

DATA COLLECTION WEBINARS SUMMARY REPORT: GUIDING DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS TO IMPROVE FIRE SAFETY IN BUILDINGS.

Since 2013, Fire Safe Europe has been pushing for a harmonised effort to collect data at EU level to improve fire safety policies and regulations for the safety of European citizens.

In 2016, Fire Safe Europe, together with 15 other organisations published a call to action titled: **“the EU needs a fire safety strategy”**. A key recommendation in this document is for the European Commission to work to collect comparable data and statistics amongst Member States in order to identify issues and risks.

The European Union is now taking steps to collect fire data by funding a project on mending data gaps and paving the way for pan-European fire safety efforts.

To feed into the EU’s efforts on this topic, Fire Safe Europe kick-started a discussion on data collection through a series of webinars which ran from November 2018 to May 2019. The webinar series invited organisations and experts who are collecting data and have a proven track record on improving fire safety to share their experiences and best practices.

THE WEBINAR SERIES WELCOMED EXPERTS FROM THE FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL AND EU ORGANISATIONS:

<p>NOVEMBER 6, 2018 <u>Learning from international organisation that gather, analyse and use fire data.</u></p>  <p>Birgitte Messerschmidt National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)</p>	<p>DECEMBER 4, 2018 <u>Learning from other sectors where fire data is being successfully collected and analysed.</u></p>  <p>Dr. Lori Moore-Merrell International Public Safety Data Institute</p>	<p>MARCH 15, 2019 <u>Learning from other EU initiatives which have been collecting data with the aim to increase safety.</u></p>  <p>Sifis Papageorgiou European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA)</p>	<p>APRIL 19, 2019 <u>Learning from pioneering EU countries.</u></p>  <p>Benjamin Truchot INERIS</p>	<p>APRIL 19, 2019 <u>Learning from pioneering EU countries.</u></p>  <p>Guy Marlair INERIS</p>	<p>MAY 16, 2019 <u>Learning from fires with</u></p>  <p>Bart van Leeuwen Netage.B.V (Netherlands)</p>	<p>MAY 16, 2019 <u>Learning from fires with</u></p>  <p>Dr. Esa Kokki Pelastusopisto (Emergency Services Academy Finland)</p>	<p>MAY 16, 2019 <u>Exclusive webinar: Learning from fires with</u></p>  <p>Dr. Vyto Babrauskas Fire Science and Technology Inc.</p>
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These experts presented their lessons learned, existing fire safety initiatives of their respective organisations, and shared their experiences and best practices. The webinars showed a consensus that fire data are an essential source of knowledge-based progress and should be seen as a prerequisite to carefully learn from past fires and to identify how fire safety measures can be improved.

Based on the webinar discussions, the following recommendations have identified ideas on how to address fire data collection at EU level.

Establish terminology: agree on common definitions to have an authoritative set of fire safety terms which can be used as a basis for collection of comparable data across EU countries.

“ We need to have an authorative set of terminology.”
- Bart van Leeuwen, Netage B.V -

We can start by agreeing upon a glossary of relevant terms to enable EU countries and other relevant stakeholders to collect comparable data based on common definitions.

To give a concrete example, let's consider data collected by the Czech Republic and by Hungary on fire injuries. The Czech Republic defines a fire injury as “persons carried off to the doctor with a suspected injury.” Hungary defines fire injury as “every injured person on the site of a fire, whether the injury occurred because of the effect of fire or not.” Based on these definitions, both countries will collect data differently, and the results will not be comparable.

However, if both countries use a common definition, the data collected can be comparable.

As a first step, the different definitions of EU Member States should be gathered. Based on these, common definitions, which can be accepted and agreed upon by all stakeholders, should be established.

Lastly, the glossary created can be made available online and take inspiration from the **EU Vocabularies** and the **Interactive Terminology for Europe (IATE)**, two terminology databases which collect, disseminate and manages all relevant terms used in the EU institutions.

Ensure data diversity: collect fire data from EU Member States and relevant initiatives. Having data from a diversity of stakeholders will prevent biases and foster knowledge-sharing.

“ We should match fire statistics from reliable databases to try to avoid biases.”
- Benjamin Truchot, Ineris -

Use a platform to assemble existing fire data collected at Member States level and by other EU or international initiatives, which can foster knowledge-sharing. Such a platform already exists at the European level: The Fire Information Exchange Platform (FIEP) created by the European Commission empowers the Member States and relevant stakeholders to share best practices.

