

COMMUNIQUÉ

EURALARM POSITION ON THE STATE OF FIRE SAFETY IN EUROPE **Fire Information Exchange Platform 16 October 2017**

Fires are clearly one of the most hideous phenomena taking lives, causing incurable injuries and confronting families with unspeakable pain and life-long consequences. Since 1970, Euralarm has worked intensively with stakeholders in the areas of policy, regulations, standards and guidelines towards keeping Europe safe from fires. We estimate that in Europe alone, estimated 100'000 lives have been saved. Together with over 20 national associations and all the major suppliers, we continue this work.

Unfortunately, events like Grenfell Towers and others are a consistent reality, in commercial, industrial and residential buildings. As a society, we ask ourselves how this can happen especially in the light of what industry and regulators have done. We bring to your attention three key areas:

- A. Few people are ever in a building when a real fire occurs and much less are confronted by the fire itself. We could state that we are victims of our own success. As we are all aware, people have a tendency to “let down their guard” when threats become rare events for them personally resp. when the epicentre is not in our own backyard.
- B. The move towards de-regulation puts the responsibility on the private and public building owners and operators to keep their objects fire safe, thereby ensuring that building occupants receive early warning of any fire event. Regular fire safety reviews by certified professionals is crucial. However, the importance of such reviews can and are overseen resulting in these responsibilities not being sufficiently prioritised.
- C. Fire loads in buildings have grown considerably due to modern furnishings, increase in the number of electrical/electronic devices as well as exterior wall insulation. The latter has made these objects more energy efficient, but installation processes and certain materials have contributed significantly to a buildings fire load. Modern furnishings can reduce the reaction and evacuation times over earlier years.

From the above, Euralarm calls for the following measures:

1. A holistic approach towards achieving and maintaining fire safety that cover three aspects:
 - i. The building structure and its contents must be considered as to how they contribute to the overall fire load as well as how they can hinder and restrain a fire event.
 - ii. Technical means to provide early detection and evacuation of the building coupled with extinguishing.
 - iii. Organisational plans on what is to be done in such an event and who is responsible to execute what measures.
2. Qualifications of the people and companies that define the (holistic) fire safety concept, design/engineer the solution, install and commission such and finally those maintaining the systems must be in line with the recently released EN 16763 Services Standard for Fire Safety Systems and Security Systems.
3. A pan-European data collection of fire events is required. Euralarm has completed a 3 year study of several countries and concluded that a European approach is greatly needed. A European Norm based on the knowledge derived from the Euralarm report would advance this effort, allowing all to quantify and qualify the problem, but also define corrective measures.

Euralarm is committed to work with the European Commission and other stakeholders to continue the effort to keep Europe fire safe!

About Euralarm

Euralarm represents the electronic fire and security industry, providing leadership and expertise for industry, market, policy makers and standards bodies. Our members make society safer and secure through systems and services for fire detection, intrusion detection, access control, video monitoring, alarm transmission and alarm receiving centres. Founded in 1970, Euralarm represents over 5'000 companies within the fire safety and security industry valued at 67 billion Euros. Euralarm members are national associations and individual companies from across Europe.

Gubelstrasse 22 • CH-6301 Zug • Switzerland

E: secretariat@euralarm.org

W: www.euralarm.org