



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

April 2010 Report

After some last-minute tension due to the airport closures, the Brussels 2010 conference went extremely well. 80% of delegates managed to attend, some making huge efforts to do so. I am very grateful to all of them for helping to make the event such a success. At the EFSN Annual General Meeting, held before the conference, members present elected several individuals to the EFSN Council. Also in April, René Pons and other EFSN members gave French fire officers the first two-day seminar on sprinklers, while in the UK the Welsh Assembly received legislative authority from the government in London to introduce a measure requiring the fitting of sprinklers in all new Welsh housing. Meanwhile in Norway the government announced that from 1st July this year all new housing of more than two storeys, as well as all new hospitals, care homes and hotels must be sprinklered.

Brussels 2010

Brussels 2010 was a huge success and I have received many positive comments. Despite the airport closures we had over 150 people on the first day and almost 180 on the second. Some companies found substitutes for their speakers; other speakers were able to give their presentations by telephone. Participants came by car and train, some driving overnight. Among those present were government officials from eight countries.

Conference participants learned about the latest regulatory developments in favour of sprinklers, such as retrofit of care homes and other high risk buildings in Finland; the support of the Amsterdam Fire Brigade to see sprinklers in all new housing; and requirements to fit sprinklers in new hospitals and care homes in Sweden. Perhaps the most significant development came from Norway, which from 1 July this year will require sprinklers in all new housing of more than two storeys, as well as in all new hospitals, care homes and hotels. The networking event on the first evening was popular, with participants staying well past the time it was due to end. Our lunchtime speakers told us about the work of the European Burns Casualties Association and of the European Parliament. The EFSN is working with both organisations.

Technical developments were also well-covered at the conference, with presentations on the latest developments in European and international standards and on sprinkler-related research. Those who stayed for the gala dinner at the end of the conference enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Château Sainte-Anne.

The next conference will be held in Paris in 2012. I am forming a conference committee so please contact me if you would like to be involved.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 20th April to coincide with the Brussels 2010 conference. Full minutes will be circulated in May but here are the highlights. I gave brief report of progress over the past year. The members then approved the audited accounts and the budget for the financial year beginning on 1st July 2010. Next they approved a change to the Articles of Association to reduce the number of Council seats reserved for the International Fire Sprinkler Association from five to three, while increasing the number of elected Council seats for the Contractor/Manufacturer category from five to seven. They then elected several new Council members.

European Hotel Fire Safety

I wrote an article in the EU Reporter on hotel fire safety. The EU Reporter is a magazine distributed within the European Parliament and European Commission and therefore has a well-targeted readership. Conference participants also received a copy. Thanks to the article a journalist from the European Parliament came to the conference.

International Fire Sprinkler Network

I made a request for funding from the IFSA for \$16,000 to match the new income gained in France since René Pons began to represent the EFSN there. The IFSA has a standing policy to offer matching funds for this sort of activity and its board approved the request. A number of other French companies have expressed an interest in joining the EFSN and so I am hopeful that we will be able to fund steadily larger campaigns in France in the future.

France

René Pons, together with several EFSN members, gave a two-day training seminar on sprinklers to over 20 French fire officers. This course was hosted by ENSOSP, the French fire officer training school, at its centre in Paris. Responses have been very positive and this activity has helped to build goodwill with the French fire service. The next seminar will be held in November. This good will has already led to an invitation from the Paris Fire Brigade for the EFSN to assist in the organisation of the next Eurofire conference, to be held in Paris in 2011.

In April René also met Colonel Queyla, Fire Chief of Avignon and member of a national committee on domestic fire safety, to discuss the wider use of sprinklers. In parallel with René's efforts I attended the Annual General Meeting of the French Chapter of the SFPE, where we discussed plans for a 30th anniversary event. SFPE members are a well-connected and influential group.

UK

Just before the British Parliament ended its session for the general election, the Welsh Legislative Competence Order was passed and received Royal Assent. This means that the Welsh Assembly may now introduce a measure to require the fitting of sprinklers in all new housing. Several of us have already met Ann Jones to help with the drafting of the measure, and we are working on answers to any questions or

objections that may be raised during the course of its passage in the Welsh Assembly. While success is not guaranteed, there has until now been cross-party support in Wales for this measure.

In April the Business Sprinkler Alliance was formed and its officers elected. Using the services of Ogilvy, a large PR company, we learned how many warehouses are in the England and Wales, by size and category. With what we know of the sprinkler market, we could estimate that less than 25% of new warehouses are sprinklered. To achieve our aim, which is to see greater use of sprinklers in warehouses, we will need the support of the civil service. At present, the Better Regulation Executive assesses new regulatory proposals to see if they are necessary and economically justified. With a lobbyist employed by the BSA, I arranged to meet a senior official within this government department to learn about how it assesses regulatory proposals.

At the end of April I attended the first meeting of the committee which will draft BS 9991 Fire precautions in the design, construction and use of buildings – Part 1: code of practice for residential buildings. Two years ago BSI published BS 9999, which introduced codified trade-ups for the fitting of sprinklers in most types of buildings. It did not include residential buildings and BS 9991 is intended to fill that gap.

CEN TC/127

I attended a meeting of this CEN committee, which writes standards for the fire resistance and reaction to fire of building components. It is also leading efforts to prepare CEN standards on fire engineering and would probably become involved in any European standard on hotel fire safety. These are my main reasons for participation. While there I learned about initiatives to standardise the environmental performance of products. Sprinklers have a good story to tell and I intend to push for the life-cycle consideration of environmental performance to include fire and the effect of the presence of a sprinkler system on lifetime emissions.

Next Steps

- 1) Participate in Belgian Fire Sprinkler Network meeting at the European Burns Casualties Association in Neder-over-Heembeek.
- 2) Meet David Martin MEP to discuss a sprinkler study visit to the US. Continue preparations for this visit.
- 3) Participate in a meeting in Oslo of Task Group 1 of CEN TC/127, on fire safety engineering.
- 4) Participate in a meeting in London of Task Group 2 of Working Group 5 of CEN TC/191, on the European sprinkler system standard, EN 12845.
- 5) Meet British officials to discuss progress on the fitting of sprinklers in schools.
- 6) Participate in meetings of the Business Sprinkler Alliance.