

7TH MEETING OF THE CTIF VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS COMMISSION  
*6th April of 2022*

Participants :

- Chairman Christoph Weltecke (Germany)
- Christophe Marchal (France)
- Finland
- Poland
- Greece
- Sweeden
- Slovenia
- Lituania
- Netherlands
- Estonia + Austria

**I Introduction**

- Brief history of the Commission and the chairmanship handover
- Wish to meet twice a year in order to fulfil the Commission's missions
- 11 countries present

**II COVID-19 IMPACT ON VOLUNTEER FIRE SERVICE**

- The pandemic is still ongoing in all countries: necessity to discuss about how it has affected the work of volunteer firefighters.
- Netherlands: establishes a positive aspect of the pandemic as a lot more people ended up being available for the fire station (couldn't go to their current work). Helped them and still do even though the restrictions are now less present.
- France: The main issue was to cope with the ambulance services (as it is assured by firefighters): need to adapt the procedure of emergency transport. Volunteers' implication in vaccination and test centres: a challenge that helped to promote volunteerism among firefighters. Current obligation for a firefighter (either volunteer or professional) to be fully vaccinated: led to a decrease of about 3% of volunteers. However, the Covid issue was successfully faced by emergency services despite the challenge for volunteerism.
- Estonia: Impact of pandemic on the prevention activities usually assured by volunteers.

- Poland: Highlights the use of numeric devices during the pandemic and importance of keeping going with these devices in order to become more efficient in the emergency response.
- Finland: The number of young people taking part to volunteerism has decreased as the fire stations were closed during the pandemic and therefore no educational activities were organised for the youth; but more adults took part to complement the basic rescue service which happened to increase the global number of volunteers.
- Slovenia: The activity was not affected that much even though their system is based on volunteerism; big impact of COVID on the educational and training sector, especially for the volunteers and the youth. Want to take further measure to be able to maintain their activities in the future and to counteract another pandemic.
- Discussion that shows the volunteer system is successful; but it is still too early to draw conclusions as the pandemic still goes on.

### III WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

- The French brigade already started an initiative towards the EU Commission regarding the protection of the volunteer status; French Federation of firefighters promotes a new directive on civic engagement and volunteerism.
- Opportunity of the French Presidency of the Council of EU and interest of the draft conclusions of the EU Commission on civil protection in view of climate change which emphasizes the importance of volunteerism.
- Not on the scope of the working time directive; necessity to maintain and protect volunteerism. In the face of the threat: need to work together and to raise awareness regarding the side effects for the Commission and Parliament.
- Netherlands: No differentiation between the volunteers and professionals which is a problem for the Dutch Parliament; all fire services were asked their opinion and 50% of volunteers would stop their activities if there were to be a differentiation between them and the professionals.
- Poland: there is no regulation concerning volunteers whereas there is one for professionals.
- Finland: idea of defining voluntary fire fighting as a public activity which compensation could be paid as a reward and not a salary; could help to draw the line between the working directive and volunteerism.

Next meeting: During the two first weeks of October 2022, in Slovenia