

Lightning Country Snapshot : Spain

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include your email if you wish



Spain 2025 wildfires: communication faltered

False narratives:

- Arson conspiracies overshadowed structural causes including climate change, rural abandonment, and prevention failures.
- Alleged use of fires to reclassify land for construction—false under Spain's *Ley de Montes*, which bans changing forest use for 30 years post-fire.
- False link of fires to the UN's 2030 Agenda to eliminate traditional livestock farming.

What didn't work:

- Disinformation amplified by political polarization, including claims rejecting climate science.
- Limited and reactive institutional counter-disinformation.
- Challenging coordination between central and regional governments.

Lessons learned:

- Pre-agreed protocols for coordination between political leaders are essential.

Success story: Spain's community-centred Mpox response

Authorities co-created and co-delivered health information with HIV/AIDS and LGBTQ+ civil society organisations (**CSOs**) representing affected communities; primarily gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men.

- ✓ **Non-stigmatising** language.
- ✓ **Trusted dissemination channels** (CSOs) with deep understanding of their communities.
- ✓ Explaining **ring vaccination**: targeting close contacts rather than mass immunization.

Despite good practices, **always something to learn**:

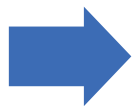
- Stigma was often reinforced by media.
- Reaching those with intersectional vulnerabilities (migrants, sex workers) remained difficult.
- CSOs require structural support.

Main actors responsible for communicating scientific evidence to the public during crises

- ✓ **Law 17/2015** establishes the **National Civil Protection System**: mandates emergency plans to include preventive information and alert programmes.
- ✓ **State General Emergency Plan** (PLEGEM) coordinates national and regional response. Deploys technological alert networks including ES-ALERT public warning system via mobile.
- ✓ **Guide on Preventive Information for the population in situations of risk and emergencies** (Ministry of Interior): advocates for two-way communication, audience research, and evidence-based message design.
- !! Intersectoral coordination protocols are to be developed.
- **National Strategy against Disinformation**: under development.
- **Action Plan to combat Climate Misinformation**: under development.

Take away messages

BEFORE (preparedness)



DURING (response)



AFTER (recovery & learning)

- ✓ Agree cross-institutional protocols.
- ✓ Map communication channels.
- ✓ Social partnerships (CSOs).
- ✓ Myth library for early pre-bunking.

- ✓ One joint brief per day; single, science-based.
- ✓ ES-ALERT with clear, actionable instructions.
- ✓ Public oriented messaging.
- ✓ Pre-bunk and rapid rebuttal.

- ✓ Sustain CSO partnerships.
- ✓ Tracking & evaluation: reach, comprehension, behaviour change.
- ✓ Publish “myths vs facts” audit and next steps.
- ✓ Update protocols & strategies.



Thank you