



International Association for the
Study of Insurance Economics

Geneva Association Information Newsletter

World Fire Statistics

Information Bulletin of the World Fire Statistics

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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.

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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 1998.

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

TABLE 1 - Cost of Direct Fire Losses (in millions, except for Italy and Japan - billions)

Adjusted direct losses

Country	1993		1994	1995	Percentage of GDP
	Direct		Direct	Direct	Losses 1993-1995
	Curr.		Losses	Losses	
Czech Republic	CzKr		1,100	1,000	0.09 (1994-95)
Japan	Yen	390	480	500	0.10
Hungary	Ft				0.12 (1986-88)
Spain	Pta				0.12 (1984)
Poland	Zl	220	260	400	0.13
Slovenia	SIT		2,300	1,900	0.13
United States	\$US	9,000	8,600	9,400	0.13
United Kingdom	£	900	1,000	1,000	0.14
Australia	\$A	610			0.16 (1992-93)
Finland	FMk	850	770		0.16 (1993-94)
Austria	Sch	3,500	3,800	4,100	0.17
New Zealand	\$NZ	135	145		0.17 (1993-94)
Germany	DM	5,900	6,150	5,950	0.18
Netherlands	Dfl	1,450	1,150	1,050	0.20
Canada	\$Can	1,650	1,600	1,525	0.21
Denmark	DKr	1,950	2,050	2,450	0.23
France	FF	17,000	17,500	16,100	0.23
Sweden	SKr	3,500	3,650	3,500	0.23
Switzerland	SwF				0.23 (1989)
Norway	NKr	1,950	1,950	2,300	0.24
Italy	Lit	4,700	5,000	4,900	0.29
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 (1993-95)

Country	%
Norway	0.004
Sweden	0.009
USA	0.012
Italy	0.014 (1993-94)
Japan	0.016 (1985-86)
UK	0.019
Canada	0.022 (1991)
Slovenia	0.024 (1994-95)
Austria	0.025
Finland	0.025 (1993-94)
France	0.026
Denmark	0.029
Germany	0.029
Hungary	0.029 (1992-93)
Czech Republic	0.067 (1994-95)
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)		
	1993	1994	
1995			
Switzerland	35	35	
Netherlands	90	100	85
Australia	165	135	120
Austria	60	70	60
Slovenia		10	30
Germany	875	745	
Czech Republic	100	110	115
New Zealand	40	35	35
France	725		
Sweden	120	120	105
UK	790	770	820
Norway	65	55	65
Canada	460	415	440
Poland	595	595	630
Japan	1,880	1,940	2,400
Denmark	75	90	100
Greece	170	160	
USA	5,000	4,650	4,950
Finland	130	120	
Hungary	365	335	

TABLE 4 - Population Comparisons for Fire Deaths (1993-1995)

Population comparisons for fire deaths

Country	Deaths per 100,000 persons	
Switzerland	0.55	(1992-94)
Netherlands	0.60	
Australia	0.78	
Austria	0.79	
Spain	0.86	(1991-92)
Slovenia	1.01	(1994-95)
Germany	1.04	(1992-94)
Czech Republic	1.05	
New Zealand	1.05	
France	1.19	(1992-93)
Sweden	1.31	
UK	1.36	
Norway	1.42	
Belgium	1.47	(1989-91)
Canada	1.50	
Poland	1.57	
Japan	1.66	
Denmark	1.70	
Greece	1.70	(1992-94)
USA	1.87	
Finland	2.46	(1993-94)
Hungary	3.29	(1992-94)

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

TABLE 5 - Cost of Fire Fighting Organizations

Average percentage of GDP (1993-1995)

Country	%	
Denmark	0.09	(1987-88)
Austria	0.11	(1994)
Norway	0.11	
Netherlands	0.15	
New Zealand	0.17	(1992-94)
Belgium	0.18	(1987-89)
Poland	0.19	
Sweden	0.19	
UK	0.23	
USA	0.28	
Finland	0.29	(1993-94)
Czech Republic	0.31	(1994-95)
Japan	0.34	
Canada	0.35	(1991)

TABLE 6 - Costs of Fire Insurance Administration

Average percentage of GDP (1993-1995)

Country	%
Czech Republic	0.01 (1994-95)
Hungary	0.01 (1987-88)
Netherlands	0.04 (1987-88)
Spain	0.05 (1986)
Canada	0.06 (1991)
Finland	0.06 (1993-94)
Italy	0.06
Sweden	0.07
Denmark	0.08 (1987-88)
Germany	0.09
UK	0.09
USA	0.09
France	0.10 (1994-95)
Norway	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 (%)	Cost (in millions except for Italy and Japan - billions)			
		Currency	1993	1994	1995
Canada	3.9	\$Can	2,400	2,000	2,900
France	2.5	FF	12,300	11,200	11,600
Italy	4.0	Lit	5,900	5,700	5,900
Japan	2.5	Yen	1,130	1,100	1,025
Netherlands	3.0	Dfl	1,830	1,830	1,890
New Zealand	2.5	\$NZ	110	140	
Norway	3.5	NKr	2,700	3,000	3,200
Slovenia	2.0	SIT	1,550	2,000	2,350
Sweden	2.5	Skr	1,850	1,875	2,000
United Kingdom	2.1 (1993) 2.2 (1994-95)	£	975	1,075	1,175
USA		\$US	18,500	20,300	21,900

Note: In the United Kingdom, the estimated fire protection costs varied from 1 per cent for housing to 7 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 (1993-1995)

Country		%	
Slovenia	SIT	0.11	
Sweden	SKr	0.12	
New Zealand	\$NZ	0.14	(1992-94)
France	F	0.16	
UK	£	0.16	
Belgium	BF	0.21	(1987-88)
Japan	Yen	0.23	
Switzerland	SwF	0.29	(1989)
USA	\$US	0.29	
Netherlands	Dfl.	0.30	
Canada	\$Can	0.33	
Norway	NKr	0.34	
Italy	Lit	0.35	
Hungary	Ft	0.42	(1987-88)

UN Scheme Endorsed

In their session held in Geneva on September 16, 1998, 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. The Centre regards this European approach as of prime importance and continues to pursue it energetically.

The Centre has also been in touch with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), who have expressed interest in the Centre's work and described it as "an initiative that definitely deserves to be supported". However, OECD is not at present in a position itself to take any concrete steps in this regard.

International Conferences.

A paper on "Need for Risk Management by Governments: a Challenge for the 21st Century" was presented to a fire information conference in Melbourne, Australia in May and to the annual Management of Risks in Engineering (M.O.R.E.) seminar in Hanover in June. The Centre was also represented at the Health Fire International Conference in Edinburgh in June.