

## EUROPE MUST TACKLE FATAL FIRE SAFETY FLAWS

*4,000 people are killed every year by fire says new White Paper*

**Brussels, 2 December:** More than 4,000 people are killed by fire every year in Europe and improved EU-wide building fire safety regulations are urgently needed to save lives, says Fire Safe Europe (FSEU) in a White Paper launched today.

The paper was launched to coincide with meetings between Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and fire fighters from the European Fire Fighters Unions Alliance (EFFUA) who are campaigning to improve fire safety in buildings for European citizens.

“These days it seems we are fighting buildings on fire not fires in buildings,” said Mikael Svanberg of the EFFUA, a fire officer with 25 years of experience. “Fires are now more unpredictable, bigger and more dangerous while buildings are more complicated and modern construction materials are not necessarily fire safe. I no longer know what to expect when I’m called to a fire and I’m taking more risks.”

Czech Republic MEP Pavel Poc said: “We urgently need to take action to save lives. We spend 90% of our time in buildings – homes, offices and schools – and this is where 90% of fires occur. The loss of 4,000 lives every year is unacceptable but in addition to these tragedies nearly 200 people every day are hospitalised due to smoke and fire while the risks facing our fire fighters continue to escalate.”

The FSEU White Paper launched today highlights how existing fire-related building standards and construction regulations across the EU are out-dated and a patchwork of inconsistent regulations, particularly in public buildings such as hospitals and schools.

For example, in Germany the distance to a school fire exit is 10 metres compared to 60 metres in Italy.

German MEP Jens Gieseke said: “Any loss of life resulting from out-dated regulations is not acceptable. Therefore, I absolutely support the harmonisation and upgrade of fire safety regulations for buildings at EU level. As the situation in some Member States showed, there is an enormous potential to improve safety standards EU wide. Joint action needs to be taken to use this potential and to ensure that the highest standards are achieved in all EU countries.”

Earlier this year 78 European Parliamentarians standing for election in 2014 pledged their support to put building fire safety at the heart of the EU’s political agenda.

“Today we call on all Members of the European Parliament to work for fire safety in buildings,” said FSEU President Barry Lynham. “In the 1950s it would take around 15 minutes for a full blaze to take hold, but today a big fire can be out of control in under three minutes.”

“Now more than ever it’s time for the European Parliament to wake up to the threat of fire in our buildings.”

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### **About EFFUA**

The European Fire Fighters Unions Alliance (EFFUA) is an international alliance of independent trade unions representing fire fighters which includes unions solely representing fire fighters and those representing a wider range of occupations, but including fire fighters.

More information on EFFUA can be found on: [www.fffua.org](http://www.fffua.org)

### **About Fire Safe Europe**

Fire Safe Europe is a broad and unique alliance of fire experts, fire fighters, international companies and European associations. It is a cross sectorial organisation of fire experts, construction sector manufacturers and material suppliers such as insulation, cable, concrete, ceiling and fire protection equipment.

More information on Fire Safe Europe can be found on: [www.firesafeeurope.eu](http://www.firesafeeurope.eu)

Fire Safe Europe's call to action on fire safety in buildings can be found on:  
[www.firesafeeurope.eu](http://www.firesafeeurope.eu)

### **About the Campaign Fire Safety First**

#### **FIRE SAFETY FIRST**

This call to action is part of FireSafetyFirst is a European campaign, which aims to improve fire safety in buildings for European citizens.

Our Vision - to have a fire safe Europe.

Our Mission - to improve fire safety in buildings for European citizens.

More information on the campaign can be found on:  
[www.firesafetyfirst.eu](http://www.firesafetyfirst.eu) and [www.facebook.com/firesafetyfirst](https://www.facebook.com/firesafetyfirst)