

European Commission proposes two approaches to assess the fire performance of building facades

Brussels, September 24, 2018: The European Commission' [report](#) of the study on the development of a European approach to assess the fire performance of building facades published in early September proposes:

- A “main” approach consisting in the adoption of a British test (BS8414) and a German test (DIN 4102 part 20)
- An “alternative” approach which offers strong improvements to the British and German test methods.

Whilst we commend the European Commission for undertaking this crucial work, the “main” approach proposed in the report **will not guarantee a good level of fire safety**. Indeed, the two tests proposed (BS8414 and DIN 4120-20) are both highly contested:

- Throughout the Grenfell independent review and public enquiry, the British test BS8414 has been [criticized](#) for not sufficiently fulfilling the purpose of giving guidance on fire safety of facades. Due to the [criticism](#) of the test, the British Standards Institution (BSI) has agreed to start a revision process of BS 8414.
- In Germany, the test DIN 4102 part 20 has been supplemented with an additional test method, as the authorities concluded through a detailed analysis of a large number of façade fires that it does not sufficiently represent the risks associated with an external fire.

The key argument supporting the “main” approach seems to be that existing test data would be kept for the countries which are already using the British and German methods (only four countries out of 28), though only 55 tests are available on the BRE [website](#) for the British method.

The argument of historical data should not be an essential condition for the development of the European approach to assess the fire performance of facades – guaranteeing a good level of fire safety should be the priority.

In contrast, the “alternative” approach offers key improvements such as: a better assessment of fire spread of both large and medium fire exposure test, and greater knowledge on façade testing. This approach also proposes only one test for a specific façade which leads to a simpler and clearer classification system that can be used across EU.

Juliette Albiac, managing director of Fire Safe Europe (FSEU) says “Having an approach to assess the fire performance of facades which reflects real-life fire scenarios is crucial to ensure the fire safety of our buildings. In order to have a sufficient level of fire safety, the “alternative” approach should be taken forward.”



Press Release

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About 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. FSEU's mission is to improve fire safety in buildings for European citizens. Together with our partners, we believe it is time for the EU to act on fire safety in buildings.

[Read our call to action for a Fire Safety Strategy!](#)