Government report
Сергей Шойгу считает необходимым создать экспертную группу	EMERCOM	09/08/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442534">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442534</a>	Government report

РАН для изучения последствий аномальной жары				
Пресс-конференция главы ведомства Сергея Шойгу на тему: "Ситуация с природными пожарами на территории Российской Федерации"	EMERCOM	05/08/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442551">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442551</a>	Government report
Сергей Шойгу: за последние сутки спасатели отстояли от огня более 360 населенных пунктов	EMERCOM	04/08/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442558">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442558</a>	Government report
Премьер-министр России Владимир Путин поблагодарил всех, кто мужественно противостоял пожарам, и призвал к объединению сил в борьбе со стихией	EMERCOM	31/07/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442569">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442569</a>	Government report
Применение авиации МЧС России при тушении лесных пожаров -- комментарий начальника управления авиации и авиационно-спасательных технологий Закирова Рафаила Шакуровича	EMERCOM	03/08/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442559">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/vse-novosti/1442559</a>	Government report
Выступление Министра С.К.Шойгу на заседании Государственной Думы Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации по итогам лесопожарного периода	EMERCOM	07/09/2010	<a href="https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/novosti/1442481">https://www.mchs.gov.ru/deyatelnost/pre-ss-centr/novosti/1442481</a>	Government report – Speech
Trip to Mari El	Kremlin	09/08/2010	<a href="http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/8604">http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/8604</a>	Government report
<b>Case II</b>				
In Aftermath of Unprecedented Blazes, Russian Villagers Place Hope in Putin	The Moscow Times	08/09/2021	<a href="https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/08/11/in-aftermath-of-unprecedented-blazes-russian-villagers-place-hope-in-putin-a74751">https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2021/08/11/in-aftermath-of-unprecedented-blazes-russian-villagers-place-hope-in-putin-a74751</a>	News report
First Regional Chiefs Quit Over Wildfires	The Moscow Times	07/09/2021	<a href="https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/09/06/first-regional-chiefs-quit-over-wildfires-a1192">https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2010/09/06/first-regional-chiefs-quit-over-wildfires-a1192</a>	News report
«Восстановление жилья и отдых для детей»: Владимир Путин дал ряд поручений в связи с пожарами в Челябинской области.	Continentalist.ru	10/07/2021	Accessed via integrum, also available at: <a href="https://russian.rt.com/russia/article/883971-prirodnye-pozhary-chelyabinskaya-oblast?ysclid=la6to6jee7227734204">https://russian.rt.com/russia/article/883971-prirodnye-pozhary-chelyabinskaya-oblast?ysclid=la6to6jee7227734204</a>	News report

