



# Federation of European Union (FEU) Fire Officer Associations



## **Pan European Fire Strategy 2020** **A safer Europe for all**



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## Context

The European Union (EU) in the 21st century consists of 500 million people across the 27 countries which make up the Union. Security has become a key factor in ensuring a high quality of life in European society, and in protecting our critical infrastructure through preventing and tackling common threats.

In this context EU internal security means protecting the people and values of freedom and democracy, so that everyone can enjoy their daily lives without fear. The Lisbon Treaty and the Stockholm Programme enable the EU to take ambitious and concerted steps in developing Europe as an area of freedom, security and justice.

Within an increasingly complex world, there are a number of significant threats:

**Terrorism**, in any form, has an absolute disregard for human life and democratic values. It's global reach, its devastating consequences, its ability to recruit through radicalisation and disseminate propaganda over the Internet, and the different means through which it is financed, make terrorism a significant and ever-evolving threat to our security.

**Natural disasters** such as forest fires, earthquakes, floods and storms, pose safety and security challenges. In this day and age, civil protection systems should represent an essential element of any modern and advanced security system.

**Fires, road traffic accidents and major emergencies** There are a number of other common phenomena which pose safety and security concerns to people across Europe, for example road traffic accidents take the lives of more than tens of thousands of European citizens every year.

The Fire & Rescue Services across Europe provide society with a safety net to reduce life loss and harm. We care passionately and are professional in our planning, training and delivery of prevention and emergency responses. We work with respective Governments and through the EU machinery of Government want to play an active part in advising policy makers in order to ensure the professional voice of the Fire & Rescue Services are heard in order to collectively develop a 'Safer Europe for all'.

Specifically, this strategy, prepared by the Federation of European Union Fire Officer Associations, will provide the framework to assist DG ECHO (responsible for programmes of prevention and response) and DG HOME (responsible for the internal security Strategy with a civil protection element) mitigate the above risks.



This FEU strategy, also directly contributes to the strategy “Towards a stronger European Disaster Response”. This strategy represents the first step in the development of a reinforced EU disaster response capacity. It will help maximize the impact of the EU's contribution to alleviating the suffering of the victims of disasters inside the EU and across the world.

The Lisbon Treaty also introduced a Solidarity Clause, which established the obligation for Member States to assist each other in the event of a natural or manmade disaster on EU territory. The European Commission and the High Representative are developing further arrangements associated with the Solidarity Clause.

In addition, implementing the Internal Security Strategy will become one of the priority tasks of the Committee for Internal Security (COSI). Other issues such as Working Time, Driving Hours and Hotel Safety are within other DG and our contributions will continue to be made in these areas.

If successful, the outcomes of this strategy will be improved safety for residents within and visitors to the European Union.

This strategy has been agreed by all 22 member states represented within the Federation of European Union Fire Officer Associations (we are an independent professional body and not a trade union).



### Introduction

The FEU has at its heart, the protection and safety of all those involved with, or affected by fire and other emergency incidents across Europe.

Despite the borders that sometimes divide us, the impact of fire is consistent across Europe. Fire does not stop at borders and neither does its impact.

As people also begin to travel more across the world, and Europe in particular, they also need to know that they are safe from fire, emergencies and their impact. Therefore it is essential that we begin to work in a more collaborative and cohesive way. As a caring service we owe that obligation to our citizens.

The FEU also believes in enhancing the protection of fire-fighters across Europe. Fire fighters sometimes are called to make the ultimate sacrifice in protecting citizens and we aim to ensure that fire fighter fatalities are reduced in the future.

The economic cost of fire amounts to some €80bn and without a focused European approach and a common strategy, it will be difficult to achieve a real reduction in EU fire losses.

The FEU believes therefore in the longer term vision of a safer Europe for all, where the issues that affect Fire and Rescue Services across Europe are addressed collectively.

This Strategy sets out how the FEU believe this can be achieved, what the drivers are, and how we can achieve our aims and goals. There are commitments associated with this strategy and our activity will be shaped by it. We need Governments to support this and ensure that safety of the citizens of the EU is afforded the priority that it deserves.



