

## Heat wave, drought, wildfires in Russia (Summer 2010)

### MR Touch Natural hazards – Event report

Geo Risks Research, NatCatSERVICE



Photo: Munich Re

**Type of event:** Heat wave, drought, wildfire  
**Date:** July – Sept. 2010

**Region affected:**  
 Russia (esp. Moscow region)

**Overall losses:**  
 US\$ 3,600m (wildfires, drought)\*

**Insured losses:**  
 US\$ 20m (wildfires)\*

**Fatalities:**  
 56,000 (excess mortality rate)

\* Original losses

**From July to September 2010, Moscow and central parts of Russia were firmly locked in the grasp of an unprecedented heat wave. Extreme dryness led to the outbreak of numerous wildfires which cloaked parts of the country in toxic smoke.**

#### Event report

The Russian summer of 2010 will go down in history as the hottest to date. In July and August, meteorologists measured the highest temperatures ever since records first began some 130 years ago. The extreme dryness which was associated with the heat also promoted the outbreak of fires. Almost all the fires in more densely populated areas were caused by people.

#### Losses and fatalities

All in all, the 30,376 fires including 1,162 peat fires, claimed 130 lives. As many as 147 settlements were partly or completely destroyed. Flames ravaged 1.25 million hectares of land including 2,092 hectares of peat moor. Firefighting efforts are estimated to have cost the Russian government 19 billion roubles (US\$ 630m).

The long heat wave, extreme dryness and smog caused considerable health problems. Moscow's inhabitants suffered under a dense cloud of smoke which enveloped the city. In addition to toxic gases, it also contained considerable amounts of particulate matter. Mortality increased significantly: the number of deaths in July and August was 56,000 higher than in the same months in 2009.

#### Summary of losses

Lack of rain, temperatures up to 45°C. Worst drought in 130 years. Toxic smog, esp. in Moscow. 2,500 homes burnt. Severe losses to agriculture, forestry and infrastructure.