



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

June 2008 Report

On 24-25th June the EFSN co-hosted an international sprinkler conference in Copenhagen. This event was a great success and I have received many positive comments. The next conference will be solely hosted by the EFSN and will be in Amsterdam in 2010. Before the Copenhagen conference the EFSN Council met and decided I should find someone, probably a former fire officer, to work in France to persuade the fire service of the benefits of sprinklers and win its support for their wider use. At the IFSA Board meeting I requested \$150,000 to assist with the funding of the EFSN, in particular of this initiative. The request was granted.

Copenhagen Conference

In June the EFSN and IFSA co-hosted a two day conference in Copenhagen. Over 270 delegates attended and many commented that the speaker programme was the best ever. The event gave a great boost to the sprinkler cause, diffused a huge amount of information to key people and was an excellent networking opportunity. The next conference will be in late spring in Amsterdam in 2010 and will be hosted solely by the EFSN. Separately, the IFSA may host a conference at another time of year on another continent.

Council Meeting

At the EFSN Council meeting the Council asked me to recruit someone on a part-time basis, probably two days per week, to win over the hearts and minds of the French fire service to become supportive of sprinklers. I was also asked to see if the demonstration unit with the Cologne fire brigade, which was built for Interschutz in 2005, is still serviceable and available for demonstrations in France. The Council formed a conference committee which decided that the next conference should be in Amsterdam in 2010. Meanwhile as part of the campaign in France we would hold annual conferences in France, in the French language.

IFSA Board Meeting

At the IFSA board meeting I requested \$150,000 to fund the proposed campaign in France. The IFSA board agreed to this grant. That leaves the IFSA with significant funds to support initiatives in other parts of the world, if it should choose to do so.

Technical Committee Meeting

The EFSN Technical Committee met in Copenhagen. The 21 participants covered a wide range of topics. The EFSN is now represented on a number of CEN committees, as well as the Nordic Residential Sprinkler Committee and NFPA 3, the new NFPA

committee drafting a standard for the testing and commissioning of fire protection systems. The minutes were circulated to all EFSN members.

European Parliament

In Brussels I met some more Members of the European Parliament. We decided to re-launch the EU Sprinkler Forum, initially set up by Bernadette Hartley, with an evening reception on Wednesday, 17th September. This will be followed up by a seminar, provisionally scheduled for the morning of Thursday, 11th December.

One of the MEPs I met was Arlene McCarthy, who chairs the Internal Market and Consumer Affairs Committee within the European Parliament. Following our meeting she decided to organise a workshop on 3 July on hotel fire safety. I was invited to speak at this workshop. She also invited a number of other speakers and attendees whom I recommended and who are sympathetic to sprinklers. We will call for a Directive on hotel fire safety, since voluntary measures have failed to have an impact.

Online Training

In June I did a practice run of an online training seminar. Paying participants in these seminars can log onto the IFSA web site, hosted by the NFSA, and see a presentation. They then hear the presenter explain the slides while he talks into a landline telephone. If they have a question they can send an email which arrives as a popup on the presenter's computer. The seminar finishes with a quiz. The practice run was successful and we plan to offer a range of seven courses, each starting at 15:00 Central European Time and lasting for 90 minutes, as follows:

Introduction to sprinklers	8 th September
Sprinkler System Hydraulics	13 th October
Commodity Classification	10 th November
General Storage	8 th December
ESFR	12 th January 2009
Earthquake	9 th February 2009
High-Rise	9 th March 2009

Jim Knight MP

I had dinner with Jim Knight MP, the British Schools Minister. He was positive about the impact of his new policy on the fitting of sprinklers in schools and gave some advice on how to make progress in other areas. As a result together with BAFSA I have arranged a meeting on 31 July with Nick Raynsford MP, who is a former Fire Minister and who is currently the Chairman of the Fire Protection Association. He would be able to contact MPs on our behalf to make the case for sprinklers.

SFPE French Chapter

At a meeting in Paris we agreed measures to rejuvenate the web site and arrange an active programme of seminars. SFPE members have excellent contacts within the French fire safety community and can help advance the cause of sprinklers in France.

VBBB

I gave a presentation on sprinklers for life safety at annual conference of the Verband der Deutschen Brandschutz Beauftragten (Association of German Fire Protection Managers). The event was held in Fulda, 100km northeast of Frankfurt. Over 100 delegates attended, most of whom were responsible for fire protection within medium and large companies.

BS 9999

At the final working group meeting we went through the remaining comments. This standard will now be put to a full BSI committee vote on 10 July and is expected to be published in October. I persuaded David Smith, the Chairman of the BS 9999 committee, to give a presentation on this new standard at the Copenhagen conference.

Water UK

At a meeting with Water UK in London, the sprinkler industry learned that the 26 water companies have widely differing policies towards domestic and residential sprinklers. Some make it very hard to connect these sprinkler systems to the mains, while others make it relatively easy, providing guidance with isometric drawings showing acceptable piping schemes and explaining the approval process. We will continue to negotiate with the industry towards acceptance of these sprinkler systems. The objections raised, in no particular order, were:

- Water may be stolen if the mains connection were upstream of the water meter (pressure losses can be significant through 1" water meters)
- Water meters must be upstream of the home to prevent theft (this would mean two pipes to the mains if the sprinkler connection is to be upstream of the meter)
- If the water pressure fell the sprinkler system may not work and the water company may be held to blame
- Testing the sprinkler system could reduce mains pressure and affect water supply to other households
- A pump on the sprinkler system could cause a vacuum in the mains and lead to pollution being drawn into the pipe

Fortunately, not all the companies shared these concerns and at the meeting they disagreed with each other.

Next Steps

- 1) Participate in European Parliament hotel fire safety workshop.
- 2) Meet Jeannette van Dongen of the European Trade Union Confederation.
- 3) Meet London Fire Brigade to discuss fire safety advice on care homes.
- 4) Meet President of French Burns Victims' Association.
- 5) Visit colleagues in France to discuss recruitment of a French representative.
- 6) Meet Nick Raynsford MP.