## Who we are

FEU is an independent professional body of senior fire professionals from EU countries that have responsibility for the strategic management of the Fire and Rescue Services in their respective countries. Each country has established an association at national level that supports the collective views and interests of these career principal officers. Collectively we lead 2.7 m firefighters within Europe and as FEU members we work in a voluntary capacity and are answerable to our own member associations. Presently the FEU represents senior fire officers in the following FEU countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom

## Our Aims

The principal aim of the FEU is to enhance fire safety and provide expertise to European bodies in matters concerning the development of fire brigades and fire safety in Europe and especially in respect of organisation and management, structure, technical skills, training and fire engineering. We do this so as to gain the most effective, efficient and economic means for mitigating the loss and damage to life, property and national economies by fire, other emergencies (including catastrophic national disasters) and all related environmental issues.

## Our Mission

The mission of FEU is to provide leadership and represent the interests of professional fire associations in the European Union through vision, networking, exchange of information and effective communication so as to enhance their expertise and professionalism.

## Our Values

Our values are:-

**Leadership** – the FEU values leadership and seeks to develop a European Vision for member associations as well as map a path to achieve this.

**Partnership and Collaboration** - the FEU recognises the collaboration and partnership of member associations to deliver our objectives.



**Consultation** – the FEU relies on the guidance and support of member associations. Therefore consultation feedback and the active participation of those associations is fundamental.

**Equity** – the FEU considers all member associations equal.

**Diversity** – the FEU accepts and respects the diversity amongst its member associations and officers.

**Autonomy** – the FEU recognises that each member association represents the views of officers within their jurisdiction. FEU acknowledges their role and independence.

### Our Vision

Our vision is to be recognised and respected as the leading voice of professional fire officers across Europe.

### Our Objectives

We have the following objectives:

- To provide advice on the management, organisation, responsibilities, financing and structure of Fire and Rescue Services, to the European Union and to all other relevant organisations and to the constituent associations of FEU.
- To express the opinion of FEU on any matter associated with civil protection, disaster management, fire safety, fire service management, fire fighting, rescue and other emergency operations.
- To promote the appropriate levels of cross border co-operation between the brigades and adjacent countries.
- To encourage the promotion of appropriate legislation to prevent and to mitigate the effects of fire, disaster and other emergency situations.
- To improve communication by the exchange of information between the members of FEU and those with whom **we** wish to work.
- To undertake, promote or support any other activity or organisation which FEU believes will assist the achievement of **our** objectives.



## Drivers for an EU Fire Strategy 2020

The EU is becoming a progressively integrated community operating across borders. It is important therefore for the Fire and Rescue Services of Europe to emphasise the importance of the role they play in regard to ensuring the safety of European citizens, protecting the infrastructure, and reducing the economic costs to the Union.

The resources that the Fire and Rescue Services possess are an asset that the EU has at their disposal through the sovereignty of the EU member states. Cross country working is now commonplace to deal with major disasters (a recent example is Operation Orion, a European exercise to test arrangements to managing wide spread flooding occurring simultaneously).

Although the challenges that Europe face become ever more diverse, the need to resolve these issues, against a backdrop of economic uncertainty remain. This has been compounded by the recent financial and banking crisis.

Through their involvement with the FEU, the professional fire associations of Europe recognise:

- The need to strengthen links between the Fire and Rescue Services of Europe.
- The need to improve safety of our residents and those who come to visit or travel within the EU.
- The need to ensure that the economic variance across Europe does not result in increased arson.
- The need to share our legislative frameworks to improve building and community safety for all.

Therefore the key focus of our Strategy for 2020 are:

- Improve EU citizen Safety
- Improve Fire fighter safety
- Improve Influence on Policy Formulation
- Improved Sharing of Good Practice
- Improve Crisis Management / Stronger EU Disaster Response

By focusing on these key areas, the FEU believes that the professional Fire and Rescue Services of Europe can contribute to the wider EU agenda. The EU work plan for 2012 includes:<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> EU Commission work programme Vol 1 31/03/2010





- Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe's social market economy.
- Building on a citizen's agenda which puts people at the heart of European action.
- Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach.
- Modernising EU instruments and ways of working.
- Working towards common recognised safety systems in hotels and buildings.
- Supporting the EU-wide standard for fire safe cigarettes.
- Sharing good practice.
- Maximising educational awareness of demographic differences.
- Commissioning research.
- Championing the provision of smoke detectors in all homes.
- Encouraging cross border co-operation.
- Improving communication between member states.
- Providing advice and guidance on Fire and Rescue Service related matters.



