



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

June 2007 Report

In June the European Fire Sprinkler Network held its second technical committee meeting and also held a Council meeting, where a new Chairman, Michel Walhof, was elected. Glasgow City Council held a well-attended seminar to promote sprinklers in homes and appealed to house-builders only to submit plans which include sprinklers. We were also active in Brussels, France, Germany and Hungary.

EFSN Technical Committee

The second technical committee meeting was held in Paris. The meeting was well-attended with 18 participants. Since the first meeting we have made progress with recognition on standards-writing committees. Among other actions the committee approved a draft report on care homes and will collect data to make an economic case for fitting sprinklers in warehouses. The committee will also collect information on backflow prevention. Widely differing interpretations of the European standard for backflow prevention mean that in some countries, such as Germany, it is impossible to connect a sprinkler system to the mains water supply. A pump and tank considerably increase system costs, especially for smaller systems, making sprinkler systems less attractive.

Council Meeting

At a meeting in Cologne the Council elected Michel Walhof, the owner of the Dutch sprinkler contractor Aqua+, as its new Chairman. Simon Quillish, the Managing Director of the British sprinkler contractor Hall & Kay, was elected Vice-Chairman and John Viniello, the Managing Director of the International Fire Sprinkler Association, was re-elected Treasurer. The Council formed a long-range planning committee to assist with strategic direction of the EFSN.

Brussels

Bernadette met the MEP who has introduced us to people involved with OSHA. She also met the OSHA representative in Brussels and we have been invited to go to OSHA headquarters in Bilbao, Spain. Our aim is to see fire safety incorporated in the health & safety at work legislative programme and to see a major role for sprinklers in the process. Bernadette also held a meeting of the EU Sprinkler Forum where tactics were agreed. In the new session in the autumn we will focus on certain committees in the European Parliament.

Hungary

Through Edit Herczog MEP, Bernadette Hartley arranged a meeting with officials from the Hungarian National Directorate General for Disaster Management in Budapest. The officials were sympathetic to sprinklers as a means to improve fire safety and Hungary already has several requirements for sprinklers in its fire safety building code. However, the fire safety building code is not regularly updated and at present there is no political interest in doing so. We will work with Edit to raise the political profile of fire safety. Hungarian fire deaths and injuries are much higher than those for western European countries at about 150 per annum in a population of about 10 million.

German Copper Association Press Conference

I gave a presentation on the benefits of sprinkler systems in houses and apartments at a press conference organised by the German Copper Association. A number of German companies which install other services in housing are interested in offering sprinklers.

Glasgow Fire-Safe City Campaign

In June a seminar was held in Glasgow, supported by the City Council and Strathclyde Fire & Rescue Service, to promote sprinklers to house-builders. A DVD of the parallel burn test held a few weeks before was screened and copies given to each attendee. The EFSN is acknowledged on the DVD. One house-builder gave a presentation to explain why he fits sprinklers in houses. The Deputy Leader of the City Council, Jim Coleman, said that the City Council wanted to see sprinklers in designs submitted for planning approval. The pressure is clearly on the house-builders but Jim Coleman said that he was prepared to consider planning relaxations if sprinklers are fitted, helping to make sprinklers economically attractive to house-builders. Letters and DVDs have been sent to those who did not attend

Fire service representatives from other British cities attended this event, and London is planning a sprinkler seminar at City Hall on 7th November. Bernadette and I are involved in planning this event. In addition a representative from the Swedish Fire & Rescue Service attended, and our new EFSN Council Chairman, Michel Walhof, came over from The Netherlands.

SFPE French Chapter

I participated at an event organised by the French Chapter of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers and met several new and influential people in the French fire safety community.

Next Steps for Alan and Bernadette

- 1) Alan to participate in review of DD9999 at BSI.
- 2) Bernadette to meet Czech officials in Prague.
- 3) Alan to participate in committee writing design standard for sprinkler systems in schools.