

COST Action C 17 Fire Loss to Historic Buildings

Working Group 1 Meeting, Schonbrunn Palace, Vienna, Austria 16 - 17 July 2004

Introduction

In opening the meeting, I Maxwell, Chairman, acknowledged the accidental death of French colleague, Michael Schall, in a drowning accident that occurred following the Action meeting in Trondheim. The Chairman paid tribute to Michael's knowledge, abilities and expertise, and his positive contribution to the work of the Action. A one-minute period of silence was observed in commemoration of such a tragic loss.

Attending

Wolfgang Kippes	Austria
Dietmar Wohltan	Austria
Petar Hristov	Bulgaria
Galina Mileva	Bulgaria
Simon Singer	France
Kalle Reivila	Finland
Alberto Dusman	Italy
Stephano Marsella	Italy
Einar Karlsen	Norway
Lenka Molek	Slovenia
Erik Egardt	Sweden
Steve Emery	UK
Ingval Maxwell	UK (Chairman)

Following personal introductions, a particular welcome was offered to Lenka Molek, Slovenia, who was attending her first COST Action C17 meeting.

Apologies were noted from Kerstin Westerlund (Sweden)

Agenda

The meeting agenda was formally approved.

As there were no corrections to the Minutes of the Trondheim meeting, held on 17th April 2004, these were approved.

Background to Meeting

Following discussion and agreement in Trondheim, a topic-specific Working Group 1 meeting was considered necessary with the intention of assessing the different electronic recording systems of fire statistics that were currently in operation.

The meeting had the specific aim of -

- Establish commonality in the various adopted approaches
- Identifying the range of differences
- Devising the specific data needs from the user's perspective
- Consider what needed to be done to integrate the systems
- Determine what follow up action needed to be pursued in each country
- Prepare a draft questionnaire

The meeting was held in two parts.

Part A: Presentation of Research Activity: 16 July 2004

In Part A, a series of discussion papers (See Annex Report dated 26 July 2004) were delivered:

- **Wolfgang Kippes** “Developing an Internet-based Data-base system on European Fire Events, and the Results from existing statistics from NFPA, USA”
- **Steve Emery** “Electronic recording system of fire statistics in the UK”
- **Petar Hristov** “Electronic recording system of fire statistics in Bulgaria”
- **Kalle Reivila** “Electronic recording system of fire statistics in Finland”
- **Erik Egardt** “Electronic recording system of fire statistics in Sweden”
- **Einar Karlsen** “Electronic recording system of fire statistics in Norway”

In addition, a paper was tabled by:

- **Alberto Dusman** “Schult’z Hazard Analysis”

Led by Wolfgang Kippes, a scientific site inspection of recently completed fire detection and suppression systems in Schonbrunn Palace was also undertaken.

Part B: Conclusions

In Part B, Summary Conclusions from Part A provided the basis for group discussion, the identification of opportunities, and agreements:

Current opportunities

In reviewing what political possibilities currently existed to promote the need to include historic buildings data on fire reporting pro-forma a number of pan-European opportunities were considered possible at this time -

- S Emery (UK) reported at that he was due to present evidence to an all-party group of Members of Parliament who were promoting Fire Safety in the UK.
- W Kippes (Austria) indicated that a similar position existed in the USA where many Senate Members also sat on the NFPA council.
- P Hristov (Bulgaria) indicated that COST C 17 had opened up avenues of awareness in Bulgaria so that politicians and decision makers could be informed of the need.
- W Kippes (Austria) suggested that the Austrian Volunteer Fire Brigades were a powerful body that carried a lot of influence but, as yet, they were not well linked to politicians.
- E Karlsen (Norway) indicated that a programme of co-operation between the two relevant Directorates was just starting in Norway, and that a national goal had been determined that historic buildings should not be lost to the effects of fire.
- E Egardt (Sweden) indicated that all Municipalities in Sweden were required to prepare Action Plans that analysed all risks, and this included the risks to historic buildings
- I Maxwell (UK) referred to the UK initiative in the Fire Brigades to produce Integrated Risk Management Assessments, and that built heritage would be included in that process
- S Marsella (Italy) noted that a recently started programme in Italy focused on teaching a performance based approach but that agreement between responsible ministers for

fire and heritage may be difficult to achieve.

- A Dusman (Italy) considered that it may be possible to affect an integrated approach between the fire and heritage authorities in his localised area of responsibility in Italy.
- S Singer (France) indicated that links between the two relevant French Departments (Ministry of Interior and Ministry for Arts and Culture) were not perfect and, consequently, it was unlikely that rapid progress could be made in bringing the two aspects together.
- L Molek (Slovenia) thought that good connections between the Ministries responsible could be possible in Slovenia where, following the introduction of a 1994 Law, heritage interests had to be included in the assessment of risks and dangers.

Conclusions: 17 July 2004

Given the wide range of potential and pending changes in the fire reporting mechanisms that currently exist in each country, it was considered possible that the time was right to promote an additional requirement for the reporting of fire incident information to get better data on how historic buildings were affected. It was considered that this information would be beneficial to the -

- Buildings themselves
- Owners
- Building managers
- Fire fighting authorities
- Insurance companies
- Politicians
- Lawmakers

The challenge therefore was to establish how information on historic buildings could be incorporated into fire data-base pro-forma. Experience had shown that heritage bodies did not keep their lists adequately up-to-date. Ideally, what information existed should be data-cleansed and made available in an electronic form for incorporation into computerised fire reporting records.

