



Raising the Profile of Fire Safety in Buildings



WHY THIS INITIATIVE?



WHY THIS INITIATIVE?

The aim of Fire Safe Europe is to raise the profile of fire safety in buildings, especially with policy makers and regulators, at both the European and National levels.

The built environment around us is changing, with new materials and modern technologies bringing a fundamental shift in how new buildings get designed and built, while massive renovation programmes are taking place in older buildings, as part of much needed efforts to conserve energy and lower our carbon footprint. We should use these renovations to **improve fire safety as well as improving the energy efficiency of Europe's building stock.**

The fire load in buildings is going up and with it the risk of big fires. The time it takes for a small fire to accelerate and become a major hazard is reducing, and without adequate and comprehensive fire protection systems built in, the rapid spread of flames and toxic smoke well beyond the point of origin and **cuts the time available for the occupants to make a safe exit**, thereby putting their lives at risk. This also creates a much bigger and more dangerous problem for the fire fighters to tackle when they get to the scene.

Yet improving fire safety seems not to be a priority on the agenda of policymakers across Europe, despite evidence, both from within and beyond Europe's borders, that misapplied and poorly controlled regulations combined with poorly supervised maintenance and installation practices are already causing fatalities and leaving massive destruction in their wake.

Unfortunately **history shows that the risk of fire is often underestimated, or traded off for short term cost savings.** Only after a major fire are resources deployed at a national level to look at what went wrong and changes made to reduce the risk of re-occurrence.

Fire injures 45,000 European citizens each year and fire related costs are estimated at around 1% of Europe's GDP. The longer term economics of improving fire safety make a strong case for priority action now, to upgrade and harmonize fire protection standards and encourage best practices are in place in each and every EU Member State, rather than waiting till disaster strikes and we reap the consequences.

We believe a **sustained effort will be needed at the political level** to ensure that fire safety in buildings gets the attention it deserves.

WHAT ARE OUR AIMS?



WHAT ARE OUR AIMS?

explore
develop
demonstrate
encourage

➔ To actively **explore, develop, demonstrate** and **encourage** the use of measures which will provide greater protection against fire and its consequences in all large buildings where many people are at risk, including schools, offices, factories, shopping malls, entertainment complexes, sports halls, hotels, storage facilities, hospitals, nursing & retirement homes, and multi-storey residential buildings.

➔ To **provide studies & research**, gather and communicate statistical data, develop **best practice guidelines** and sponsor awareness campaigns.

➔ To work closely with front line **fire fighters** and bring their firsthand experience to bear in shaping future policy.

➔ To **promote awareness** and **ensure policy makers** and other **key decision makers** are well informed about fire safety, both in governmental and non-governmental organisations.

➔ To develop a **broad network of specialists** to support the achievement of these goals at a national, regional and European level.

➔ To **build a reputation** with policy makers and key decision makers as a reliable source of objective and informed advice on fire safety and help bring an integrated approach to fire safe engineering practices.

SOME OF THE ISSUES TO BE TACKLED



THE FIRE PROTECTION INDUSTRY NEEDS TO COME TOGETHER AND SPEAK TO POLICY MAKERS AND LEGISLATORS WITH ONE AUTHORITATIVE VOICE.

Some of the issues to be tackled

The inconsistent application or misinterpretation of regulations needs to be better policed.

The quality of installation and maintenance of both active and passive fire protection systems can often be the weak link which compromises fire safety, despite the use of otherwise sound components. Greater use of third party certification for installation & maintenance work needs to be addressed.

More attention needs to be given to fire safety in buildings under construction, or undergoing renovation, as well as at the end of life phase.

The use of inappropriate standards, based on **test methods which don't reflect the reality of large fires,** resulting in failure to provide full protection in the event of a really big fire, needs to be reviewed and better standards put in place.

Ill considered trade-offs between active and passive fire safety systems should be discouraged where they would undermine the overall level of protection for the occupants of the buildings. **The application of sound fire safe engineering practice should be applied** to ensure that both approaches are integrated in a complimentary way for an optimal level of fire protection in situ.

Though the number of fires has not been increasing, their size and seriousness has, with enormous economic consequences for society, in addition to the evident impact on the health and safety of Europe's citizens and on the environment at large.

A statistical base should be established to help collect and analyse data from all EU Member States so that we can make better informed policy decisions in the future.

Information campaigns targeting Europe's citizens should be encouraged to raise awareness of the consequences of fire and to provide them with good practice guidelines for their personal safety. Campaigns along similar lines for road safety have been shown to give positive results.

HOW'S THE ALLIANCE STRUCTURED?



HOW'S THE ALLIANCE STRUCTURED?

Board Members will represent leading multinational companies who have a major interest in improving fire safety in buildings.

Associate members will represent smaller companies or associations, often with a national remit.

A Technical Task Force made up of experts from the member companies will monitor, collect and analyse data, statistics and trends from the fire safety sector, including technological innovation, so that our advocacy is based on sound science and best practice at all times.

An advisory group drawn directly from professional fire fighters and their organisations will provide real life learning and expertise for us to communicate to the policy makers on a regular basis as part of raising the awareness needed to support informed decision making.

An advisory group drawn from academic institutes and universities will provide a forum for the exchange of ideas on state of the art developments in fire safety engineering and fire safety science as well as giving us the ability to closely monitor research projects in support of our objectives.

A Communications Task Force made up of public affairs and communications professionals from the member companies will create documentation and/or use alternative communications media, to ensure that Fire Safe Europe's messages reach the right audiences effectively and efficiently. They will also develop our website as an easily accessible and up to date source of information and news on fire safety from around the globe.





As an organisation which wishes to be inclusive rather than exclusive, we will be looking to partner with other groups sharing the same longer term objectives as we do, either in one-off initiatives or on an ongoing basis over time.

Fire Safe Europe

Rond Point Schuman 6, box 5
1040 Brussels

Tel.: **+32 (0)2 234 77 03**

Mobile: **+32 (0)475 940 169**

Fax: **+32 (0)2 234 79 11**

e-mail: **info@firesafeeurope.eu**