



**EUROPEAN FIRE
SAFETY WEEK
2022**

LET'S PLACE CITIZEN SAFETY
**AT THE HEART OF
THE RENOVATION WAVE!**

don't miss the 4TH edition

14-18 NOVEMBER 2022

European Fire Safety Week 2022: Political Session
15/11/2022 – European Parliament, Brussels



On the 15th November 2022, as part of the European Fire Safety Week 2022, the European Fire Safety Alliance (EuroFSA) held a high level political debate hosted by Members of the European Parliament Maria da Graça Carvalho (EPP, Portugal) and Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, Portugal) in the European Parliament in Brussels.

In her opening address, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Maria da Graça Carvalho stated the importance to consider fire safety in a holistic way, starting with prevention and detection, ensuring proper measures related to early suppression, evacuation, compartmentation, structural safety and firefighting. As a mechanical engineer, Ms Carvalho particularly emphasized the importance to support scientific assessments and research in the fire safety field. Damages from fires can be prevented via proper understanding of fire behaviour, simulations and testing. Science supports the development of better designs. Fire safety being a national competence, MEP Carvalho believes that the EU should play a more proactive role via the allocation of EU funding (e.g. Horizon programme) to research in the fire safety engineering field. Ms Carvalho ended by recalling that skills in the building and construction sector are playing a very important role in fire safety: in this context, there is a need to promote the vocational stream in (fire safety) engineering, also ensuring proper integration of women.

MEP Carlos Zorrinho focused his intervention on addressing the social aspects related to fire safety. Fire discriminates, as the poorest live in the leakiest houses and are most at risk of accidental fires from electrical origin. For him it is crucial that the renovation wave benefits all. Fire safety must be at the core of the Renovation Wave. Laia Segura, from the *Right to Energy Coalition*, was aligned with Mr Zorrinho and said that decent and safe houses and buildings are key for social justice and energy efficiency. She also argued that the European Commission should consider the most vulnerable communities via specific financing, minimum energy standards and subsidies.

MEP Ciaran Cuffe (Greens, Ireland), the rapporteur on the review of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) joined the discussion. Mr Cuffe considers that the EPBD is the file that could raise the bar regarding safety aspects; renovating buildings must be used as an opportunity to consider fire safety. As he stated, it wouldn't make sense to improve the energy performance of a building while leaving it unsafe because of obsolete electrical installations or lack of fire safety features.

The EPBD will include some considerations related to electrical safety as it is one of the main causes of residential fires. According to the FEEDS, half of European dwellings have obsolete electrical installations and 25-30% of residential fires have an electrical source. The EPBD should introduce regular electrical safety checks as a key technical fire prevention measure and to prepare the further electrification of energy in buildings. MEP Cuffe proposed to request Member States to include fire safety information into Energy Performance Certificates and Renovation Passports and to use their

National Building Renovation Plans to improve fire safety, including via awareness campaigns that can use available EU funds.

From the European Commission, Stephan Moser, DG ENER, Head of Unit 'Buildings and Products' confirmed that as buildings are at the service of citizens, the EPBD should be used as an opportunity to address building renovation in a holistic way – fire safety being one of them. Mr Moser emphasised the importance of training and skills of Building & Construction professionals as well as sharing of knowledge and best practices. Ms Katharina Knapton-Vierlich, Head of Unit 'Construction', DG GROW, reiterated the importance of the Fire Information Exchange Platform (FIEP). Building legislations starts with exchange of best practices. The FIEP, gathering fire safety experts and Member States representatives, is responding to this need regarding fire safety.

Krzysztof Biskup - chair of the European Fire Safety Alliance emphasized the importance of reliable and comparable fire statistics for an efficient improvement of fire safety in Europe. Participants of the discussion positively responded to Mr. Biskup's appeal to support a European Parliament Preparatory Action as a follow up of the very successful EU FireStat project aimed at harmonisation of the European fire statistics.



Moderated by the excellent Theresa Griffin, chair of the FEEDS, the two hours conference was co-organised by EuroFSA in collaboration with the European Forum for Electrical Domestic Safety (FEEDS), the Modern Building Alliance, the European Fire Sprinkler Network, the European Association for Passive Fire Protection (EAPFP), the Council of Gas Detection and Environmental Monitoring (CoGDEM), Euralarm and EuroLux.