Названы главные риски для России от глобального потепления	Lenta.ru	06/10/2021	<a href="https://lenta.ru/news/2021/10/06/climate/">https://lenta.ru/news/2021/10/06/climate/</a>	News report
В России появится пожарная спецэскадрилья	Lenta.ru	14/10/2021	<a href="https://lenta.ru/news/2021/10/14/escadrille/">https://lenta.ru/news/2021/10/14/escadrille/</a>	News report
Путин принял доклад губернатора Челябинской области о ситуации с лесными пожарами	9111.ru	10/07/2021	Access only via integrum	News report
На стыке проблематики: борьба с лесными пожарами 2021	forestcomplex.ru	15/10/2021	<a href="https://forestcomplex.ru/rf-protection/borba-s-lesnymi-pozharami-2021/">https://forestcomplex.ru/rf-protection/borba-s-lesnymi-pozharami-2021/</a>	News report
Путин назвал пожары и паводки в России проявлением глобального потепления	Kommersant	05/08/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4929471">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4929471</a>	News report
Путин предложил передать часть полномочий по охране лесов на федеральный уровень	Kommersant	21/07/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4910032">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4910032</a>	News report
Ох, рано горит охрана	Kommersant	27/07/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4918313">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4918313</a>	News report
«Колоссальный ущерб — это экология, здоровье людей»	Kommersant	27/07/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4918244">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4918244</a>	News report
МЧС предложило создать оперштабы по предотвращению ЧС в каждом регионе	Kommersant	27/07/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4918616?ysclid=la6owzkwy6976574257">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4918616?ysclid=la6owzkwy6976574257</a>	News report
Глава МЧС попросил разрешить министерству тушить пожары при федеральном ЧС	Kommersant	14/08/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4945801">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4945801</a>	News report
«Ситуация не такая трагичная»	Kommersant	09/08/2021	<a href="https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4936619">https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4936619</a>	News report
В МЧС заявили о стабилизации ситуации с пожарами в Якутии	TASS	17/08/2021	<a href="https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/12152717?utm_source=ru.wikipedia.org&amp;utm_medium=referral&amp;utm_campaign=ru.wikipedia.org&amp;utm_referrer=ru.wikipedia.org">https://tass.ru/proisshestviya/12152717?utm_source=ru.wikipedia.org&amp;utm_medium=referral&amp;utm_campaign=ru.wikipedia.org&amp;utm_referrer=ru.wikipedia.org</a>	News report
Прокуратура начала проверку советника красноярского губернатора, который назвал россиян «плаксивым сбродом»	Polit.ru	24/08/2021	<a href="https://polit.ru/news/2021/08/24/sbrod1/">https://polit.ru/news/2021/08/24/sbrod1/</a>	News report
Советника красноярского губернатора, назвавшего жителей «кучей дерьма», оштрафовали на 5 тыс. Рублей	Polit.ru	29/10/2021	<a href="https://m.polit.ru/news/2021/10/12/agafonov/">https://m.polit.ru/news/2021/10/12/agafonov/</a>	News report
Более 4,4 тыс. добровольцев, тушивших лесные пожары в Якутии, не получили выплаты за работу	Polit.ru	29/11/2021	<a href="https://m.polit.ru/news/2021/11/29/Yakutia/">https://m.polit.ru/news/2021/11/29/Yakutia/</a>	News report
На защите лесов. Как нацпроект снизил ущерб от пожаров	Argumenty i Fakty	06/07/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/society/ecology/na_zashchite_lesov_kak_nacproekt_snizil_ushcherb_ot_pozharov">https://aif.ru/society/ecology/na_zashchite_lesov_kak_nacproekt_snizil_ushcherb_ot_pozharov</a>	News report

