

FEU developments

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www.f-e-u.org

Federation of the European Union Fire Officer Associations

FEU is the independent organization in the EU that strives for a higher level of physical safety for all EU citizens

Who cares about uniform fire protection regulations in Europe, about uniform training of emergency responders?
The FEU does - and it does more

History of FEU

In the early nineties of the last century it became evident that decisions on European level had a large impact on the European fire services. But these decisions were made without taking into account the expertise of European professional fire chiefs. This was obviously also due to the fact that no fire service organisation was established at European level which could react quickly enough with professional advice on pending issues.

Thus the idea was born to establish a European network of independent fire safety experts.

The initiative started in 1993 in England, the statute of the new organisation was agreed in 1994 in Palma de Mallorca and FEU was officially founded in 1995 in Finland.

Aim of FEU

The principal aim of 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 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.

Achievements

Several reorganisations within the European Commission (more commissioners, more and more internal competition and strain) created a bureaucratic machine, difficult to approach.

Other than the small unit for civil protection in the Directorate-general Environment, there is no logical entrance for the action field FEU wants to play on.

Even this Civil Protection unit has no consistent interest in fire safety and on top of that it lives under the constant strain of the "Third pillar", which means the Commission has no power in that field, all actions have to rely on Council decisions. We had to realize that in our area of interest the principle of subsidiarity (subsidiarity = if possible, responsibility should be to the lowest administrative level) results that representatives of the Member States can often overrule expert's advice and minimize European initiatives obviously because no Member State wants to admit that improvement of their national system is needed.

Nevertheless FEU has established contacts with some General Directorates of the European Commission, other European organisations aiming at improving the safety of European citizens and – most important – provide members of the network to cooperate in various European projects (Civil protection and Research).

As a consequence FEU was less focussed on the European Commission as thought but used European projects to produce results to enhance fire safety

Some FEU-Products

developed with financial support of the EC within the Leonardo da Vinci programme



Leonardo da Vinci



SAFEHOTEL

Interactive fire safety training of hotel personnel

Problem:

It is widely accepted that training of hotel personnel in fire safety is less than satisfactory - this compromises the safety of hotel guests travelling in Europe.

As one can draw from numerous hotel fires within the last years the risk of fire represents a serious threat to life, health of staff and guests and even the existence of hotel and housing enterprises.

According to a report by the European Commission published in June 2001 the council recommendation 86/666/EEC launched in December 1986 concerning fire safety in existing hotels did not have the desired effect.

Primarily the training of the hotel staff in safety issues is insufficient. It is therefore reality that safety concepts and built-in safety facilities aren't understood and by inattentiveness and carelessness particularly rescue ways are made useless.

Hotel owners outline that it is almost impossible - because of high staff fluctuation (seasonal worker) - to ensure the training of the staff with conventional courses in a cost effective manner.

Objectives:

The project will remedy this deficiency in a way that by means of use of CD this training can be performed in the hotel during the regular business e.g. also during the night hours and thus nearly cost-neutrally.

The project provides:

- A self-tuition CD available in the languages German, Spanish, English, Italian, Norwegian, Slovenian, Norwegian.

The project aims that the hotel staff by using the products of the project

- knows the safety concept of a hotel comprising of structural precautions and organizational measures;
- can identify the structural safety facilities of the own hotel and explain the function of them;
- learns the right behaviour in the daily business and in the case of a fire
- can take up the right measures in the case of fire to minimize the damage for people and goods.

Long term aim:

Quality label for fire safety in hotels

The project provides:

- A Safehotel check-list is available on the website www.safehotel.org which allows hoteliers to check their fire safety standard.
- The Safehotel check-list meant to be used for a voluntary external fire safety inspection can be downloaded as pdf-file.
- After submission of the signed check-list to the secretariat of the FEU the Safehotel quality label will be issued. This label is valid for 3 years. The hotel will be included in the Safehotel databank – accessible from the website.

Conclusion:

The project uses the mechanism of the free market ("Best quality sells) to raise fire safety.

The initiative is beneficial for the hotels, the authorities, the tour operators and travelers, which throughout the EU can trust on a high safety standard in those hotels which trains the staff correspondingly.



www.feucare.org

FEUCARE

Career of professional fire fighters in Europe

Problem:

As one of the major aims of the European Union is the free movement of workers in the EU it is evident that a comparable qualification is a pre-requisite.

While facing the particular challenges and inherent risks of the job as a fire fighter the need for an exchange of best practice and strategies of realistic training on international level is a must for the sake of safety of the personnel.

Aim:

Analysis of the various structures and national peculiarities of European fire services

Results:

The results of the project are published on the INTERNET under www.feucare.org in 7 languages (German, English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Czech).

One can interactively retrieve information about the fire services and associations of 19 countries including most of the EU-member states.

A special databank structure allows to interactively compare results from countries under consideration for example with respect to requirements to join the fire service.

Of further interest may also be the general requirements for fitness and health, as well as the goals and methodology for the physical education, such as swimming, athletics and also the particular training to raise muscle strength to cope with the physical demanding tasks of the job.

