



Press Release

The **F**ederation of the **E**uropean **U**nion Fire
Officer Associations
(FEU)
www.f-e-u.org



FEU Council Meeting 02 /14Poznan Poland October 2014



General Wojciech Mendelak addressing our meeting

General Wojciech Mendelak, CFO of the Wielkopolska region in Poland delivered the opening address at the FEU Council Meeting in Poznan Poland on October 9th 2014. Twenty FEU member associations were represented including the UK, Sweden, Spain, Slovenia, Norway, Luxemburg, Poland, Italy, Ireland, Netherlands, Germany, France, Greece, Finland, Estonia, Denmark, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Belgium, and Austria. The conference took place on the banks of Lake Malta one of the oldest man-made rowing venues in Europe.



Lake Malta

FEU President Dr Dieter Nuessler and FEU Secretary Finian Joyce reported a busy 6 months since our last FEU Council meeting held in Ireland in May. Dieter Nuessler represented the FEU at the Global Fire Service Leadership Alliance meeting in Amsterdam raising awareness of the FEU 2020 vision and key aim of 'Delivering a safer Europe for all.' At the CTIF General Assembly in Beograd Dieter Nuessler signed a memorandum of understanding on behalf of the FEU to develop future cooperation. Ongoing liaison with the European Emergency Number Association EENA and the European Fire Academy aims to avoid duplication, share knowledge and develop key themes where the EU fire sector organisations and associations can genuinely influence the safety agenda across Europe.

Progress in key European projects with active FEU involvement and an overview of future EU projects followed. The FEU are a full partner in the Emergency Management in Social Media Generation project **EmerGent** and all colleagues from the emergency services across the EU are encouraged to take a short time to complete a questionnaire which can be accessed from the link on the project website www.fp7-emergent.eu/ or on the FEU website www.f-e-u.org.

The FEU are also represented on the advisory board for **EPISECC** which is a project to establish Pan-European Information Space to enhance security of EU citizens www.episecc.eu/node/8 which supports **Strand 1** of our Vision 2020 strategy document to improve EU Citizen Safety.

National updates were provided by representatives from Austria, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden with a common theme of restructuring driven by reduced funding. Interestingly this was against a backdrop of some challenging, protracted and large scale operational incidents that had stretched resources locally, emphasising the need and value for resilient cross border arrangements and support to resolve operational incidents safely. These included a large scale wildfire in Sweden and unprecedented sleet in Slovenia which saw the national power grid collapse.

Day two began with three presentations on Polish fire safety related projects

1. Structure and Coordination of the Safety Research System in Poland....Sebastian Serwiak
2. Fire Safety – Research Projects ReviewPiotr Guzowski
3. The Cluster for Rescue, Safety, Civil & Environment Protection...Zbigniew Chrzanowski

Interestingly, the drive for these projects is the increasing numbers of fires and fire deaths in Poland and these projects link with concentrated efforts to develop prevention strategies to improve home and business safety across Poland. Since Poland's accession to the EU as a full member in 2004 they had been very successful in attracting a lot of EU funding for various projects within the fire service.



Dieter Nuessler and Chief Commandant Major General Wieslaw Lesniakiewicz

Chief Commandant of the State Fire Service Major General Wieslaw Lesniakiewicz welcomed FEU delegates to Poland and addressed the council meeting. Recognising the support and shared knowledge the Polish State Fire Service has received over the past twenty years Major General Lesniakiewicz emphasised the need to now share this knowledge and experience across borders to the East of Poland. Fully supportive of the 'prevention is better than cure' methodology he welcomed further support in the development and delivery of comprehensive community safety strategies to reverse the trend of increased fire deaths in Poland.

CFO Des Prichard from the UK then updated the meeting on the EU Working Time Directive (WTD) asking and gaining FEU approval to seek a meeting with the new EU Commissioner for Social Affairs and Employment Marianne Thyssen from Belgium. The aim of the meeting being to increase the Commissioners understanding of the detrimental impact the EU WTD will have on fire and rescue services across Europe and discuss solutions in terms of the status of standby on call hours within the Directive. He then provided a summary of the work undertaken within UK on FRS aerobic fitness standards. Based on research from practical tasks including a hose run, equipment carry, stair climb, casualty evacuation and wild-land fire the UK has agreed a standard of 42.3VO₂ max capacity irrespective of age or gender which is tested on an annual basis

Niels Morup from Denmark delivered a presentation on research into cancer risks amongst firefighters. Time span between carcinogen exposure and developing cancer make confirmed links difficult however carcinogenic particles on PPE and poor hygiene are believed to be contributory factors. Airing on the side of caution Denmark have developed Good Preventive Behaviour guidance for Firefighters which is available on the FEU website www.f-e-u.org/

Dieter Nuessler delivered an update on the initiative for Broadband Spectrum for Public Protection Disaster Relief PPDR. This emphasised the need for all 22 member countries to consider the implications and actively support FEU in influencing developments and outcomes within their own countries.

Day three begun with updates from each of the key themes within the FEU 2020 Pan European Fire Strategy. **Strand 1**- Improve EU citizen safety Jens Stiegel from Germany demonstrated key prevention strategies and activities from across the EU. **Strand 2** - Olli-Pekka Ojanen from Finland announced a Firefighter safety themed conference in Denmark [on the 25th of August 2015](#). **Strand 3** - Improve influence formation on policy formation Paul Walker from the UK announced the FEU Twitter account FEU@org and shared a copy of a draft letter to be sent to MEP's and the new EU Commissioners Marianne Thyssen from Belgium Social Affairs & Employment and Christos Stylianides from Cyprus Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management. **Strand 4** - Improved sharing of good practice Finian Joyce from Ireland with Gasper Bizjak from Slovenia focussed on our website development, use of social media and press releases to raise awareness of the FEU and the Pan European work undertaken. **Strand 5** - Improve crisis management /stronger EU disaster response Petr Oslejsek from the Czech Republic discussed the recent cross border questionnaire encouraging all 22 FEU member countries to complete the survey to enable responses to be analysed and develop best practice models.



FEU delegates and guests at Soldier Hall Poznan

CFO Chris Addiers Antwerp Belgium and CFO Oli-Pekka Ojanen Tampere Finland contested the election for the position of FEU president. They presented interesting presentations that outlined their position for the FEU. After some rigorous questioning Chris Addiers was successful and will lead the FEU until October 2017. "FEU should apply to be the first and main point of contact for "A safer Europe for all" he quoted.



Olli-Pekka Ojanen and Chris Addiers

All 22 member countries acknowledged and thanked Dr Dieter Nuessler for his professionalism, dedication, knowledge and humour in leading and driving the FEU throughout his presidency. A unanimous vote saw Dieter made a FEU honorary member and all members will welcome his continued support, experience and company at future FEU meetings and events.

The next FEU Council meeting will take place in Hamburg from 3rd - 6th June 2015 followed by Interschutz in Hannover where all readers are welcome to visit the FEU stand to see and discuss the work undertaken by the FEU in "Delivering a Safer Europe for all."

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