



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

June 2010 Report

June marked the end of the financial year for the EFSN. The company is healthy and able to finance its ongoing activities. We have ten more members than a year ago and the prospect of more members in the future. Over the past year we have set up fire sprinkler networks in Belgium and France and I hope to set up more national networks in the year ahead. We have seen several countries introduce new requirements for sprinklers, most notably Norway which as of 1st July 2010 will require sprinklers in all new housing of more than two storeys, as well as all new hotels, hospitals and care homes. While Europe's economies continue to struggle, we see steady progress with the recognition of sprinklers so that today a higher proportion of new buildings is sprinklered.

Belgium

The Belgian Fire Sprinkler Network held two meetings in June to plan for the stand at the Firefest event in September. This is a fire brigade event with wide attendance. We will have a stand with a flyer. There will also be a burn demonstration to show the benefits of sprinklers in a residential setting. The EFSN has provided a logo and has registered a domain name for the Belgian Fire Sprinkler Network. The web site is now under construction at www.sprinklernetwork.be. Over the next two months we will add material to it so that it is fully functioning by September. Our meetings have been hosted by the Belgian Burns Victims' Association, which has political contacts. At present a new coalition Belgian government has not been formed following the elections in June. To be ready for this moment I have drafted a position paper which will now be translated into French and Dutch and posted on the web site. I had dinner with the Brussels Fire Chief, Lt-Col de Sneyder, who told me that fire officers could insist on sprinklers if they felt they were necessary. We will therefore work with the fire safety officers in Brussels and elsewhere.

France

The French arm of the EFSN met at the CNPP offices in Paris in June. René Pons had previously attended a conference organised by the French Burns Victims' Association, which as in Belgium has political contacts. He reported that it is now becoming accepted in France that there are about 800 fire deaths each year. Accurate statistics are not collected so this figure is based on data from hospitals and other sources. However, 800 deaths is a relatively high figure and we will argue that sprinklers should play a part in reducing it. The new law which requires smoke detectors in homes also requires an active system in the common parts. We will argue that this could be a sprinkler system. In the autumn we will seek a meeting with French politicians through the French Burns Victims' Association. In parallel, to raise our profile the EFSN will participate in the Eurofire conference, to be held in Paris in

May 2011. The Paris Fire Brigade will host this conference, whose theme is fire engineering. The French branch of the EFSN will next meet on 17th November at Vinci in Rueil-Malmaison. Please contact me if you are interested and have not previously attended.

UK

I attended a parliamentary seminar on fire safety, at which sprinklers were very prominent. The new government had not yet decided its policy on several other fire safety matters so the Minister did not attend. Since then the new government has announced steep spending cuts, which among other things will affect the building of new schools. It has also made clear it is against new health and safety regulations and on sprinklers has said that we should make our case to industry not the government. On a more positive note, I attended a meeting of the National Fire Sprinkler Network at South Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service. The fire service continues to be a very effective advocate for sprinklers in the UK. I also attended a meeting of the committee drafting BS 9991, a standard on fire safety in housing. The government is participating in this committee and the standard may be a route to introduce new incentives for sprinklers which will later become formal government guidance.

Interschutz

I attended the Interschutz trade show in Leipzig. Held every five years, this is the largest fire sector show in the world. Much of it is focussed on the fire service but there is also a fire engineering conference. As the date clashed with the NFPA conference and there were two other major fire engineering conferences in the following weeks, the Leipzig conference was not well attended. However, it gave a good overview of the progress with fire engineering in Germany and it is clear that sprinklers are favourably viewed by many German fire engineers.

SFPE Conference

This year the SFPE held its bi-annual conference at Lund University in Sweden. Over 300 people took part, making it a useful networking event. As in Germany, sprinklers were frequently referenced by the speakers. On the last day of the conference fire engineering teams from different countries presented their solution to a brief provided by the SFPE. This year the brief was a six storey office building in which the first three storeys were to be converted to a night club. Of the seven teams, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Sweden and the United States included sprinklers in their designs. Only the French team did not, which shows the challenge ahead of us in France.

European Fire Academy

Set up by senior fire officers from several countries, EFA aims to influence European thinking on fire safety. It is promoting flame retardants, smoke detectors, the collection of accurate fire statistics, and sprinklers. The EFSN has been invited to its meetings in the past but will be expected to join if it is to attend in the future. The June meeting was held in Brussels and included a lunch in the European Parliament hosted by Malcolm Harbour, a British MEP whom I met in March and who chairs the

Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection. The main benefit of EFA is that it offers an opportunity to network with influential fire chiefs from a dozen countries.

CEN TC/191 WG5

I attended the annual meeting of CEN Technical Committee 191 Working Group 5 at ANPI in Belgium. We agreed which work items we wish to request of CEN Technical Committee 191 at its annual meeting in October. Regarding sprinklers there is some uncertainty about whether our draft Amendment 3 of EN 12845 should be changed to the first official revision of that document but we agreed that the material in it needs to get into EN 12845 as soon as possible. We will also seek work items to include further new material, such as residential sprinklers. As agreed last year, the Working Group discussed the Technical Specification for water mist, TS14972. The chairman of the Task Group on water mist stated that the majority of the Task Group wished this document to remain as a Technical Specification for another three years, during which it would be improved and gain field experience. At that time the TS must either become a full CEN standard or be dropped.

European Parliamentary Study Visit to United States

In July I will visit the United States with two Members of the European Parliament, MEPs. In June I coordinated the travel arrangements and meeting schedule. I also wrote a briefing document for the MEPs.

New Member

In June Engineering & Inspection Hellmund, a small German contractor, joined the EFSN.

Next Steps

- 1) Lead European Parliamentary Study Visit to United States.
- 2) Attend Business Sprinkler Alliance Meeting in London.
- 3) Attend a meeting of BS 9991 committee.
- 4) Contact Parisian hotels for 2012 conference.
- 5) Prepare Council meeting for November.
- 6) Write an Article for International Fire Protection Magazine.