



## Improving fire safety in the EU

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# Missing links to improve fire safety in the EU

1. Structural fires are not recognized as a disaster
2. Fire safety is squeezed by the subsidiarity principle
3. Gap between emergency services and civil protection
4. Fire is a disjointed matter at EU level
5. Data collecting and cross border sharing of lessons learned





# Structural fires are not classified as a disaster

Yes,

- not really leading to disruption
- relatively short time-frame
- mostly limited extend
- not often disturbing the functioning of a community
- mainly not exceeding the ability of the affected community

Yet,

- more structural fire fatalities (4 to 6.000 fatalities a year – nearly 80% in the domestic area) than natural hazard casualties ( $\pm$  3.200 victims/year [EEA])
- discriminates and mostly affects vulnerable people





Each fire safety strategy  
should primarily be  
focusing on  
the housing of  
elderly and  
social vulnerable people.



# Structural fires are not classified as a disaster

We should examine the inclusion of structural fires as a permanent disaster because of the equal long-term impact

We should pay balanced attention on both phenomena:  
*sudden disasters versus the ongoing daily tragedies*



# Squeezed by the subsidiarity principle

In the EU context, fire issues are evaluated as a pure national competence.

At national level, fire issues are mostly further laid down at municipal level.

The subsidiarity principle would better be re-evaluated:

- It can continue to exist for building codes and responding to emergencies
- It should be lifted at a higher level for the risk assessment, data collecting, R&D and fire safety science



# Gap between emergency services and civpro

- One of the conclusions of the ECPM interim consultation 2016:  
*“the commission will assess...making full use of Europe’s expertise and assets for (**research**), preparedness and response”*
- This is where the EU safety science policy should lead us:  
a holistic approach to get the best outcomes using the most efficient processes leading to the highest rate of implementation





# Fire as a disjointed matter at EU-level

- fire safety has no SPOC (single point of contact) at EU-level
- current approach: fragmented and narrow scope (e.g. construction products)
- future approach: holistic and broad scope



# “societal benefit “ driven

- *defining and determining a set of (existing or modified) test methods, in order to increase survivability and escape capabilities during domestic fires (May 2017)*





# Data collecting and sharing of lessons learned

- sound data collection to produce harmonised statistics in EU
- sharing of the fire research / fire investigation outcomes leading to an integrated and evidence-based advisory strategy
- emphasizing on disseminating and empowering the implementation at local level



## Conclusion: improve the societal debate

- By promoting the coherence and cohesion between all initiatives, the EC could express
  - her **willingness** to be the generator of the global safety approach for a safe Europe
  - her **conviction** that only a holistic approach will protect citizens in the most effective way
  - her **wish** to using all public available means in the EU in the most efficient way
  - her **belief** that sound decisions are made on evidence-based research



## A Safer Europe For All