



International Association for the  
Study of Insurance Economics

# Geneva Association Information Newsletter

# 15

September 1999

## World Fire Statistics

Information Bulletin of the World Fire Statistics

### EDITOR'S ADDRESS & PHONE NUMBER:

R.T.D. WILMOT  
12 Kylestrome House  
Cundy Street

London SW1W 9JT Tel. + Fax: (0207) 730-5133

### Aims and Activities of the World Fire Statistics Centre

The Centre's main objective is to persuade governments to adopt strategies aimed at reducing the cost of fire which, although running at around 1% of GDP in most advanced countries, has generally received much less attention than the cost of crime or of road accidents. In pursuit of this objective, the Centre collects from over 20 leading countries statistics on national fire costs (see Contents above).

A further important effort is devoted to persuading the European Union to identify fire safety as a topic for collective action, leading to a European fire strategy.

**The Geneva Association Newsletter** on "The World Fire Statistics" appears annually and is distributed free of charge. **Printed copies:** 1000. Unrestricted circulation. For further information contact:

**Editor:** TOM WILMOT – 12 Kylestrome House – Cundy Street – London SW1W 9JT – Tel + Fax +44 20 7730 5133.

**Deputy Editor:** TONY PAISH – 32 Westmoreland Road – London SW13 9RY – Tel +44 20 8748 1899 – Fax +44 20 8255 7903.

© Copyright 2000. The International Association for the Study of Insurance Economics. *ISSN:1605-8283*

The Geneva Association • General Secretariat • 53 Route de Malagnou • CH-1208 Geneva  
Tel. +41-22-707 66 00 • Fax. +41-22-736 75 36 • [secretariat@genevaassociation.org](mailto:secretariat@genevaassociation.org) • [www.genevaassociation.org](http://www.genevaassociation.org)

1. United Nations Fire Statistics Study

The Centre presented its annual report to the UN Committee on Human Settlements at the meeting in Geneva in September 1999.

The following 8 tables of international fire costs comparisons appeared in the report:

**TABLE 1 - Cost of Direct Fire Losses**

Adjusted direct losses (in millions, except for Italy and Japan - billions)

Country	Currency	1994 Direct Losses	1995 Direct Losses	1996 Direct Losses	Percentage of GDP 1994-1996
Czech Republic	CzKr	1,100	1,030	1,400	0.09
Japan	Yen	480	500	425	0.10
Slovenia	SIT	2,350	1,900	2,400	0.10
Hungary	Ft				0.12 [1986-88]
Spain	Pta				0.12 [1984]
Poland	Zl	260	400	500	0.13
United States	\$US	8,600	9,400	9,900	0.13
United Kingdom	£	1,000	1,000	1,000	0.14
Finland	FMk	770	820	870	0.15
Australia	\$A				0.16 [1992-93]
Austria	Sch	3,800	4,100	4,300	0.17
Germany	DM	6,150	5,950	5,000	0.17
New Zealand	\$NZ	145			0.17 [1993-94]
Netherlands	f.	1,150	1,050	1,250	0.18
Canada	\$Can	1,575	1,525	1,575	0.20
France	F	17,500	15,600	17,300	0.22
Denmark	DKr	2,050	2,300	2,550	0.23
Sweden	SKr	3,650	3,500	3,900	0.23
Switzerland	SwF				0.23 [1989]
Norway	NKr	1,950	2,300	2,650	0.24
Italy	Lit	4,950	4,900	5,000	0.28
Belgium	BF				0.40 [1988-89]

Note : Fire losses include explosion losses following fires, but exclude explosion loss where no fire occurs, eg some acts of terrorism.