## Strand 1: Improve EU Citizen safety

The 'raison d'être' of the EU is to improve the well-being of its citizens and to further their interests. A key element of this agenda is the Stockholm programme for an "open and secure Europe, serving and protecting the citizen" adopted by the European Council at its December 2009 meeting.

European society faces a number of long term trends which will have a direct impact on the life of citizens. These include new technologies, immigration and the pressure of demographic ageing, the consequences of climate change and environmental threats.

The policies of Fire and Rescue Services from across Europe have the potential to affect and be affected by all of these issues.

Therefore in a move to improve safety of the public of the EU, the FEU will strive to:

- Map and share current research.
- Identify statistical trends across Europe.
- Identify common areas of interest and engage stakeholders in addressing these problems.

Specific activities are shown in Annex A.



## Strand 2: Improve Fire fighter safety

The EU has adopted a wide variety of measures in the field of safety and health at work on the basis of Article 153 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

The Framework directive, with its wide scope of application, as well as further directives focusing on specific aspects of health and safety at work, is a fundamental part of European health and safety legislation.

Each year in the EU there are 5580 fatal work related accidents and millions of people are injured\* or have their health seriously harmed in the workplace.

Fire fighters face inherent dangers within the role that they perform, which are largely biological, chemical, ergonomic, physical, safety and psychological.

Therefore the FEU will:

- Map and share incident data across Europe;
- Liaise after critical incidents and their subsequent effects;
- Share best practice in training and development of fire fighting staff;
- Liaise over specialist equipment provisions within the EU;
- Seek to influence health and safety legislation which impacts on fire fighting;
- Ensure CEN standards maintain or improve the levels of safety for operational fire fighters.

\*[European Agency for Safety and Health at Work]



### **Strand 3: Improve influence on policy formation**

The EU is active in a wide range of policy areas, from human rights to transport.

These policies form the basis of European action and are underpinned by legislation, with governance provided by the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the Committee of the Regions.

Whilst there is no specific policy area on ‘fire related’ matters, there is specific interaction with many other policy areas, such as transport, environment, humanitarian aid and employment.

The FEU seeks to influence decision makers through provision of professional advice in order to protect citizens of Europe.

Therefore, the FEU will:

- Map networks of influence across Europe.
- Seek to establish an MEP European Parliament Intergroup (primarily comprised of MEPs from Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection Committee and the Employment and Social Affairs Committee).
- Provide Europe-wide information to those who seek our advice.
- Monitor CEN standards for their impact on Fire Service issues.
- Ensure that the contribution that the Fire and Rescue Services make to the wider policy arena is articulated in a timely and appropriate manner.



## Strand 4: Improved sharing of good practice

The Fire & Rescue Services have a long history of sharing good practice, not only within Europe, but across the world. Exchange programmes e.g. The EU 'Exchange of Experts' programme, EU funded projects such as Multicom 112, Safehotel, 'twinning' arrangements, and joint training exercises, have all served to foster good relations and to share good practice between FEU members. As we move into challenging times, the sharing of good practice will bring benefits of shared learning, financial savings, and will help provide a commonality of approach where appropriate. Improved sharing of good practice will bring about a real and tangible benefit to both the Fire and Rescue Services and the communities of Europe.

