



FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION – September 2024

EAPFP statement in response to the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry Phase Two (final) Report

The **European Association for Passive Fire Protection (EAPFP)** welcomes the publication of the *Final Report of the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry*, published on 4th September, and notes the recommendations that the report makes to ensure that such a fire will not happen again.

In light of the work that the chairman, Sir Martin Moore-Bick and his colleagues undertook for the phase one report which determined what happened during the fire, we were confident that the final report on why it happened and whose fault it was, would also be comprehensive, concise and hard hitting.

We have heard the of the evidence and conclusions as we have followed the Public Inquiry over the last six years. The numerous points of failure of regulators, manufacturers, designers, contractors, approval bodies etc. is a reminder of the significant structural and cultural failings of some parts of the UK construction industry. The Report is one from which we must learn and we can also draw some parallels in the European arena.

- The EAPFP welcomes the criticism of the use of small-scale Reaction to Fire tests to evaluate the fire performance of external walls in UK Building Regulations and associated guidance documents. This is something that is also common across Europe. The Report concentrates on the use of national British Standard fire tests and classes, but the issue is deeper than that. The use of Euroclasses is also unsuited to evaluate external fire conditions, which should be evaluated by large scale system tests.
- The EAPFP welcomes the recommendation that responsibility for fire safety of buildings in the UK should be brought together under one regulator. At the time of the fire, three UK government departments had responsibilities in fire safety from Building Regulations, through construction product safety to looking after the fire service and fire risk assessment of occupied buildings. Most recently the new Building Safety Regulator has a special responsibility for Higher Risk Buildings making four in total. In addition, some of the departments are formed from staff taken from other departments. Such a fragmentation is not conducive to joined up thinking and this has been reflected in UK fire regulation over the years.
- EAPFP also welcomes the recommendation for a National UK Regulator for Construction Products.
- The EAPFP notes the recommendation that a system of mandatory accreditation of Fire Risk Assessors of occupied buildings be introduced. This is long overdue and is part of a bigger problem of the lack of structured evaluation of the skills, knowledge and experience required for fire risk assessors but also many other actors in passive fire protection from designers through to installers. Again, to a greater or lesser extent depending on country, this is a European issue as well.
- The EAPFP is pleased to see that the chairman recommends that an application for building control approval for a higher-risk building (currently over 18m high and 7 storeys – but definition can be expanded by the Secretary of State) includes a statement from the Designer that the design of the building will be as safe as required by the UK Building Regulations.

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- We similarly welcome the recommendation for a licensing scheme for installation contractors working on Higher Risk Buildings and that any building control application for a higher-risk building be supported by a personal undertaking from a senior person from the Principal Contractor to ensure the building is as safe as is required by the Building Regulations.
If enacted, these recommendations will help prevent the culture of ‘blame-passing’ that Sir Martin outlines in the report as endemic in the UK industry.

The EAPFP recognises that many of the findings and recommendations are also relevant to other European countries which makes the work of the association increasingly relevant and important.

For its part, the EAPFP will continue its mission to share knowledge and best practice in passive fire protection in Europe through the provisions of correctly designed, manufactured and installed passive fire protection.

We will also continue to work with other pan-European bodies such as CEN, EOTA, CPE, Fire Safe Europe, European Fire Safety Alliance and the European Commission to ensure that a fire of this type is unlikely to occur again.

The publication of the Final Report of the Grenfell Tower Fire Public Inquiry reminds us there is much more to do.

This statement is the EAPFP’s initial response to the Report and we may comment in more detail once the findings and recommendations have been reviewed at greater length.

Niall Rowan

EAPFP President

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For further information on the EAPFP, visit <https://eapfp.com/>

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