**TABLE 2 - Costs of Indirect Fire Losses**

Average percentage of GDP (1994-96)

Country	%
Norway	0.003
Finland	0.007 [1995-96]
Sweden	0.008
USA	0.011
Italy	0.014 [1993-94]
Japan	0.016 [1985-86]
UK	0.020
Canada	0.022 [1991]
Slovenia	0.024
France	0.026
Netherlands	0.027 [1995-96]
Denmark	0.029 [1993-95]
Hungary	0.029 [1992-93]
Austria	0.030
Germany	0.030
Czech Republic	0.045
Switzerland	0.095 [1989]

Note: This table must be regarded with serious reservations - the figures are produced on widely varying bases and some of the differences look too large for credibility.

**TABLE 3 - Fire Deaths**

Country	Adjusted figures (fire deaths)		
	1994	1995	1996
Switzerland	35		
Netherlands	100	85	130
Spain	310		
Austria	70	60	
Australia	135	135	175
Italy			
Germany	745	770	
New Zealand	35	35	40
Slovenia	10	30	25
Czech Republic	110	115	125
France	610		
UK	705	810	780
Belgium			
Sweden	120	105	125
Canada	415	440	405
Norway	55	65	70
Poland	595	590	575
Greece	160	150	
Japan	1,940	2,400	2,020
Denmark	90	90	105
USA	4,650	5,000	5,400
Finland	120	95	110
Hungary	335	300	

**TABLE 4 - Population Comparisons for Fire Deaths (1994-1996)**

Population comparisons for fire deaths

<b>Country</b>	<b>Death per 100,000 persons</b>
Switzerland	0.55 [1992-94]
Netherlands	0.68
Spain	0.77 [1993-94]
Austria	0.79 [1993-95]
Australia	0.82
Italy	0.86 [1992-93]
Germany	0.98 [1993-95]
New Zealand	1.04
Slovenia	1.09
Czech Republic	1.13
France	1.16 [1993-94]
UK	1.31
Belgium	1.32 [1991-92]
Sweden	1.32
Canada	1.42
Norway	1.45
Poland	1.52
Greece	1.54 [1993-95]
Japan	1.69
Denmark	1.82
USA	1.90
Finland	2.12
Hungary	3.25 [1993-95]

Note : Population figures used are derived from the United Nations Demographic Yearbook.

**TABLE 5 - Cost of Fire Fighting Organizations**

Average percentage of GDP (1994-1996)

<b>Country</b>	<b>%</b>
Denmark	0.08 [1995-96]
Austria	0.11 [1994]
Norway	0.11
New Zealand	0.14
Netherlands	0.15
Belgium	0.18 [1987-89]
Poland	0.19
Sweden	0.21
USA	0.23
UK	0.24
Czech Republic	0.25
Finland	0.29 [1993-94]
Japan	0.33
Canada	0.35 [1991]

**TABLE 6 - Costs of Fire Insurance Administration**

Average percentage of GDP (1994-1996)

Country	%
Hungary	0.01 [1987-88]
Netherlands	0.04 [1987-88]
Spain	0.05 [1986]
Canada	0.06 [1991]
Finland	0.06
Italy	0.06
Sweden	0.07
Denmark	0.08 [1987-88]
Germany	0.08
Norway	0.09
USA	0.09
France	0.10
UK	0.10
Japan	0.11
Austria	0.14 [1979-80]
New Zealand	0.19 [1993-94]
Belgium	0.28 [1988-89]

**TABLE 7 - Costs of Fire Protection to Buildings**

Country	Fire protection (%)	Currency	Cost (in millions except for Italy and Japan-billions)		
			1994	1995	1996
Canada	3.9	\$C	2,000	1,800	
Czech Republic	3.0	CzKr		2,600	3,000
France	2.5	F	11,200	11,600	11,400
Italy	4.0	Lit	5,700	6,000	6,200
Japan	2.5	Yen	1,100	1,025	1,150
Netherlands	3.0	f.	1,830	1,890	
New Zealand	2.5	\$NZ	140	160	180
Norway	3.5	NKr	3,000	3,500	3,800
Slovenia	2.0	SIT	2,000	2,350	3,450
Sweden	2.5	SKr	1,875	1,750	1,500
UK	2.2	£	1,075	1,175	1,250
USA		\$US	23,000	24,900	26,100

Note: In the United Kingdom, the estimated fire protection costs varied from 1 per cent for housing to 6 per cent for industrial buildings, in the United States, from 2.5 per cent for housing to 12 per cent for private non-residential structures, and in Canada from 2 per cent for single homes to 13.2 per cent for high-rise apartments.

