EU FIRESTAT PROJECT - CLOSING DATA GAPS AND PAVING THE WAY FOR PAN-EUROPEAN FIRE SAFETY EFFORTS
2ND STEERING GROUP

30th September 2021; 14:00-17:30 GMT+2 Online meeting

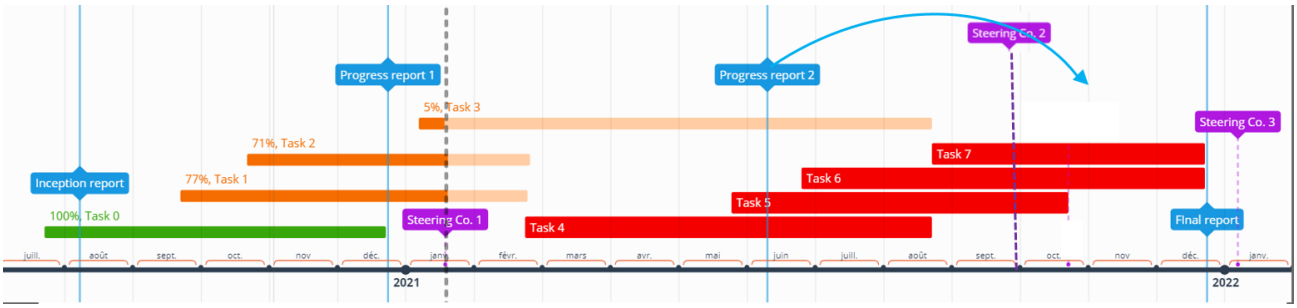
Meeting minutes

1. Welcome

Heikki Väänänen (DG GROW) opened the floor and welcomed all the participant of the steering group. Comments and questions can be delivered during the meeting or after the meeting via email

2. Overview of the project progress

The project progress was presented, which is moving ahead according to the timetable. Task 3 and 4 are almost finished and only waiting for comments from the Steering group. Task 5, 6 and 7 are ongoing and should end by the end of the year. The 2nd progress report was postponed so that the 2nd steering group can include their comments.



3. Comments on Task 1 report - Terminology and data collected survey

The report of Task 1 was circulated to the group. No comments were received therefore can be considered it as finalised.

4. Task 2 – Data needed for decision making

The quesitonnaire from Task 2 was presented in the previous meeting. In this meeting, the analyses of the answers of the questionnaires were presented as well as the outcome of the quesitonnaire. In brief, eight variables should be harmonized and collected as a priority (Tier 1). Once the previous eight variables have been implemented efficiently, then five additional variables (Tier 2) should be collected. The complete list is presented in the attached documents. Finally, it is worth noting that collecting these variables as part of the harmonized European fire statistics should not prevent the European countries to continue collecting other variables in parallel.

- ACTION: Provide comments on the report of Task 2 by 15th October 2021.

<u>Comments and questions from the Steering Group:</u>
Heikki VAANANEN: I follow the reasoning on the issue around this topic. Now that the concept is developed, will the indicators in Tier 3 be kept on board?
Answer: For the next steps of the project (Task 3-4) we focus only on the 13 variables from Tiers 1 and 2 so that we don't spread the work and make it superficial.

Heikki VAANANEN: Did you check Task 3 indicators in the light of their links with those of Tier 1 and 2?
Answer: The selection was based on the variables voted by the majority and already collected in most countries. This methodology was based on the suggestion received from EuroStat which was to keep it simple and focus on the most important aspects first. We will look at the other valuable from Tier 3, to see if any of them is linked to the variable in Tiers 1 & 2.

Heikki VAANANEN: it would be important to define how we start and how we could extend and implement the work in the future because highlighting the links then other information could arise. Moreover, it is important also to recognise when there is a need for specific indicators which are not available in current fire statistics.

Benoit DOME: Collecting only the age of fatalities will not be sufficient to describe the personal characteristics of the victims. Adding other criteria such as disability could be important.
Answer: Amongst all the variables, the disability ended in Tier 3 because it was not already collected most countries. This is something that will be included in the next steps of the project and be linked to variables in Tier 1 & 2.