Текслер попросил Путина дофинансировать противопожарные мероприятия	Argumenty i Fakty	21/07/2021	<a href="https://chel.aif.ru/incidents/fire/teksler_p_oprosil_putina_dofinansirovat_protivopozharnye_meropriyatiya">https://chel.aif.ru/incidents/fire/teksler_p_oprosil_putina_dofinansirovat_protivopozharnye_meropriyatiya</a>	News report
Путь к восстановлению лесов. В России появится сеть зелёных питомников	Argumenty i Fakty	13/08/2021	<a href="https://rzn.aif.ru/society/put_k_vosstanovleniyu_lesov_v_rossii_poyavitsya_set_ze_lyonyh_pitomnikov">https://rzn.aif.ru/society/put_k_vosstanovleniyu_lesov_v_rossii_poyavitsya_set_ze_lyonyh_pitomnikov</a>	News report
Путин с воздуха осмотрел пострадавшие от пожаров районы Челябинской области	Argumenty i Fakty	06/08/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/putin_s_vozduha_osmotrel_postradavshie_ot_pozharov_raznony_chelyabinskoy_oblasti">https://aif.ru/incidents/putin_s_vozduha_osmotrel_postradavshie_ot_pozharov_raznony_chelyabinskoy_oblasti</a>	News report
Сохраним лес. В ходе экокэкции в 46 регионах России высажено 7 млн деревьев	Argumenty i Fakty	13/09/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/society/ecology/sohranim_les_v_hode_ekoakcii_v_46_regionah_rossii_vysazhenno_7 mln_derevev">https://aif.ru/society/ecology/sohranim_les_v_hode_ekoakcii_v_46_regionah_rossii_vysazhenno_7 mln_derevev</a>	News report
Борьба с пожарами. Регионам выделяют по 8 млрд рублей на лесоохрану	Argumenty i Fakty	13/09/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/society/ecology/borba_s_pozharami_regionam_vydelyat_po_8_mld_rublej_na_lesoohranu">https://aif.ru/society/ecology/borba_s_pozharami_regionam_vydelyat_po_8_mld_rublej_na_lesoohranu</a>	News report
Путин прокомментировал ситуацию с пожарами в России	Argumenty i Fakty	21/07/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/incidents/putin_prokomentiroval_situatsiyu_s_pozharami_v_rossii">https://aif.ru/incidents/putin_prokomentiroval_situatsiyu_s_pozharami_v_rossii</a>	News report
Николай Николаев: «Экология сегодня больше похожа на религию, чем на науку»	Argumenty i Fakty	02/08/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/society/ecology/nikolay_nikolaev_ekologiya_segodnya_bolshe_pohozha_na_religiyu_chem_na_nauku">https://aif.ru/society/ecology/nikolay_nikolaev_ekologiya_segodnya_bolshe_pohozha_na_religiyu_chem_na_nauku</a>	News report
Лес и чистый воздух. К 2030 году выбросы в атмосферу Красноярска сократятся	Argumenty i Fakty	01/07/2021	<a href="https://krsk.aif.ru/money/les_i_chistyy_vozduh_k_2030_godu_vybrosy_v_atmosfera_krasnoyarska_sokratyatsya?ysclid=la5mjl5ih4499750633">https://krsk.aif.ru/money/les_i_chistyy_vozduh_k_2030_godu_vybrosy_v_atmosfera_krasnoyarska_sokratyatsya?ysclid=la5mjl5ih4499750633</a>	News report
Якутия не «электоральная аномалия». Эксперт об итогах выборов в регионе	Argumenty i Fakty	22/09/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/politics/russia/yakutiya_ne_elektoralnaya_anomaliya_ekspert_ob_itoгах_vyborov_v_regiоне">https://aif.ru/politics/russia/yakutiya_ne_elektoralnaya_anomaliya_ekspert_ob_itoгах_vyborov_v_regiоне</a>	News report
Карелия направила дополнительные силы для тушения пожаров в Якутии	Argumenty i Fakty	08/08/2021	<a href="https://karel.aif.ru/society/details/kareliya_napravila_dopolnitelnye_sily_dlya_tusheniya_pozharov_v_yakutii?ysclid=la5mxhleuk392699275">https://karel.aif.ru/society/details/kareliya_napravila_dopolnitelnye_sily_dlya_tusheniya_pozharov_v_yakutii?ysclid=la5mxhleuk392699275</a>	News report
Искусственные осадки. В нацпарке Якутии пожары тушат необычным способом	Argumenty i Fakty	14/07/2021	<a href="https://aif.ru/society/ecology/iskusstvennye_osadki_v_nacparke_yakutii_pozhary_tushat_neobychnym_sposobom">https://aif.ru/society/ecology/iskusstvennye_osadki_v_nacparke_yakutii_pozhary_tushat_neobychnym_sposobom</a>	News report
Владимир Путин посетит Челябинскую область 6 августа	Argumenty i Fakty	05/08/2021	<a href="https://chel.aif.ru/society/vladimir_putin_posetit_chelyabinskuyu_oblast_6_avgusta?ysclid=la5o5x5bwn638335804">https://chel.aif.ru/society/vladimir_putin_posetit_chelyabinskuyu_oblast_6_avgusta?ysclid=la5o5x5bwn638335804</a>	News report
В Магнитогорске Владимир Путин начал совещание о ситуации с пожарами	Argumenty i Fakty	06/08/2021	<a href="https://chel.aif.ru/society/v_magnitogorske_vladimir_putin_nachal_soveshchanie_o_situatsii_s_pozharami">https://chel.aif.ru/society/v_magnitogorske_vladimir_putin_nachal_soveshchanie_o_situatsii_s_pozharami</a>	News report
Артур Парфенчиков запросил помощь у МЧС России в борьбе с лесными пожарами	Argumenty i Fakty	19/07/2021	<a href="https://karel.aif.ru/society/details/artur_parfenchikov_zaprosil_pomoshch_u_mchs_rossii_v_borbe_s_lesnymi_pozharami">https://karel.aif.ru/society/details/artur_parfenchikov_zaprosil_pomoshch_u_mchs_rossii_v_borbe_s_lesnymi_pozharami</a>	News report
Иркутский губернатор Кобзев доложил президенту РФ о ситуации с лесными пожарами	Новые Известия	07/08/2021	<a href="https://newizv.ru/news/society/07-08-2021/irkutskiy-gubernator-kobzev-dolozhil-prezidentu-rf-o-situatsii-s-lesnymi-pozharami">https://newizv.ru/news/society/07-08-2021/irkutskiy-gubernator-kobzev-dolozhil-prezidentu-rf-o-situatsii-s-lesnymi-pozharami</a>	News report
Ни денег, ни людей, ни техники: леса у нас сгорают не только из-за погоды	Новые известия	12/08/2021	<a href="https://newizv.ru/news/politics/12-08-2021/ni-deneg-ni-lyudey-ni-tehniki-lesa-u-nas-sgorayut-ne-tolko-iz-za-pogody">https://newizv.ru/news/politics/12-08-2021/ni-deneg-ni-lyudey-ni-tehniki-lesa-u-nas-sgorayut-ne-tolko-iz-za-pogody</a>	News report

