



## **Statement of 8 EU trade Associations delivered by Arnaud Duvielguerbigny, Secretary General of PU Europe, at the FIEP on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

I am pleased to be given the opportunity to share the views of a group of associations representing various plastics industries manufacturing high quality products for the construction sector. The industries I am speaking on behalf of are (alphabetical order): EUMEPS, EUPC, EXIBA, FlameRetardants.EU, ISOPA, Plastics Europe, PINFA and PU Europe (to which I am the sec of gen). In other words, these sectors comprise the production of polymers and flame retardants through to the manufacture of performance construction products based on plastics.

We see the initiation of the FIEP as a most significant step to enhance fire safety for European citizens and we greatly appreciate this effort from the side of the Commission and the Member states. Our industries intend to be active and constructive partners within the FIEP and this is why we would like to share with you a number of points which we believe are going to be useful as this Platform begins its work.

It won't come to you as a surprise that fire safety has always been and continues to be a major objective for the plastics industry and an integral part of the design of our products. Our industries have for a long time brought an active contribution in research, standardization and regulatory activities on the topic, at European and national levels, as well as the international level.

Building on this experience, we would certainly recommend the comprehensive approach that this complex topic deserves. And to put the FIEP on a good path, we think a good starting point could be to conduct a "gap analysis" to identify what the fire status is across Member States at the present time. This would enable a factual picture to be established on where if any, gaps are in terms of fire safety approaches. Such an approach would allow the evaluation of the adequacy of current fire safety standards and inform any future roadmap on to improve them if needed.

In addition, this platform is ideally placed to make recommendations on how to improve fire statistics at EU level, more harmonized/consistent.

As most of the agenda items of today's meeting concern fire safety in buildings, altogether we have come up with some suggestions on areas in which an exchange of best practices would be most efficient in our view (the list is non-exhaustive):

- Importance of application system performance vs product testing,
- Attention to the design of urban environments (*eg access to buildings and their interaction with the wider environment*),
- active fire prevention measures by installing fire detection, fire alarms and suppression devices,



- attention for organizational aspects such as clear fire safety responsibilities, fire drills, but also public awareness campaigns.
- well planned and equipped and safe intervention of fire fighters
- and last but not least: a proper understanding and enforcement of national fire safety laws.

We need to recognise, as stated by Commissioner Bienkowska a month ago, that a number of factors affecting the fire safety framework are of national or even local nature, which means that development of an effective framework should respect the subsidiarity principle. However, any progress under the platform would anyhow be invaluable, as we are speaking about saving lives.

Finally, while we understand that this FIEP still needs to clarify the remits of its work/scope, we call on you the decision-makers, to ensure that all stakeholders involved adhere to high standards of transparency and objectivity. We also see a need for the work of this platform to be rooted in facts and adhering to a science-based approach in its way of working. Information provided in this platform should be reliable and clear enough to be exploited safely as learnings by all its members. Furthermore, as I hope you have understood from my intervention, our industries have a great deal of expertise and experience on the fire safety issue, and we obviously stand ready to contribute and commit to the functioning of this platform, and of any subsequent strand of work.

Thanks again for the opportunity to share with you what we consider as key ingredients for the success of this platform. together will my fellow industry colleagues we look forward to fruitful discussions that will effectively improve the fire safety situation across the European Union.

I thank you very much for your attention.