



## INTERNATIONAL SAFETY EDUCATION SEMINAR

Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs organized the International Safety Education Seminar in cooperation with FEU (Federation of the European Union Fire Officer Associations) and the cooperative safety education working group of Finnish rescue services. The seminar was held on the 11th – 12th of October at Helsinki Convention & Exhibition Centre. A total of 75 participants attended the seminar from nine different countries: Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Australia and United States of America. There was a lot of international knowledge and people shared their experiences. This seminar was first of its kind, but hopefully not the last.

### What did the seminar offer?

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior Ritva Viljanen opened the seminar. Chief Executive Officer of Regional Rescue Services Department of Tampere Olli-Pekka Ojanen was the chairperson for the first day and second day's chairperson was Matti Waitinen, the Principal of the Helsinki Rescue School.

There were three themes in the seminar. The themes of the first day were "Methods of Safety Education" and "Safety Education and Integration of Immigrants". First speaker was the Principal of the Helsinki Rescue School Matti Waitinen. He talked about the concept of safety education and methods of safety education in Finland. Next speaker was Education & Youth Diversion Manager Mark Taylor from Surrey Fire & Rescue Department. He brought an international view to the topic and he gave perspective especially about their work with young people who are under the risk of social execution. In addition he presented "Safe Drive, Stay Alive" –project which reaches new and pre-drivers in an emotive and hard-hitting way, influencing behavior and attitude on the roads. Last speaker of the first theme was Researcher Eila Lindfors from the University of Tampere. Her presentation was about safety education in Finnish comprehensive school and teacher education.



*Chief Executive Officer  
of Regional Rescue  
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There were six speakers in the afternoon who talked about safety education and integration of immigrants. The Refugee Woman of the Year Saido Mohamed gave presentation about fire safety and safety in everyday life from her own point of view. It was really thought-provoking to learn about cultural differences and immigrants' image of authorities. There were also two speakers from abroad who were discussing about this theme; Imran Khan from Region South Fire & Rescue Service Sweden and Tony McGuirk from Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services. They both presented their link worker or advocate projects where they educate link workers between the fire department and immigrants. That was something new that we should concern to do in Finland as well.

## The Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs

Theme of the next day was "Safety Education and Social Media". ICT Development Manager of Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs Janne Leinonen was the first speaker and his topic was "Rescue Services in Social Media". He presented the practical planning of rescue services. The Finnish Police has been working in social media much longer than rescue services and Police Officer of the Year, Police Sergeant Marko Forss was presenting their work in social media. There were also really interesting presentations under the headers: "Social Media: to use or not to use?" and "Designing and Executing Campaigns in Social Media". Last speaker of the seminar was Vice President of Communications of National Fire Protection Association Lorraine Carli. Her presentation about their projects and works in social media gave some really good tips how we could use social media to expand our safety message outreach.

### Feedback of the seminar

The Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs collected feedback of the seminar using online survey solution Webropol. 45 % of the participants filled out the feedback form. On the basis of the feedback the seminar was found really interesting and successful. Participants thought that learning from others and learning how things are done in other places was really interesting. Other things that were found important were meeting new people, getting a wider picture of safety education, getting good information about how we can use social media in our work and learning about immigrants' point of view to the rescue services. In addition it was important to learn that we all have the same expectations and challenges regardless of location, but we have many different ideas on how best to work with different communities. International atmosphere, exchange of ideas, dialogue and discussion globally about safety education were essential for people who took part in the seminar.



"Safety Education and Social Media" was the most interesting theme and a lot of people would have wanted to learn even more about it. Some other topics that participants would have wanted to hear were co-operation between different authorities and other countries, how theory is applied to practice, and research and development results.

100 % of the respondents said that there is a need for safety education seminar in the future and most of them said that it should be arranged every second year. So there is definitely a need for this kind of seminar and also a need for international work in safety education.

### How to continue?

The next seminar will be arranged in 2013. The Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs is going to contact Nordic countries and discuss about the next seminar. The Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs will coordinate it and put it into practice alone or in co-operation with other Nordic countries.

## The Finnish Association of Fire Chiefs

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