1st CONFERENCE FOR THE FIRE PROTECTION OF STRUCTURES, 7-8 Feb, 2020, Athens, Greece

Organized by the Hellenic Institute for the Fire Protection of Structures (EL.I.PY.KA.)

The 1st Conference for the Fire Protection of Structures, Athens, Greece, organized by the Hellenic Institute for the Fire Protection of Structures (EL.I.PY.KA.) took place at Eugenides Foundation during 07-08/02/2020. It was attended by more than 500 delegates from all over Greece and abroad. Among attendees were engineers, executives from Greek ministries, state organizations and Fire Brigade, who had the opportunity to follow 23 presentations from an international panel. Among presenters, were several academics, internationally acclaimed scientists, certified fire engineers, fire safety researchers and consultants, Fire Brigade officers, audit and consulting engineers and risk assessment and certification organizations’ executives.

Deputy Minister of Environment & Energy, Mr. Dimitri Economou, saluted the Conference and so did the representative for the General Secretariat for Spatial Planning and Urban Environment.

The conference covered important issues on fire protection in Greece as well as the international view with presenting participants from Belgium, the United Kingdom, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, Italy, Cyprus and Singapore, as well as representatives from EURIMA and CFPA-Europe.

Presentations raised the issue of fire protection regulation in Greece, commented on its legal dimension and the role and capability of local fire testing laboratories, shared best practices regarding external façade systems of buildings, steel structures and fire resistant doors and also examined the critical issue of Wildlife-Urban Interface (WUI). Furthermore, other presentations gave instances of European and global experiences. Interesting points were made regarding building evacuation policies, compliance with fire protection requirements for building facades and the role of fire engineers in a modern context of Fire Safety in Structures. Dr. Amaya Osacar, member of the Fire working group of EURIMA, stated the importance of the role of architects in a holistic approach of building design that takes into account fire protection early on the building design.

On behalf of EL.I.PY.KA. Dr. Yiannis Kontoulis, Chairman of the Board of Directors, presented the Institute’s vision, aims and proposals for a sustainable and safe development in construction, through an applicable model of fire safety audits, specifications, studies, construction approaches and systems & personnel certification, including the necessity of enrichment for the existing Regulatory Framework and creation of an effective control mechanism. The conference also presented proposals by EL.I.PY.KA, regarding a methodology for checking Existing Buildings’ compliance with Fire Protection Regulations, as well as a comprehensive proposal for the creation of evaluation standards, linking the Market needs and experience with the studies and training of new engineers.

The discussion that followed brought forward the importance of the initiative and the role of EL.I.PY.KA. All participants made a pledge to follow up on this effort, both with the organization of a subsequent conference and of course with the presentations in other Greek cities.

In conclusion, the success and dynamism of the first conference of EL.I.PY.KA, as well as the Institute’s contribution to the Fire Safety discussion until now, has shown its ability to coordinate the ongoing effort and to continue being a reliable partner for all parties sharing the common goal to reduce and prevent the loss of life and property because of fire.