Путин дал челябинскому губернатору поручения в связи с пожарами на юге области	Chelyabinsk-news.net	10/07/2021	<a href="https://eanews.ru/news/putin-dal-chelyabinskomu-gubernatoru-porucheniya-v-svyazi-s-pozharami-na-yuge-oblasti_10-07-2021">https://eanews.ru/news/putin-dal-chelyabinskomu-gubernatoru-porucheniya-v-svyazi-s-pozharami-na-yuge-oblasti_10-07-2021</a>	News report
Путин прибыл в Челябинск	Chelyabinsk-news.net	06/08/2021	<a href="http://chelyabinsk-news.net/other/2021/08/06/313401.html">http://chelyabinsk-news.net/other/2021/08/06/313401.html</a>	News report
Сергей Шмидт: Шойгу и Кобзев объединят усилия в борьбе с пожарами	IrkutskMedia.ru	05/08/2021	<a href="https://irkutskmedia.ru/news/1141347/">https://irkutskmedia.ru/news/1141347/</a>	News report
На борьбу с пожарами Россия тратит миллиарды, а леса все равно горят	Комсомольская Правда	16/08/2021	<a href="https://www.kp.ru/daily/28317.5/4459860/">https://www.kp.ru/daily/28317.5/4459860/</a>	News report
Путин наградил тушивших пожары в Якутии медалями «За отвагу на пожаре». Элбаги Игитян награжден посмертно	NewsYkt	03/09/2021	<a href="https://news.ykt.ru/article/125971">https://news.ykt.ru/article/125971</a>	News report
Экспертный клуб Якутии - за то, что боролся с лесными пожарами, чем придется – виноват!	NewsYkt	10/09/2021	Access via integrum	News report
Глава Якутии — РБК: «Была серьезная битва за тайгу, как война»	NewsYkt	03/09/2021	<a href="https://news.ykt.ru/article/125996">https://news.ykt.ru/article/125996</a>	News report
Глава МЧС России Евгений Зиничев прибыл в Якутск	NewsYkt	12/08/2021	<a href="https://news.ykt.ru/article/124890">https://news.ykt.ru/article/124890</a>	News report
В Якутии 25 тысяч человек получили знак участника тушения лесных пожаров	NewsYkt	30/12/2021	<a href="https://news.ykt.ru/article/130341">https://news.ykt.ru/article/130341</a>	News report
ВИЖАЙ БЫЛ ОБРЕЧЕН?	Нижегородские новости	24/08/2010	Access via integrum	News report
В России хотят ужесточить наказание за уничтожение лесов	SachaMedia	24/10/2021	<a href="https://ysia.ru/v-rossii-mogut-uzhestochit-sanktsii-za-unichtozhenie-lesov/">https://ysia.ru/v-rossii-mogut-uzhestochit-sanktsii-za-unichtozhenie-lesov/</a>	News report
Игорь Кобзев принял участие в акции «Сохраним лес»	Irkutsk.news	08/09/2021	<a href="https://irkutsk.news/novosti/2021-09-08/280173-igor-kobzev-prinjal-uchastie-v-akcii-sohranim-les.html?amp=1">https://irkutsk.news/novosti/2021-09-08/280173-igor-kobzev-prinjal-uchastie-v-akcii-sohranim-les.html?amp=1</a>	News report
Путин направил главу МЧС в Якутию из-за лесных пожаров	Yakutia.info	12/08/2021	<a href="https://yakutia.info/article/200567">https://yakutia.info/article/200567</a>	News report
Путин поддержал предложения Николаева по борьбе с лесными пожарами	Yakutia.info	22/07/2021	<a href="https://yakutia.info/article/200276">https://yakutia.info/article/200276</a>	News report
2021 год — полный рекордсмен по пожарам	Greenpeace Russia	17/09/2021	<a href="https://greenpeace.ru/blogs/2021/09/17/2021-god-polnyj-rekordsmen-po-pozharam/">https://greenpeace.ru/blogs/2021/09/17/2021-god-polnyj-rekordsmen-po-pozharam/</a>	NGO-Report
Greenpeace предложил Правительству список	Greenpeace Russia	04/08/2021	<a href="https://greenpeace.ru/news/2021/08/04/greenpeace-predlozhit-pravitelstvu-spisok-">https://greenpeace.ru/news/2021/08/04/greenpeace-predlozhit-pravitelstvu-spisok-</a>	NGO-Report