**TABLE 8 - Fire Protection to Buildings**

Average percentage of GDP (1994-1996)

Country	%
Sweden	0.11
Slovenia	0.12
France	0.15
UK	0.16
New Zealand	0.18
Czech Republic	0.19 [1995-96]
Belgium	0.21 [1987-88]
Japan	0.22
Canada	0.28 [1993-95]
Switzerland	0.29 [1989]
Netherlands	0.30 [1993-95]
Italy	0.34
USA	0.34
Norway	0.37
Hungary	0.42 [1987-88]

### **UN Scheme Endorsed**

In their session held in Geneva on September 15, 1999, the United Nations Committee expressed its interest in the Report, thanked Mr. Wilmot, invited him to present a similar report to its next session and encouraged countries which had not yet done so to participate in the study.

### **European Parliament and Fire Costs**

Following a meeting with Sir Christopher Prout MEP and with DG III (Industry), Sir Christopher in 1994 drafted the following Motion for resolution by the European Parliament:

"Whereas fire is currently costing countries of the European Union approximately 1% of GDP,

Whereas in comparison with road safety, crime prevention and industrial safety, little or nothing is being done to monitor progress on safety measures,

Whereas the rewards have been high for Governments, such as the United States of America, which have organised a determined campaign to cut fire costs,

### **NOW THEREFORE**

1. The European Parliament urges the Council of Ministers to make a public announcement stating their concern over the level of fire costs in the EU.
2. The European Parliament calls on the European Commission to establish a Working Party of fire experts whose terms of reference would be to recommend ways of tackling the fire problem."

Sir Christopher (now Lord Kingsland) is no longer an MEP, but in 1995 Ms Christine Crawley MEP put down a similar Motion which went to the Environment Committee in 1996. However, only three of the twenty proposed Motions before the Committee were accepted for pursuit and, although the fire resolution was "recognised to be an issue of great importance", it was not accepted. Lord Kingsland in 1997 raised it again with the Chairman of the Environment Committee, who took it up with the Commission, only to receive a stone-walling response.

In 1998 the Centre was in touch with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), who expressed interest in the Centre's work and described it as "an initiative that definitely deserves to be supported". However, their own budgetary situation was such as to prevent them from translating that interest into any form of sponsorship.

In April 1999, an international conference, "Firesafe Europe 99", was organised in Chester, UK on behalf of FEU<sup>1</sup> and CACFOA<sup>2</sup> with EU financial support. This resulted in a suggested European fire safety action programme, and the Centre is involved in helping FEU to carry this forward.

### International Conferences.

During the past year, besides attending the UN Committee's Practical Workshop on Housing Privatisation in Krakow, the Centre was represented at the CFPA<sup>3</sup> International meeting in Cairo, and was involved in an international conference in Singapore and at Firesafe Europe in Chester. A revised version of the paper on "Need for Risk Management by Governments: a Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" was presented to the UK insurance Economists' annual meeting at Nottingham University, and afterwards published in *The Geneva Papers on Risk and Insurance : Issues and Practice* (July 1999)

---

<sup>1</sup> Federation of European Union Fire Officers' Associations.

<sup>2</sup> Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association (UK).

<sup>3</sup> Confederation of Fire Protection Associations.

The Centre wishes to thank all those readers who completed and returned forms to enable the Bulletin mailing list to be updated. In a few cases, the writing on these slips was difficult to read (sometimes because fax transmissions had become partially corrupted), and we should like to apologise for any omissions or mistakes thereby arising.

If you would like to correct any such errors, or wish to notify any subsequent additions or amendments to the mailing list, please send the necessary details to the Centre at any of the addresses given at the top of the first page of the Bulletin.

