



NEWSLETTER

International Federation of Environmental Health

July 2012 Edition

IFEH Newsletter – July 2012

Welcome to the July edition of the IFEH Newsletter.

The IFEH 12th World Congress on Environmental Health took place in Vilnius, Lithuania from the 22 – 27 May 2012. The Congress was organised by the Lithuanian Union of Hygienists and Epidemiologists (LUHE). Hosting a World Congress, particularly in the current difficult financial climate, is not an easy task and requires a great deal of hard work and forward planning; so I would like to pass on my thanks, and that of the Federation, for a job well done. The local organising committee chaired by Viktorija Montviliene, and co – chaired by Dr. Andrius Kavaliunas, did a first class job. All those attending both the IFEH meetings and the Congress were impressed by the organisation and the welcome given to guests. Special mention should also be given to Jurga Ramanauskaite from UAB Aim Group Baltic, the Congress secretariat. We first met Jurga during a visit to Vilnius for a Europe Group meeting in April 2009, when we also visited Congress venues, and the benefit of an organiser being involved at the initial planning stage was evident in how well this Congress ran...well done Jurga.

The Congress titled “New Technologies, Healthy Human Beings and Environment”, was attended by over 250 participants from 45 countries worldwide. These included not only many European and neighbouring countries, but also participants from Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, China, India, South Korea, Japan, South Africa, Malawi, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, USA and others. A total of 150 verbal presentations and 40 electronic presentations were made.

Congress participants and guests presented and discussed the topics of environmental health, health impact assessment, air and water pollution, climate change, food safety and nutrition, physical and chemical agents, communicable diseases, occupational health and child health. Participants were also able to visit Lithuanian Institutes and laboratories during the technical visits: the Radiation Protection Centre, the National Public Health Laboratory, National Food and Veterinary Risk Assessment Institute, Lithuanian Hydro Meteorological Service and “Vilnius waters” Ltd.

We were honoured to be addressed by many high ranking government members and eminent academics from Lithuania at the opening and plenary sessions, and the social events were outstanding. The music and dance performed so beautifully by the children and young people at the opening ceremony – through to the wonderful surroundings of Trakai castle and the gala dinner – all thrilled and were enjoyed by everyone present. After the Congress was over Andrius Kavaliunas said ‘...the Organizing Committee is very happy to hear good responses and acknowledgments and also express many thanks to all the participants. We wish you good luck in your future works and see you in Las Vegas in 2014’.

During the IFEH Council meeting held on 21 – 22 May it was announced that the next World Congress will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA from the 7 – 10 July 2014. This Congress will be organised by the National Environmental Health Association. The Council also provisionally accepted a bid from Malawi to host the 2016 World Congress, this being subject to a full bid document being submitted to the Federation.

The next IFEH Council meeting will be held in the Glynhill Hotel (www.glynhill.com), Renfrew, Scotland on 18 – 19 May 2013, following the REHIS Annual Conference being held in that hotel on the 16 – 17 May. The Council accepted an offer from Ray Ellard, former IFEH secretary, to edit the next two editions of the IFEH magazine, Environment and Health International. Any articles for the next magazine, which is due to be published later this year, should be sent to Ray at rellard@fsai.ie

The IFEH AGM took place on Sunday 22 May and Peter Davey, representing Environmental Health Australia, was elected President, and Henning Hansen, representing ENVINA Denmark, was elected President Elect. Congratulations were offered to both Peter and Henning for the next two years. The meeting also thanked Robert Bradbury for his time as President.

The draft minutes of the Council meeting and the AGM can be found on the IFEH website.



INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH FACULTY FORUM (IEHFF), VILNIUS, MAY 2012

The IEHFF met on two occasions during the 2012 World Congress in Vilnius.

On Tuesday 22 May, academic presentations took place (see programme of 13 papers in attachment), there were approximately 65 attendees. This was seen as a very useful opportunity to share experiences in respect of environmental health educational matters.