мер по сокращению лесных пожаров в России			<a href="http://mer-po-sokrashheniju-lesnyh-pozharov-v-rossii/">mer-po-sokrashheniju-lesnyh-pozharov-v-rossii/</a>	
Совещание с членами Правительства	Kremlin	21/07/2021	<a href="http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66232">http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66232</a>	Government report
Совещание о ситуации с паводками и пожарами в регионах	Kremlin	06/08/2021	<a href="http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66335">http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66335</a>	Government report
Совещание о ликвидации последствий подтоплений и природных пожаров	Kremlin	14/08/2021	<a href="http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66381">http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66381</a>	Government report
Распоряжение № 3052-р: Стратегию социально-экономического развития Российской Федерации с низким уровнем выбросов парниковых газов до 2050 года	Government	29/10/2021	<a href="http://static.government.ru/media/files/ADKkCzp3fWO32e2yA0BhtIpyzWfHaiUa.pdf">http://static.government.ru/media/files/ADKkCzp3fWO32e2yA0BhtIpyzWfHaiUa.pdf</a>	Government decree



**Table 3**

<b>Category system</b>	<b>Coded segments</b>
1 Center and the regions	84
1.1 Federal organization	17
1.1.1 Ministry of Defence helps	7
1.2 Federal Power	29
1.3 Power vertical	29
1.4 Center believes in and praises the regional or local power	7
1.5 Regional action (and power)	12
1.5.1 Region rejects federal help	2
2 Performance	140
2.1 Purposeful neglect: no firefighting	6
2.2 Effectivity	18
2.3 Afforestation	11
2.4 Institutional response and reform efforts	42
2.5 Stabilization	17
2.6 Regions helplessness	11
2.7 Admitting Demand	26
2.8 Hand over responsibility	12
2.9 Ignorance of warnings	2
2.10 Funding needed	10
3 Communication	148
3.1 Reestablished normality	28
3.1.1 Optimism and promises	26
3.1.2 successfull reconstruction	4
3.2 Uncontrollable event	27
3.3 Call for action	23
3.4 Appeal to the population for assistance	9
3.5 Strong state	21

