

Second Review — Referee #1

The authors have provided detailed and careful responses to all points raised in the first review. The revisions are thorough, and I observe more clarity in the revised manuscript. The addition of burned area climatology (Figure 1b), the new composite analysis section (Section 2.2.6), the sensitivity tests across multiple FWI percentiles (Figures D1–D5) all strengthen the study. I am satisfied that most of my concerns have been adequately addressed.

I recommend accepting the manuscript subject to two minor residual clarifications as below.

Comment 1 (original Point 3)

The authors acknowledge that the proxy combination overestimates the Europe-wide average FWI95d trend by ~17%. Is this a single domain-wide number? Given the large climatological differences between the Mediterranean and northern Europe, this overestimation is unlikely to be spatially uniform. I ask the authors to add one or two sentences in the discussion clarifying whether this bias is broadly uniform or concentrated in specific regions.

Comment 2 (original Point 4)

The composite analysis and VPD-FWI spatial correlation (~0.85) are compelling, and Section 2.2.6 is a valuable addition. However, the northward expansion signal is reported at the ensemble median level, and it is unclear whether individual model chains agree on this shift. The authors may add a brief statement on confidence. According to me, this is necessary because this statement is an important claim the manuscript makes.

Final Recommendation

The manuscript is well-revised and makes a meaningful contribution to the fire–climate literature. The two residual comments above are minor and do not affect the main conclusions. I recommend acceptance upon incorporation of these minor clarifications.