On Saturday, May 26 May a meeting of IEHFF took place with approximately 20 attendees. There was a view that IEHFF has not been reaching its potential in activities in recent years and the purpose of this meeting was to identify a role and activities for IEHFF for the future.

Robert Bradbury, President and Peter Davey, President Elect encouraged the meeting to consider that IEHFF become a Special Interest Group (SIG) of IFEH and therefore have ex officio representation on the IFEH Council. The attendees had little experience of SIG's and are requesting further information from IFEH on SIG's before making a decision.

Improving communications on an ongoing basis was seen as a priority; Chuck Treser and Barbara Delaney were tasked with investigating communication tools like WebEx, LinkedIn, Face Book, Google Groups, etc. and report to the group, it was also planned to establish a web presence on the IFEH website. It is planned to have a communication tool in operation within a few months so that ongoing discussions within the group can take place.

Some discussion took place as to whether membership of IEHFF should be exclusively academics or should encompass involvement in some way for other interested parties e.g. professional bodies. The issue of how IEHFF should relate to IFEH and whether we need a constitution and/or bylaws was explored. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial for academics to submit papers to Congress on educational or research topics to involve Environmental Health Professionals (EHPs) more in these issues.

The operation of this year's Forum was regarded as effective and thanks were expressed to Andrius Kavaliunas. A session of presentations on relevant educational topics and a shorter meeting to discuss IEHFF issues (probably devoting one full day to IEHFF) was seen as the likely format for Las Vegas 2014. Forum 2014 could be themed e.g., Problem – Based Learning, Developing Case Studies, Curricula, Using New Technologies, Best Practices, etc.

Barbara Delaney (Ireland) and Chuck Treser (USA) were selected as co – chairs for the next two years, and are to advance issues in relation to communication and to propose arrangements in relation to the Chairing, running and activities of IEHFF for decision at IEHFF 2014. It is hoped to hold some form of online Forum/meeting in spring 2013. Barbara or Chuck will try to attend the May 2013 meeting of the IFEH Council meeting (if a SIG is formed).

Environmental Health Officers' Association (EHOA) and the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (CIEH) Northern Ireland

Again this year EHOA and CIEH Northern Ireland continued the now almost 20 year run of the All Island Conferences. Despite employer financial constraints there was an excellent attendance with a gradually increasing number of participants from Northern Ireland.

Over one and a half days members and invited speakers gave a series of topical, interesting and often challenging presentations and there were some lively debates both on the floor and in the bar later.

Of particular note were the presentations given in the ever popular session on current issues – problems and solutions met and delivered by the members on the ground on a day to day basis – these included the problems on both sides of the Irish border in dealing with dumped waste from illegal fuel laundering, safety in sports grounds and dealing with oil pollution in a major public water supply source.

The opening address from celebrity Chef and Food Ambassador Nevin Maguire gave much encouragement to our colleagues working in food safety as he expressed his gratitude for the work we do in ensuring high standards and consequent food safety throughout the Island.

The best quote was from Laura Strong, Health and Safety adviser from Sport NI, who told us of a comment from a Northern Ireland Sports Reporter – “How does a person know when he/she wants to become a health and safety inspector? Answer – When they realise they don't have the charisma to be an Undertaker”.



CIEH News

The CIEH have been closely involved with the development of food safety and health and safety monitoring systems in all venues for the forthcoming London 2012 Olympics. CIEH colleagues Jenny Morris, Steve Miller and Sharon Smith have drawn together a team of 120+ volunteer EHPs and Student EHPs from all over the membership to work closely with the Olympic organisation to ensure a safe games experience for participants and supporters alike. There will be over 880 food outlets throughout all of the Olympic venues so you can see we're going to be very busy.

This being the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, Environmental Health News has published a Jubilee Special looking back at 60 years of Environmental Health using historical data and the anecdotes of members old and not so old!

From the austerity years immediately after the Second World War, smog resulting in the Clean Air Acts, floods – still a problem today, housing redevelopment and improvement and dealing with the Rachman problem. Food safety and emerging pathogens – the Aberdeen Typhoid outbreak, Aberfan and the terrible consequences of the colliery landslip. Food fraud and food politics, unthought of consequences of our industrial activities – lots more and a very interesting read.

