



Mr. Jean-Claude Juncker

President of the European Commission
European Commission
CHARL 9/234
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 10 July 2017

Dear Mr. Juncker,

The Grenfell Tower fire in London on June 14 has shown the need for political leadership at national and EU level to keep citizens safe when fire breaks out.

There are two particular areas of fire safety for which Fire Safe Europe has, since 2011, called for the European Commission to act. There must be no further delay.

1. Urgently change the approach to façade testing

It is widely accepted that the material and structure of the facade in Grenfell Tower enabled the fire to spread rapidly. Fire Safe Europe has called on the European Commission to develop a harmonised and rigorous performance based testing method for all facade systems. Unfortunately, DG GROW is steering towards an approach that will not guarantee an adequate level of fire safety. It is logical that tests to evaluate the performance of facades in a fire are based on real-life situations where fires can be large scale. However, the facade tests that DG GROW considers applying across the EU do not meet this fundamental condition. Instead, EU citizens could end up with a “wait and see” approach to find out if a facade that is fire-tested in a lab will react the same in a real fire. We urge the European Commission to reconsider its view and to mandate CEN to develop of one harmonised test that prioritises the examination of the large-scale reality of many building fires.

2. Create harmonized classification of the smoke toxicity of construction products

Smoke is the biggest killer in fires accounting for more than half of all fire-related deaths. Yet smoke toxicity of construction products is not tested. The Construction Products Regulation review is currently taking place and a study has been launched by DG GROW to assess the need to regulate for smoke toxicity. The preliminary findings seem to infer that no requirements are necessary. Not to mandate legislation puts the safety of EU citizens at risk. But it is not too late. Legal requirements can still be introduced by the European Commission for testing the toxic smoke produced by construction products in a fire and then labelling those products with their results.

This is the time for decisive action on fire safety. We call on the European Commission, under your leadership, to seize this opportunity to be of valuable service to EU citizens. The devastation of Grenfell leaves no other choice.

We are at your disposal to discuss further.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Mark Leverton".

Mark Leverton

President of Fire Safe Europe

Fire Safe Europe (FSEU) is a broad and unique cross-sectorial alliance of fire experts, fire fighters, European associations, and international companies, including construction manufacturers and material suppliers of insulation, cable, concrete, ceiling, and fire protection equipment. FSEU's mission is to improve fire safety in buildings for European citizens.