



EUROPEAN FIRE SPRINKLER NETWORK

December 2011 Report

In December there was another fatal care home fire in France, following two in November and bringing the death toll to nine. René and I have arranged to meet an official and a politician in January to discuss this and other matters. In Belgium our efforts have led to an invitation to present what can be achieved with domestic sprinklers. The Paris 2012 conference received another boost, this time from the National Fire Protection Research Foundation, which will host a seminar to coincide with it.

Belgium

In December I attended a meeting of the Belgian Fire Sprinkler Network. We have been invited by the government to give a presentation on domestic sprinkler systems at a conference in Brussels in February. I will assist Belgian members to prepare a presentation. At our meeting we were joined by water company representatives and discussed the issues around mains connections. As in other countries, water mains pressure varies widely in Belgium.

I also attended a meeting of the Belgian chapter of the SFPE and a presentation by the European Burns Victims' Association at the European Parliament.

France

René Pons has succeeded in arranging a meeting at the beginning of January with a government official to discuss fire safety building codes and the potential for sprinklers within them. The French fire safety code for residential buildings is undergoing review. In a previous meeting with this official and with the chairman of a parliamentary committee, René learned that net cost increases would not be accepted. We will therefore discuss design freedoms (trade-offs), for which we have several proposals. We will also discuss the recent spate of fatal care home fires, which have killed 9 people. While the code concerns new buildings, there is a proposal to use sprinklers to compensate for deficient compartmentation in some existing social housing in Rouen. In December I met the consultant who made this proposal.

Our meeting with a French Député was postponed until mid-January after President Sarkozy asked to see him at the time we had agreed.

René and I are seeking more French members of the EFSN. We were invited by the chairman of the French sprinkler installers' association, GIS, to meet his colleagues at their December meeting. A number expressed an interest and René will follow up.

The board of the French chapter of the SFPE met in December and agreed the details for a seminar on 9th February at FM Global's offices in Paris. There will be presentations on fire engineering in France, Switzerland and the UK, and on fire modelling. For more details contact me.

Netherlands

In December I continued preparations for the start of the EFSN Country Manager for The Netherlands, much of it in reading background information and making appointments for early 2012.

UK

I attended a meeting of the Business Sprinkler Alliance. The cost-benefit analysis by the BRE is expected to be complete early in 2012. Meanwhile the environmental report has generated considerable interest among business and environmental organisations. A separate cost-benefit analysis by BRE on residential and domestic sprinklers is expected to be complete in January and in contrast to previous analyses is expected to show an economic case for sprinklers in flats and care homes.



The bilingual conference web site is now live and we have begun to take registrations. However, some users have complained of a virus so I have not widely publicised the site until this is resolved. In December I met representative of CNPP, the French laboratory in association with which we are hosting this event. We agreed a series of actions to help promote the conference to the Francophone world. One is to place an article, which I will draft, in Face au Risque.

The National Fire Protection Research Foundation, which carries out research to support NFPA standards, asked if it could hold a one-day seminar to coincide with the EFSN conference in Paris. The council approved the proposal, which will give our Paris 2012 conference additional publicity and bring in more participants. The seminar will be held on Wednesday, 27th June, the day before our conference. We have ensured that the programmes for the two events do not overlap.

Next Steps

- 1) Meet Hervé Tephany of the French Interior Ministry.
- 2) Meet Député Damien Meslot of the Assemblée Nationale.
- 3) Participate in a meeting of the NFPA 502 tunnel committee in Phoenix.
- 4) Visit John van Lierop in The Netherlands.
- 5) Publicise Paris 2012.