5. Task 3 – Data collection methodologies

Three alternative methods for collecting the information identified under Task 2 were presented. Their advantages/weaknesses were shown as well as their cost estimates for the various Member States. This included defining the methodologies to complete missing data and considerations related to the reliability and uncertainty of the data collected. Finally, the proposed methodologies fire statistics were compared to the existing harmonized statistics on road accidents in EU. Further details are available in the report.

- ACTION: Provide comments on the report of Task 3 by 15th October 2021.

Comments and questions from the Steering Group:
Franklyn OKWARA: The results of this study could be included in the education of new fire safety engineers within the EU.
Answer: This is something that should be shared and hopefully will be implemented in future. It is also really important to have educated persons to fill in the report to ensure data quality (fire engineers, fire officers, etc.) able to correctly insert the inputs, elaborate and interpret the data.
The different order of magnitude in the costs we estimated amongst countries is due to the different definitions adopted for fire incidents. The comparison between countries always comes back to the fundamental problem for definitions, which will eventually be problematic for decision making if we want to consider it at a European scale.

Heikki VAANANEN: For the costs, are the figures comparable? You need to have a population from which you can sample and then you can make the analysis from the existing data.
Answer: Yes, we consider that somebody has filled in the data both in the census and the sampling survey in the cost calculation. This is purely the handling of the data at the national level. For a fire officer in the USA to collect the data, it was estimated to take 0.45 h and for a census, you will have to repeat it for every single fire. The cost calculation on the sample survey is based on the NFPA practice and we have been doing it for more than 25 years and the cost per incident becomes quite low with experience.

Heikki VAANANEN: The cost is an important factor, but it is only a part of the equation. If we are talking about the investigation at the European level, how much better would the data be for the census approach? Is it better to pay the extra amount of money? How much use of the data there will be?
Answer: The answer depends on how you want to use the data. If you want to compare only the total of fire incidents then a sample will be the right choice while if you want to have a more complete database where researchers can inquire into the specific incident, then the census is the more appropriate method. It really depends on how you want to use it. It also depends on the country. If the country is homogeneous and there is not much difference geographically, economically, etc. then you don't need a census

Heikki VAANANEN: For policymaking, what kind of quality improvement in fire safety could be done with this methodology?
Answer: This is very difficult to be estimated and could be a research project of its own. However Task 5 will be focused on cost/benefit analysis so it will hopefully answer some aspects of this question.

6. Task 4 – Terminology

Definitions were propose for the 13 values (Tier 1 and 2) identified in Task 2. The objective is to elaborate clear definitions for these values and associated variables that will be collected across the EU and to ensure a common understanding. Priority was given to existing harmonized or widely used definitions, such as those in ISO TS 17755 2 standard or used by Eurostat. This terminology constitutes a minimum

dataset for collection at the local level and it would not prevent a fire department or national authority from having a more detailed data collection in parallel.

- ACTION: Provide comments on the report of Task 4 by 15th October 2021.

Comments and questions from the Steering Group:
Heikki VAANANEN: In the definition of damage, 100 euro for the property is a low number. Is the objective to include also small fires?
AS: Yes, so the aim was to include all uncontrolled fires and to exclude very small fire event (e.g. item burnt in the kitchen).
HEIKKI VAANANEN: the issue is that the fire brigade is already there and I am wondering what would be the difference if the definition was just damage to property.
Answer: If we include all fire event where the fire brigade is present, including near-misses, false alarms or small fires that did not make much damage, then it will skew the statistics. For example, in a high-rise building, the alarm is connected to the fire brigade. If the only thing damaged is the cooking pan then this fire should not be included in these statistics.
HEIKKI VAANANEN: Would that fire be recorded as a false alarm?
Answer: It depends on the structure of the national system. This scenario could be called false alarm or fire incident in some countries. We added this definition to avoid misinterpretation.
Benoit DOME: The threshold value is very important and small and big fires should be collected to start good prevention activity
Answer: This threshold should allow collecting small fires as well.