In this process there was a need to consider how near-misses might also be recorded. In this particular challenge it was recognised that building owners should be free to submit the information without penalty, otherwise little or no reporting would occur. In the short term it has also to be recognised that not all Fire Brigades are computerised, so it may take some time before such a system can be adopted universally. It was possible that the Scottish experience in creating a National Fire Data-base for Category A listed buildings, together with the UK approach on developing Integrated Risk Management Assessments (IRMA), could provide useful guidance for future activities.

In concluding the discussion a number of points were agreed:

- It was recognised that there was a lack of historic buildings data in every system and this caused some concern. It was agreed that there was a need to consider how to include historic buildings data in the fire reporting processes.
- It was agreed there was a need to consider how to carry out more effective links between the historic building authorities and those compiling fire statistics.
- It was recognised that opportunities currently exist in each country to consider how to make Historic Buildings data more accessible as matters presently stand.
- It was thought possible to agree a common format with a view to finding ways of categorising and analysing historic buildings data that could be included in the fire reporting pro-forma procedure.
- It was agreed that a Short Term Scientific Mission (STSM) should be carried out to address these particular issues. The aim would be to make it easier to compare the detail from each country's reporting pro-forma system, with a view to rationalising the causes and impact of fire affect on historic buildings.

In taking the first step towards pulling this challenge together, it was agreed that the STSM should be carried out by K Reivila (Finland). He had already volunteered to undertake such a mission during the Trondheim meeting and I Maxwell (UK) offered to host it in Scotland. On
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current timetabling this could take place during the last week of August, or the first week in September, 2004 so that a report could be offered to the COST Action C17 Varna International Workshop.

In discussing the mission Terms of Reference it was agreed that the hypothesis of “*Identifying and setting eight levels of fire causes would be sufficient for European historic building managers to gain useful information*” should be addressed. The mission would consider all the adopted categories in other countries in such a way to draw parallels that could lead to the creation of a “*Template of common levels*”. By linking the data from different countries through this over-arching template it was hoped that a reappraisal of all the European data could be affected to a common base. In advance of the mission it was agreed that Working Group members from each country would e-mail details to K Reivila (Finland) of how their system currently determined different causes of fire.

Any Other Business

I Maxwell (UK) reminded members who had not yet done so to submit a short CV to him so that he could compile an accurate overview of the experience which existed in the Action.

S Marsella (Italy) tabled two publications offering guidance and advice on dealing with disabled persons in emergency situations -

- *"Il Soccorso alle Persone Disabili: Indicazioni per la Gestione dell'emergenza" Ministero dell 'Interno, Rome, Italy. 2004*
- *"Accessibilita e Sicurezza dei Luoghi di Lavoro. Manuale per la progettazione degli uffici e dei locali aperti al pubblico" Stefano Marsella and Paolo Mirabelli, Il Sole 24 Ore, 2001 ISBN 88-324-4457-7*

A Dusman (Italy) indicated that he was happy to present the results of his work on occupants within heritage buildings at the COST C17 Sienna meeting, and tabled a CD ROM –

- *"Risk Analysis Methods in Museums" Schult'z. Series Casa Editrice Il Prato.*

P Hristov (Bulgaria) indicated that arrangements for the Varna International Workshop were progressing well, and that the Call for Papers had produced participants from Hungary, Russia

and Turkey, with possible participation from colleagues in Macedonia and Greece. The deadline for submission of abstracts was 1st August 2004. D Wohltan (Austria) indicated that he would be presenting information on the financial market, and S Marsella (Italy) confirmed he would be presenting a case study.

W Kippes (Austria) inquired if it was possible to obtain 30 copies of the recently released Nordic volume to be sent to NFPA members for their meeting in May 2005. E Egardt (Sweden) and K Reivila (Finland) indicated that the Nordic Report was available for download as a PDF file on the WWW. W Kippes (Austria) also indicated that he had been invited to give a lecture on the work at Schonbrunn Palace to the Turkish Senate in Istanbul in October 2004. In preparing his material he offered to include some input on the intentions of COST Action C17, and extend an invitation to Turkey to join the action. This was agreed. Related to this, G Mileva (Bulgaria) indicated that Varna University had invited the Director of the Turkish Fire Brigade to speak at the COST International Workshop in September.

S Emery (UK) intimated that a Conference entitled "*Fire Protection of Historic Town Centres*" was due to be held in Chester, England on 19 - 20 October 2004, noting that the Chairman of COST Action C17 was the Keynote speaker. A draft programme had been prepared, and the final version would be e-mailed to members in due course.

E Egardt (Sweden) indicated that reports on church fires, and the evacuation of disabled persons from buildings, were currently being prepared by the Swedish Board of Antiquities.

E Karlsen (Norway) confirmed the release to Action members of two reports on Water Mist Systems, following the Trondheim meeting. It was noted that these would be of considerable value to the work of Working Group 2.

S Singer (France) advised that he was soon to meet the French Prime Minister and would raise the issues of joint collaboration between relevant Departmental bodies for the exchange of information, and the need for improved collaboration between fire and heritage authorities.

In concluding the meeting, I Maxwell (UK) indicated that the discussions had clearly raised the need for closer collaboration between the Action's four Working Groups. He anticipated that following the Varna International Workshop, a forward programme would be worked out

to achieve this.

He thanked all participants for their valuable contributions and, in particular, W Kippes (Austria), and his team, for all the support behind the scenes in making that the meeting so productive.

The meeting closed at 12.25 pm.

Ingval Maxwell
Chairman COST Action C17 Working Group 1

26 July 2004