



Europäische Schornsteinfegermeister Föderation  
FÉDÉRATION EUROPÉENNE DES MAÎTRES RAMONEURS  
EUROPEAN FEDERATION OF CHIMNEY SWEEPS

## PRESS RELEASE

### **European chimney sweeps meet at Malmö**

Safe and climate-neutral heating in Europe

Malmö, 22 August 2019. **From 21 to the 25 August 2019 the technical seminar of the Europäischen Schornsteinfegermeister Föderation (ESCHFOE) takes place at Malmö. 85 representatives of the association and specialists from 19 countries participate in the event. The objective is an exchange of information in the sectors ventilation, training, work safety as well as the activity fields climate, fire and environmental protection.**

The general conditions for the chimney sweep trade in Europe vary and are reflected in the number and the structure of the trade workshops as well as their assignment spectrum. While fire protection and the operational safety of combustion systems are still regulated by law in many countries, some EU countries are still governed by insufficient regulations. In Germany, for example, chimney sweeps clean and inspect fire places, exhaust gas systems and chimneys on a legal basis. The inspections are not statutorily prescribed in Great Britain or Belgium; the responsibility rests with the property owner. The number of accidents is evidence of the ramifications. During the past years, the national Chimneysweep Associations detected an increase of fire damages and carbon monoxide poisonings. Carbon monoxide is a toxic, odourless and colourless gas which can be generated in increased concentrations by defect or faulty systems. If the exhaust routes are blocked and/or heavily contaminated, carbon monoxide can escape with the flue gas into the room and lead to the death of the occupants. In Germany, 11 persons died of carbon monoxide poisoning in connection with combustion systems in 2018. In recent times, the number of accidents increased also in Austria. The number of accidents in countries without statutory specifications is significantly greater.

### **Increasing the safety of fire places in Europe**

One of the objectives of ESCHFOE is therefore to draw attention of both politics and the public to the topic of the safety of fire places. The regular inspection and cleaning is important and should be legally incorporated. As a supplemental measure, ESCHFOE recommends the installation of CO and smoke warning systems as well as fire extinguishers. Among others, they are professionally installed and maintained by chimney sweeps.



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### **Climate protection changes the heating industry**

Next to safety-relevant tasks, chimney sweeps offer services in terms of energy conservation as well as the sector of ventilation systems. Accordingly, praxis-related presentations regarding the cleaning and inspection of ventilation and exhaust systems are focal points of the symposium. For the first time, a female Swedish chimney sweep reports about her average working day in a man's job and allows insight into the situation in the country. In Sweden, with a high component of renewable energies (54.5% in 2017) and frequently electricity-based heating supply, ventilation systems are one of the important business segments of the chimney sweep operations. Also in Germany, this activity will increase in significance in view of the national energy and heat revolution. By 2050, existing buildings are supposed to be almost climate neutral and obtain heat from renewable energies at up to 60%. Throughout the EU, national climate protection strategies such as this will impact the heating industry and the associated chimney sweep trade.

### **European clean-air preservation: clean heating with wood**

Next to wind, water and solar energy, wood as a CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral fuel is one of the available renewable energies in Europe. As ESCHFOE emphasises, heating with wood is CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral, sustainable and an economical alternative to fossil fuel in many EU regions. According to the information of the European Association, the quality of the fuel and a largely low-emission technology are decisive for the climate footprint. Modern systems emit fewer dust particles and contribute to the prevention of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. ESCHFOE maintains contact to environmental associations, particularly in the consumer information sector, and rallies for low-emission heating technology and uniform minimum standards at European level.

The **Europäische Schornsteinfegermeister Föderation (ESCHFOE)** represents the interests of the European chimney sweep trade. Its members are associations and trade guilds from 23 countries in Europe. Added to this are the United States as a guest member. The Association is registered in Brussels and is represented in Sankt Augustin in Germany by a Secretary General. From here, ESCHFOE entertains networks to partner associations on a European level and maintains contact with partner associations, political committees, legislators, market partners and interest groups. The Association informs the public about the topics concerning fire safety, environmental protection and energy conservation and collects information from the member states. In addition, ESCHFOE participates in the establishment of standards on a national and international level as well as the certification and quality assurance measures. One important objective of ESCHFOE is the promotion and maintenance of the profession in Europe. The Association supports chimney sweep companies in its member states by way of technical training, the conveying of training contents and principles of industrial safety, the development of job-related hardware and software and the exploration of new tasks. ESCHFOE is committed to uniform quality standards in the European chimney sweep trade.

Further information, check on the Internet at [www.eschfoe.com](http://www.eschfoe.com).