



PRESS RELEASE

No comparable data and limited cooperation on fire safety: EU Member States meet for the first time to learn from each other

Brussels, November 29th 2016: Government officials from across Europe met for the first time to discuss common approaches to tackling fire safety. The **unprecedented roundtable** was organised by the Fire Prevention Department of the Slovak Ministry of Interior, with the support of the Slovak Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Fifteen **Member States attended the meeting**, and the European Commission DG GROW was also at the table.

Birgitte Messerschmidt, Chair of the Technical Task Force of Fire Safe Europe, was invited to present the results of a questionnaire on fire safety. This questionnaire was filled by Member States representatives prior to the meeting, and highlighted some interesting facts.

“Most countries are working together with neighbouring countries who have shared cultural interests and building traditions, but fire is the same across Europe and we could be sharing more experiences with other countries”, remarked Birgitte Messerschmidt, Chair of the Technical Task Force of Fire Safe Europe.

The very definition of a fire injury or fire death varies greatly across Europe, some being quite specific, while some Member States do not have any legal definition of those terms. Definitions have an impact on how the number of fire injuries and fire deaths per year is calculated, which means that Member States do not have comparable data. The trends show that most EU Member States saw no major improvement, however, there are exceptions: Estonia has achieved a massive decrease in the number of deaths from building fires by implementing a new fire prevention strategy. Improvements in terms of Fire Safety are crucial, especially since the questionnaire showed that the economic cost of fires can amount to hundreds of million euros.

Yet there is currently no coordinated EU wide approach, despite the fact that almost a third of the European Commission’s DGs manage legislation or responsibilities that affect directly fire safety.

This meeting showed that Member States want to learn from each other, discuss issues and best practices, and cooperate. “This was the first step towards the EU working together on fire safety. We want to see this initiative go further in 2017, hopefully going towards the development of an EU Fire Safety Strategy” said Juliette Albiac, Managing Director of Fire Safe Europe.

Fire Safe Europe recently launched a case for an EU fire safety strategy, signed by a strong coalition of firefighters, engineers, universities and industry associations. An EU Fire Safety Strategy could be based on collecting comparable data, sharing best practices, and setting a vision for fire safety in buildings. You can discover the full campaign [here](#)

About Fire Safe Europe

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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.