Establishment of the Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union

Karl-Heinz Banse: "A Milestone in the European Firefighting Landscape"

Berlin – "Today, we have made history! This day marks a milestone for the European firefighting landscape and a clear commitment to solidarity, professionalism, and shared responsibility in protecting our citizens," stated Karl-Heinz Banse, President of the German Fire Services Association (DFV), at the founding of the "Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union" in Berlin. Representatives from 21 EU countries signed the founding document. For the first time, it has been possible to bring together representatives of fire brigades and their associations from numerous nations within the European Union into a single body.

The founding document states: “In the countries that form the European Union, fire services and civil protection are essential components of common safety policy. In this context, the fire services are an indispensable pillar of the European fire safety and resilience architecture. The extraordinary commitment and unwavering solidarity of firefighters are an essential cornerstone in saving lives, protecting property, cultural heritage and the environment while building a safer and more resilient society. Hence, the legally recognized organisations of firefighters in the Member States of the European Union hereby agree to establish the ‘Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union.’ This is intended to create a common, sustainable structure with the aim of representing their interests and engaging in an interactive dialogue with the institutions of the European Union.”

Four Members of the European Parliament (Lena Düpont, Grégory Allione, Mislav Kovac, and Zeljana Zovko), as well as German Bundestag members Leon Eckert and Nancy Faeser, added further political significance to the event. "From a European political perspective, this is a very impressive moment. The world is changing, and with it comes great responsibility for fire brigades as well. You provide a European response to the questions of our time – that is the core of the European idea!" thanked Lena Düpont, Member of the European Parliament, for the participants’ commitment. She is Deputy Chair of the Intergroup on Resilience, Disaster Management, and Civil Protection, where former French Fire Brigade Association President Grégory Allione is one of the chairs.

Karl-Heinz Banse was elected President of the new association

Karl-Heinz Banse (Germany) was elected as President of the international association. Vice Presidents are Jean-Paul Bosland (France), Ante Sanader (Croatia), Robert Mayer (Austria), and Waldemar Pawlak (Poland). They expressed the following:

Karl-Heinz Banse: "The association is a unified voice for fire brigades of the EU countries in Brussels and Strasbourg. The goal is to effectively represent the interests

of firefighters at the European level, recognize developments early, and actively participate in decision-making processes. European cooperation among fire brigades is not an end in itself but a necessity: in an increasingly interconnected world, there are no borders for disasters and emergencies!"

Jean-Paul Bosland: "This day marks a milestone in the history of fire brigades in Europe. The founding of the Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union is a real step forward for our collaboration – we strengthen our connections and speak with one voice on behalf of all firefighters in the association. This is a true paradigm shift: 21 countries, nearly as many languages and uniforms, united under one banner. I am very pleased that this initiative has come to fruition after 14 months of joint work with our German colleagues. This is just the beginning of a long journey."

Ante Sanader: "Fire services are essential components of European security policy. The newly established Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union is a needed and very important step towards recognizing that firefighting contributes to shaping the EU security and safety system."

Robert Mayer: "The founding of the Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union is a significant milestone in networking and will give fire services a strong voice at the European level. Firefighters are not lone fighters; they are team players. Good international cooperation was the foundation of this new association, which has now been launched after months of work. The presence of 21 nations at the founding assembly is a strong sign of unity and a shared direction within the European Union. I am incredibly proud to be part of this as a representative of the Austrian fire services."

Waldemar Pawlak: "In times of war, interrupted global cooperation, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, cooperation among fire services in Europe is more important than ever. Common standards, exchange of experiences, youth collaboration, and technical harmonization form the stable foundation for a resilient society. It is a personal concern of mine to promote cross-border exchange, build strong networks, and effectively represent the interests of fire services at the European level. Only together can we develop the best solutions and put them into practice – for the benefit of our citizens."

Members of the Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union

On the day of its founding, representatives from the following organizations declared their membership in the Association of Fire Brigades of the European Union:

- Austrian Fire Brigade Association (Austria)
- Fire & Rescue Belgium – BB-SPB (Belgium)
- National Association of Volunteers of the Republic of Bulgaria (Bulgaria)
- Hrvatska vatrogasna zajednica – Croatian Firefighting Association (Croatia)
- Cyprus Firefighters Association (Cyprus)

• sdružení hasičů Čech, Moravy a Slezska (Czech Republic)
• Estonian Rescue Board (Estonia)
• The Finnish National Rescue Association, SPEK (Finland)
• Fédération Nationale des Sapeurs-Pompiers de France (France)
• German Fire Services Association (Germany)
• Panhellenic Federation of Firefighters Unions (Greece)
• Hungarian Fire Association (Hungary)
• Fédération Nationale des Pompiers, Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
• Vakvereniging Brandweer Vrijwilligers (Netherlands)
• Związek Ochotniczych Straży Pożarnych Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Poland)
• Liga dos Bombeiros Portugueses (Portugal)
• Federatia de Pompieri Voluntari si Protectia Civila, FPVPC (Romania)
• Dobrovoľná požiarna ochrana Slovenskej republiky (Slovakia)
• Firefighting Association of Slovenia (Slovenia)
• CONBE Consorcios Bomberos España (Spain)
• Brandmännens Riksförbund (Sweden)

The 3rd European Firefighters' Summit, which served as the founding event of the Firefighters' Association in the European Union, was held with the kind support of Magirus GmbH and MSA Safety in the Leibniz Hall of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences.