

STOP FATAL FIRE FUMES

Fire fighters and fire experts call the EU to action on toxic fire smoke

Brussels, 30 June: Fire safety experts, health specialists and fire fighters today called on the European Union to take urgent action on fire smoke toxicity testing.

Fires in European buildings cause over 4000 deaths and 70000 hospitalisations per year, and more than half of those deaths are caused not by the fire directly but by its smoke.

“Fire smoke contains a lethal cocktail of toxicants, yet there are no European regulations or testing protocols covering the smoke toxicity of construction materials,” reported Prof. Richard Hull, fire toxicity expert from the University of Central Lancashire, at a high-level meeting of fire safety experts organised by Fire Safe Europe, the European Fire Fighters Union Alliance and MEPs Pavel Poc and Christel Schaldemose.

“Lives are being unnecessarily put at risk by failing to address this issue,” said Mr Poc. “The inhalation of fire smoke causes chronic long-term health problems and is the tragic cause of far too many deaths in building fires.”

Mrs Schaldemose added: “The mechanism is already in place to introduce smoke toxicity testing for construction materials, so it is an unprecedented opportunity for the EU to take coordinated action on this issue.”

Deadly fumes also make the work of fire fighters highly dangerous. “Toxic smoke from these products is not only putting our health at risk — it’s also preventing us from saving the lives of others,” said Tommy Kjaer of the European Fire Fighters Union Alliance. “Europe’s politicians need to address this issue urgently.”

“As medical doctors, we do our best to save lives and we have European guidelines for it” added Marc Sabbe, professor in emergency and disaster medicine at the Catholic University of Leuven, “but there should be European guidelines to prevent deaths too”.

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About EFFUA The European Fire Fighters Unions Alliance (EFFUA) is an international alliance of independent trade unions representing fire fighters. [Find more information about EFFUA on: www.fffua.org](http://www.fffua.org)

About Fire Safe Europe Fire Safe Europe (FSEU) is a broad and unique cross-sectorial alliance of fire experts, fire fighters, European associations, and international companies. FSEU’s mission is to improve fire safety in buildings for European citizens. [Find FSEU’s call to action on: www.firesafeeurope.eu](http://www.firesafeeurope.eu)