3.6 Regional call for help	6
3.7 (Threat of) punishment and scapegoating	20
3.8 Praise for the people and the volunteer effort	14
3.9 Showing / admitting weakness	17
3.9.1 Admitting mistakes (including resigning)	10
4 Means of aid	60
4.1 Reconstruction	11
4.2 Technical help	29
4.3 Financial aid	24
5 Timing	58
5.1 Late reaction and unpreparedness	23
5.2 Timely/rapid response	36
5.2.1 Preparation	13
6 Critic	102
6.1 False or no information	12
6.2 Organisational problems / coordination problems	19
6.3 Ignorance / No resignation	8
6.3.1 Not admitting mistakes	3
6.4 Call for - or change of personnel	9
6.5 Emergency services did not help	12
6.6 Center criticises the regions	12
6.7 Lack of resources and staff	27
6.8 center-addressed critic	18
7 Undefined	30
8 Personal involvement	36
8.1 President or prime minister	26

**Table 4 – Category catalogue**

<b>Main category</b>	
<b>1 Center and the regions</b>	
Content Description:	The political relationship between Russia's center and the regions and the distribution of power.
Application of the category:	Coded when power structures become visible that can be assigned to either the federal or the regional level or address the relationship between the levels or their dependence on each other.
<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>1.1 Federal organization</b>	The organizational site of the federal powers; the president or ministers advising or giving instructions. Federal actions and means that make a difference.
<b>1.1.1 Ministry of Defense helps</b>	Deployment or involvement of the Ministry of Defense; e.g. deployment of troops.
<b>1.2 Federal Power</b>	All situations and notions, where the federal power is being shown – ü or is ascribed to federal bodies.
<b>1.3 Power vertical</b>	Shifting responsibility to the federal executive, reporting to the president or prime minister; construct of political subordination.
<b>1.4 Center believes in and praises the regional or local power</b>	The political center showing its believe in the (competence of) regional authorities.
<b>1.5 Regional action (and power)</b>	Regional authorities being active and powerful forces in the disaster management.
<b>1.5.1 Region rejects federal help</b>	Regional officials who reject means of help by the federal level.

<b>Main category</b>	
<b>2 Performance</b>	
Content Description:	Characteristics of management performance of the state subdivided into different subcategories based on facts.
Application of the category:	Coded when the performance of the state is shown by various parameters.

<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>2.1 Purposeful neglect: no firefighting</b>	Including all reported means/situations, where no firefighting took place with the purposeful neglect of only securing houses and economically important (infra)structures or without any reason.
<b>2.2 Effectivity</b>	As effective identified and classified means of disaster management or the results of these.
<b>2.3 Afforestation</b>	Planned or conducted means of afforestation.
<b>2.4 Institutional response and reform efforts</b>	Identifies both: plans of forming new institutions relevant for disaster management and efforts to implement new reforms.
<b>2.5 Stabilization</b>	Perceived or measured stabilization during or after the disaster.
<b>2.6 Regions helplessness</b>	Regions showing or being attested a certain helplessness, such as no resources, organization or will to deal with the fires.
<b>2.7 Admitting Demand</b>	Identifies state actors which are admitting demand, such as demand for technical resources, reforms or financial help.
<b>2.8 Hand over responsibility</b>	A relinquishment of responsibility in connection with the disaster or its consequences.
<b>2.9 Ignorance of warnings</b>	Government, Politicians, and authorities ignoring warnings from science, society and experts.
<b>2.10 Funding needed</b>	Identifies obvious need for funding.

<b>Main category</b>	
<b>3 Communication</b>	
Content Description:	The official communication being used during or connected to the disaster.
Application of the category:	Coded when authorities, state officials or politicians make a statement or if the previous is described or mentioned as an observation. Segments that are meaningful and likely to tend to portray events in such a way that the actions of state actors appear in a positive light.
<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Definition</b>