The FIEP Project Team on Data Collection will address the collection of comparable data through the project on mending data gaps and paving the way for pan-European fire safety efforts.

As a starting point, the FIEP Project Team on Data Collection can reach out to all Member States and relevant stakeholders who are collecting fire data, for example, Finland and Netage B.V in the Netherlands. By doing so, the FIEP can encourage active participation and knowledge-sharing on data collection from a vast number of stakeholders.

“ We have a slightly easier task in the maritime industry, there are commercially available databases [...] our problem was not so much the possibility of collecting data but to filter what data we really needed, what data we could use.”

- Sifis Papageorgiou, European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) -

To synchronise the efforts of EU countries and relevant stakeholders, the FIEP can develop a simple online system composed of basic data sets (e.g. location of the fire, causes, injuries, fire deaths, costs, lessons learned and best practices). The compiled fire data can be made available online to all relevant stakeholders. Such an online system can take the inspiration from the

European Commission established database on road accidents: CARE a community database on incidents on the roads in Europe which compiles non-confidential road safety data from across the EU Member States into one central database. Differently from the CARE system; the EU efforts on fire safety data will benefit from including information on the location of the fire.¹

Collect efficiently: invest in an automatised smart tool that can collect data efficiently & standardise data collection from member states.

“ We need more automatically collected data to not rely on the data manually collected by fire officers.”

- Dr Esa Kokki, Pelastupisto -

The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have made everyday challenges with remote data collection much more manageable. Implementing a digital option to the collection of fire data at EU level will make the data collection process more efficient. It will save time for fire departments by facilitating and limiting manual data entry.

This can help the EU develop a European based software for fire safety data collection that performs with minimal human assistance and decreases ambiguity.

This EU project on data collection can take inspiration from several existing initiatives, including the joint Road Safety initiative of the European Commission, industry and stakeholders: eSafety. This smart tool makes use of Intelligent Integrated Safety Systems that use Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to increase road safety and reduce the number of road accidents.

“ What we really need and my recommendation [...] when you in Europe [...] now are looking at what can you do to collect fire data, make sure you get good tools to capture the data”

- Birgitte Messerschmidt, National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) -

¹https://ec.europa.eu/transport/road_safety/sites/roadsafety/files/pdf/statistics/dacota/asr2018.pdf

The EU can also collaborate with the **American National Fire Operations Reporting System** (NFORS), data-gathering application software that links to different data resources to automatically upload data. In the long run, this collabora-

tion can help the EU develop a European based software for fire safety data collection that performs with minimal human assistance and decreases ambiguity.

Learn from data: analyse data to produce fire statistics reports that can be communicated in an understandable manner. The fire safety community needs to understand what the data presented is trying to prevail.

“ Fire Statistics is a real interesting source of regular knowledge-based progress, it may increase fire safety, arising from careful-learning from each accident.”

- Guy Marlair, Ineris -

Produce data reports in a standardised and comparable manner to ensure that fire statistics are communicated in the same way all across Europe.

Ensure that these data reports tell a story, understandable by everyone who needs it. This can be done by making sure that the reports produced involve a combination of the following elements: data, narrative and visuals.

By ensuring that the data reports tell a story and provide lessons learned, it will enable relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, to acquire

in-depth knowledge about fires across Europe in an easy to read, understandable and ready to use.

Similar to the EU Road Safety initiatives: the European Road Safety Observatory² and the DaCoTA project³, the fire data gathered within this project should also be made available online to the entire fire safety community and other relevant stakeholders.

Identify trends to develop fire safety policies: use fire data to identify trends and issues to develop appropriate measures for good policy making.

“ We need to collect statistics which are meaningful.”

- Dr Vyto Babrauskas, Fire Science and Technology Inc. -

Collecting fire data is the pathway to identify trends and issues to develop better appropriate measures for sound policymaking. Fire data will help policymakers understand where the risks are and how existing policies can adapt to tackle

these risks. The trends and issues identified will help pinpoint concrete opportunities for co-ordinated actions to integrate coherent solutions for the fire safety of EU citizens.

² <http://erso.swov.nl/index.html>

³ <http://www.dacota-project.eu/index.html>

Conclusion

To guide data collection efforts at EU level, we have to incorporate the recommendations provided in this summary report. Only by agreeing on an authoritative set of terminology, ensuring data diversity, collecting efficiently and learning from data collected can we identify trends to develop better fire safety policies.

You can join in on these efforts. **Register** to the European Fire Safety Community's Advisory Panel on data collection and help shape the future of fire data collection across Europe.