The requirements for direct entry for leading roles and work as a fire prevention officer are displayed together with the requirements for promotion to higher ranks and work as an Incident Commander.

For the first time it has been realized to compare the various roles or functions in the fire service hierarchy with the related ranks and badges in use. The countries and roles under consideration can be compared interactively showing at the same time the tasks to be fulfilled in the role and the possibility of direct entry.

Aim:

The primary aim of the FiReComp project has been to achieve a common standard regarding the core competences necessary to fulfil the different functions in the European fire and rescue service sector across Europe.

The basis for these standards should be generic, which would allow for national, regional and local adaptation.

Other goals addressed by the project were:

- the need for sharing knowledge about vocational training and organisational development for the fire and rescue services on a European level
- the need for achieving harmony on a European level where possible and advisable
- provision of lifelong learning opportunities for people in the sector
- create a concrete survey of possible strategies/best practices, regarding the different ways in which fire and rescue personnel is able to become, and remain competent
- strengthening the European network regarding the fire and rescue services;
- the need for improved mobility for fire and rescue personnel within the European Union

Results:

Definition of a European standard of duties and tasks and their recommended European Qualifications level for the three following three key functions within fire and rescue service organizations:

- Fire fighter
- Crew Commander
- Group Commander

For each of these functions, a concise list of duties has been described. For each duty, a series of core and optional tasks has been defined. The list has been created by the working group members through comparison and assessment of each project member country's own duty system and task list. Finally every task on the list has been rated with an EQF (European Qualification Framework) score defining the type and level of knowledge the person in that specific function is recommended to acquire to be able to perform the task correctly. The list serves as comparison table for other fire fighting educators to assess their own standard of professional education.

To maximize the valorisation and dissemination of the FiReComp project, the results are available to the public through an innovative online application "FiReComp Online".

Using this online system, fire and rescue organisations throughout Europe will be able to compare the level of competence of their own fire and rescue professionals with the European "recommended level" as defined during the project. After that "FiReComp Online" can give suggestions for best practices, regarding the different ways in which fire and rescue personnel is able to become, and remain competent according to the recommended levels.



www.multicom112.org

MULTICOM112

Multilingual communication with emergency control-rooms

Problem:

The implementation of the Single European emergency call number 112 has suffered because of poor linguistic competence in Public Safety Answer Points (PSAPs)

Since the implementation of the single European Emergency Call Number by EU Council Decision (91/396/EEC) in 1991 Member States have implemented the technical means to assure that travelers in the case of an emergency can call for help throughout the EU by using the same call number <112>. From a survey about the implementation of <112> published by DG XIII in 1999 one can derive, that for the time being Member States have focused much more on the technological aspect of this Council Decision rather than dealing very much with the requirement expressed in Article 4 which is to assure that these emergency calls are answered and handled in an appropriate manner.

Aim:

Ensure that calls to the single European emergency call number are appropriately answered and handled

The project structure:

- Analysis of the necessary linguistic competence and the related knowledge of basic and advanced vocabulary
- Development of the didactical concept for the self-tuition tools to achieve sufficient linguistic competence by using the potential of the information and communication technologies
- Development of a CD for autonomous training
- Development of an INTERNET environment (Virtual learning environment) for the on-line training
- Field test of the developed learning tools on the final user level

The EU gives high priority to make the single emergency call number known throughout Europe which will result in a more intensified use by the EU-citizens. After the termination of the technical introduction of <112> the European Commission strengthens its efforts to make this important European achievement sufficiently well-known and to simplify the access to the single call number even more. This will inevitably raise the demand for foreign language competence in the PSAPs in the future. It must be stated that it is not possible to meet the requirements with conventional language training.

Therefore 2 projects within the framework of the EU-Leonardo programme for vocational training has been realized with partners from FEU network (vfdb, Germany, contractor). The project has developed modern tools for language training. These tools should allow the operators of an emergency call centre to achieve a sufficient linguistic competence within a short time.

The project provides:

- a self-tuition CD and
- an INTERNET platform for foreign language learning for operators in 11 languages

Target languages:

- English, French, German, Spanish, Dutch, Greek (1st project)
- Czech, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Turkish (2nd project)
- *Gaelic, Basques, Sami, Lithuanian, Finnish, Slovenian (3rd project proposal)*

All EU citizens can benefit from this project if they need help from the emergency services. It can be assumed that with the intended target languages the predominant part of the European Union public can be addressed.



EUSR

Special rescue from heights and depths

Aim:

The initiative aims at supporting a harmonized training for rescue and work in fall-endangered areas throughout Europe

The project provides:

- Curriculum for the basic and advanced multimedia training for work in fall-endangered areas as well as members of rope rescue groups
- Interactive Self-tuition DVD, teaching and learning material in the languages: German, English, Dutch, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Slovenian and Czech
- Provision of the results on the INTERNET
- Establishment of a network of specialists from special rescue teams