<b>3.1 Reestablished normality</b>	The state seeking to promote and restore a state of normality and political stability.
<b>3.1.1 Optimism and promises</b>	Identifies official attempts to communicate a reestablished normality via optimism and promises.
<b>3.1.2 successful reconstruction</b>	Identifies official attempts to communicate a reestablished normality by promoting the picture of successful reconstruction.
<b>3.2 Uncontrollable event</b>	The disaster officially being described as beyond the control of state structures - shown by classifications as 'catastrophe' or 'anomalous heat' (anomalnaya zhara), including war-related rhetoric.
<b>3.3 Call for action</b>	The state or other actors calling for action (addresses; state or state-connected actors).
<b>3.4 Appeal to the population for assistance</b>	Identifies situations where authorities search for help in the population.
<b>3.5 Strong state</b>	Communication which promotes the image of a strong state in various regards.
<b>3.6 Regional call for help</b>	Regional authorities calling for help in the disaster management or firefight.
<b>3.7 (Threat of) punishment and scapegoating</b>	The state calling for punishment of arsonists, authorities or officials for setting fire or mis-managing the disaster.
<b>3.8 Praise for the people and the volunteer effort</b>	The state praising people and volunteers for efforts in the firefight or reconstruction.
<b>3.9 Showing / admitting weakness</b>	The state or the region showing or admitting a weak point or failures in its disaster management.
<b>3.9.1 Admitting mistakes (including resigning)</b>	The state or the region showing or admitting mistakes and/or officials who resign as a consequence.

<b>Main category</b>
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<b>4 Means of aid</b>	
Content Description:	Classifies different measures and assigns them to groups.
Application of the category:	Coded when reconstruction, financial or technical aid is identified.
<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>4.1 Reconstruction</b>	Identifies means of reconstruction being conducted.
<b>4.2 Technical help</b>	Use of technical means to help fight the fire or its consequences.
<b>4.3 Financial aid</b>	Financial aid provided - or planned to be provided - by the center or regions.

<b>Main category</b>	
<b>5 Timing</b>	
Content Description:	Analyzing the regime's reaction on the forest fires, applying temporal classification.
Application of the category:	Coded when data reveals a 'late reaction' or 'timely response'.
<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>5.1 Late reaction and unpreparedness</b>	Segments which objectively describe, show or prove a late reaction and unpreparedness of the authorities.
<b>5.2 Timely/rapid response</b>	Segments, which contain measures being taken in a timely manner - a rapid and appropriate reaction.
<b>5.2.1 Preparation</b>	Identifies measures of preparation, which can be attributed to a timely response.

<b>6 Critic</b>	
<b>Main category</b>	
Content Description:	Comprises both, the critic within the state-bodies/regime, (revealing insights e.g., about the strategy and internal measures taken by the regime) and critic coming from outside.
Application of the category:	Coded when critic is – directly or indirectly – addressed.
<b>Subcategories</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>6.1 False or no information</b>	Identifies false information or (the results of) no information provided by authorities.

<b>6.2 Organizational problems / coordination problems</b>	Identifies problems of coordination or organization during the disaster management.
<b>6.3 Ignorance / No resignation</b>	State officials which do not resign after critic or do not change the political course or the management.
<b>6.3.1 Not admitting mistakes</b>	Identifies state officials which are not admitting mistakes.
<b>6.4 Call for - or change of personnel</b>	Officials who are calling for or strongly advise a change of personnel or staff in the management system.
<b>6.5 Emergency services did not help</b>	Includes segments which identify non-activity of emergency services.
<b>6.6 Center criticizes the regions</b>	Critic addressed from the political center at the regional level.
<b>6.7 Lack of resources and staff</b>	Identified lack of financial or technical resources or personnel shortages.
<b>6.8 center-addressed critic</b>	Critic addressed at the political center.

<b>Main category</b>	
<b>7 Undefined</b>	
Content Description:	Information, which thematically do not match with a certain category but is expected to contribute to the results.
Application of the category:	Coded when segments cannot be assigned to other categories. E.g., the history of EMERCOM and armed forces, or a Governors advisor insulting on the population who complained about fire-smoke: "a whining pile of shit"(_).

<b>Main category</b>	
<b>8 Personal involvement</b>	

Content Description:	Main category: seeks to reveal the interference and participation from the highest political leaders (prime minister and president), but also other high ranked state officials.
Application of the category:	Comprises all situations/text passages, where the president, the prime minister or other high ranked state officials personally engage in the disaster response, or their personality is presented in a special light.
Subcategory	<b>Definition</b>
<b>8.1 President or prime minister</b>	Same as the main category, but exclusively for the state leaders Putin and Medvedev.