Heikki VAANANEN: Regarding the number of deaths and injuries – there is no limitation of time after the fire. How practical this is?
Answer: The no limitation in time is due to the differences found in the various countries that could record deaths at the scene, after 10-30 days or even later by checking the deaths with the medical institute. The idea is to keep it as wide as possible to cover existing practices and aiming at harmonising them. It is also important to note that in many places, it is difficult to know the deaths resulting from the fire (on the long term) because it is confidential information.
HEIKKI VAANANEN: The value should therefore be referred to as the best knowledge

Heikki VAANANEN: in the building characteristics, type of building. I think is a good idea that you included building under construction as a separate category, you can also call it 'building under construction or renovation'. It could relate to a different fire scenario.
Answer: Renovation is an important part but the problem with the renovation could go from very small to complete renovation. We consider that the building category remains the same during renovation, but I the field "area of origin" or "item first ignited", we can record if it was due to renovation works, so the context will capture this aspect.

Heikki VAANANEN: How would you classified or where would you classify an abandoned building?
Answer: This would fit in the class 'Other buildings or not classified'

7. Tasks 5 & 6 – Cost Benefit Methodology and Case studies

The goals of these tasks is to propose an appropriate cost/benefit assessment methodology to be used by Member States and/or the European Commission to support regulatory and/or other policy decisions on fire safety. It also provide three case studies (to be agreed with the Commission services) where the cost/benefit assessment methodology/approach has been applied

Literature searches have been done. Known examples in Sweden are e.g. within arson fires of schools (research project), Residential fires (research project), Smoke detectors (Min. of housing) have been included. However the data is scares in this field, most literature is on sprinkler and detectors.

The methodology for the cost benefit with criteria and parameters is being refined starting from earlier experiences and synchronised with the outcome from this project. A report is being drafted and is expected to be ready by end of October.

The case studies will then be elaborate on experience from Sweden. It is very difficult to perform a case study on EU level so we propose to perform it at regional level but in many cases we need to find values that do not exist or cannot be found (especially on costs) therefore hypothetical cases might be considered.

- ACTION: Share suggestions or existing studies supporting the cost-benefit analysis for Tasks 5&6

Comments and questions from the Steering Group
Heikki VAANANEN: I understand the difficulties and challenges of the case study and the model around it. If some of the members of the steering group have some ideas that could be valuable input for the discussion.
Answer: if in your country this analysis is developed, I would encourage you to share it with us.

Benoit DOME: You propose a lot of case studies where the fire already exists, and it would be useful to have some information about the prevention efforts.
Answer: This is a good point to be incorporated

8. Task 7 – Support for the future

This task started in September, the goals are the following:

- Propose an appropriate data collection method using results of task 3 and input from external review group.
- Propose test for EU legislation to ensure that the statistical data will be collected in a common way in the Member States.
- Propose EU level actions fire safety and prevention efforts of Member States.
- Propose data collection templates and method as support to standardization

- ACTION: Suggestions or proposals that can match with the above-mentioned objectives are welcome.

9. Review of planning and reporting

- **List of actions for Steering Group:**
  - Comment on the report of Task 2, 3 and 4 by 15th October 2021.
  - Share suggestions or existing studies supporting the cost-benefit analysis for Task 5
  - Call for inputs or proposals for Task 7

The 2nd progress report will be finalised upon receiving all he comment on the 15th October.

The final project report will be submitted by the end of December or beginning of January.

The next and final meeting will be organised in January or February 2022, in Brussels if the situation permits. In the meantime the participants are invited to contact the project consortium for any inputs, comments or questions at **EU.FireStat@efectis.com**,

Finalised reports will be uploaded on the project website: **https://eufirestat-efectis.com/**

10. End of the meeting

The meeting was closed at 17:30.