Therefore, the FEU will seek to:

- Build up existing networks and sharing of good practice across the EU fire community.
- Continue to hold FEU Council meetings on a twice yearly basis.
- Continue to participate in joint projects to improve Fire and Rescue Service activities across Europe.
- Provide opportunities to the EU fire community to capture and share information and best practice on operational and fire prevention activities
- Form and participate in pan-European and global groups to progress improvements in fire service activities.
- Work to reduce duplication of activity and improve the sharing of resources across the EU fire community.
- Develop our website and other communications channels to promote our activities and to disseminate relevant information across the EU fire community
- Develop and promote the concept of e-learning across the EU Fire Community
- Actively promote 'Lessons learnt' initiatives from case studies across the EU fire community



## Strand 5: Improve Crisis Management / Stronger EU Disaster Response

The EU has not been heavily focused on humanitarian aid arrangements in recent years and instead has tended to focus on civil protection. However, a primary focus of EC-DG Humanitarian Aid & Civil Protection has developed a Community Civil Protection Mechanism which helps affected countries during the emergency phase inside and outside of Europe. It is recognised that the Fire and Rescue Services play a major role in civil protection systems in many countries and our day to day activities together with cross border cooperation reinforces our role in supporting international assistance.

The FEU as a platform of cooperation between various EU countries has been involved in international projects for many years. These have been useful to reinforce co-operation across different member state Fire and Rescue Services and to provide support at a local/national or international level. Improved crisis management arrangements based on Fire and Rescue Services and the EU-Civil Protection Mechanism will result in better international and cross border cooperation within Europe and community resilience. In addition, cost effective arrangements will continue to be considered as information, practices and approaches are shared.

Therefore the FEU will seek to:

- Improve the level of crisis communication among countries (based on the Schengen agreement)
- Improve interoperability between emergency services as a result of greater co-operation
- Improve Incident Command Systems within Europe and possible sharing of resources at an international level
- Involvement of FEU with the EU-CP Mechanism (including Module based training)
- Consider mutual aid agreements for cross border co-operation which could be extended to international level



## Summary

The FEU represents the most senior leaders in the Fire & Rescue Service within Europe. We have experts with knowledge and experience in working within United Nations and European contexts and count amongst our members, professional leaders who have significant experience in providing advice to Government Ministers within respective member states on a wide range of fire and emergency issues.

With this knowledge and experience comes responsibility. We have a responsibility to change that which requires change and not stand by when we can see improvements that could and should be made. Some of these improvements can be made at member state level. We will lead such changes and share good practice in order for others to learn. However, there will be some issues that are so important that we will require a coordinated and coherent approach to resolve. This is where the FEU and this strategy come to the fore.

We have ambition. Ambition to improve the safety of the citizens of Europe as well as our fire fighters. We will move from conversation to action and as a result, Annex A outlines specific actions we will develop further commencing in 2012.

This Strategy strengthens the links between the Fire and Rescue Services within Europe, in order to develop safer fire-fighters as well as safer communities.

We provide professional leadership and direction, advice and support to policy makers. We stand ready to assist both the EU as a whole and our respective member states as we collectively raise standards, improve the effectiveness of policy and continue to provide excellent prevention and response arrangements. Together we are stronger.



## Annex A

	Theme	Related FRS Area	Related EU Projects	Lead country	Supporting Country
1	Improved EU Citizen Safety	Prevention and Protection (Fire Safety) Activities	112, Safehotel (Hotel Fire Safety Standards), Pan European Road and Rail Safety Fire Statistics Project	GERMANY	ESTONIA SPAIN CZECH REP AUSTRIA GREECE PORTUGAL
2	Improve Firefighter Safety	Improved Emergency Response	Recruitment Standards; PPE; Fire Cover, Fall protection, Competence based training	FINLAND	DENMARK SWEDEN NORWAY SLOVENIA CYPRUS
3	Improve Influence on Policy Formation	Raising Awareness of the FEU in Brussels, expanding and building Networks to Influence Policy	FEU 20:20 Vision Launch; Working Time Directive	UK	FRANCE BELGIUM LUXEMBOURG NETHERLANDS PORTUGAL
4	Improve Sharing Good Practice	Website Portal; Case Studies; Exchange programme;	Website, FEU communication, External liaison, EU projects	IRELAND	SLOVENIA NORWAY GREECE
5	Improve Crisis Management / Stronger EU Disaster Response	International and Cross Border cooperation; Community resilience; Cost effectiveness	Crisis communication; Interoperability; Resources sharing / ICS; EU-CP Mechanism Involvements; Mutual aid agreements	CZECH REP	ITALY POLAND DENMARK HUNGARY

*Theme leads to develop specific action plans which will require support from member countries.*

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