3rd All Africa Congress on Environmental Health

The IFEH Africa Group and the South African Institute of Environmental Health(SAIEH) are organising the 3rd All Africa Congress on Environmental Health. The Congress is held in the International Conference Centre, Durban, South Africa on the 12 – 14 November 2012. This venue was the site of the Eighth World Congress in February 2004.

The theme of the Congress is 'Environmental Health – A collaborative approach for Africa towards a sustainable future'. Anyone wishing to present a paper at this event should note that the deadline for the receipt of abstracts is 7 September 2012 and the deadline for the submission of full papers is 14 October 2012.

Further information on this Congress is on the IFEH website.

Front of Pack nutrition labelling

Choosing healthier foods could be made easier thanks to a consultation that has been launched on front of pack (FoP) nutrition labelling. This consultation sets out the ambitions of Governments across the UK to bring more consistency to the use of FoP nutrition labelling, by working with partners to identify a way forward and seeks views on how this may be achieved. It details current use of FoP labelling in the UK, highlights the new legal framework in Regulation EU 1169/2011 on the Provision of Food Information to Consumers and reviews recent research into consumer understanding and use of FoP information.

Some form of front of pack labelling appears on 80% of food products sold in the UK. However, different retailers and manufacturers use different labelling systems which can be confusing for consumers. Research shows that providing this information consistently across a wide range of products is key to consumers recognising this information and using it to make informed healthier food choices.

The objective is to maintain and extend the use of FoP nutrition labelling across the widest possible range of food and drink products whilst achieving the greatest possible consistency in the content and presentation of FoP nutrition labelling, in a form that consumers find most useful. This open UK – wide consultation is being led by the Food Standards Agency in Scotland and Northern Ireland together with the Department of Health in England and the Welsh Government. The consultation runs until the 6 August 2012 and the Food Standards Agency would welcome your comments. The Scottish consultation documents are available on the FSA website www.food.gov.uk.

Eric Foskett Award 2012

This award, named after Eric Foskett the first IFEH Honorary Secretary, is presented at each IFEH World Congress. The award is made to either an individual or an organisation that has made a notable contribution to the work of the Federation by helping it to fulfil its aims and objectives. This year's award, announced at the Council meeting in Vilnius, goes to Ray Ellard from the Environmental Health Officers' Association. Ray is a former Honorary Secretary of the IFEH and has been a member of the Council for many years.



Practitioner exchanges and Twinning

Practitioner exchanges are an excellent way for professionals to gain experience in a different working environment and to exchange ideas with fellow professionals. Over the years many officers from Member Organisations have benefitted from visiting other countries and, therefore, experiencing the delivery of environmental health services in a different setting. At the Council meeting held in Vilnius last month it was agreed that all Member Organisations should be asked to encourage practitioner exchanges. Equally, the Federation would encourage Member Organisations to become involved in formal Twinning arrangements. A number already exist and these can be found on the IFEH website.

If you are interested in working in another country where the IFEH has a member organisation please get in touch with me. You should be aware that the requirements for working in that country might differ from those in your home country.

Keeping up to date

Frequently in these Newsletters I make a plea, particularly on behalf of the Honorary Secretary and the Honorary Treasurer, for members to keep us up to date with changes happening within their own organisations. It is important, especially for the Annual General Meeting, that we have an accurate contact list for those eligible to attend meetings. So may I take this opportunity to ask all Member Organisations, Associate Member Organisations and Academic Associate Members to review their entries on the web pages and update them, if necessary, as a matter of urgency? Please send these changes to Rod House, Honorary Secretary. It would be also helpful if you would copy your response to Steve Cooper, Honorary Treasurer, and Henning Hansen, Honorary Webmaster.

Finally the next edition of the Newsletter is due to be published in October 2012. If you have any news for the Newsletter from your organisation please send this to me by the first week in September. My thanks go to Andrius Kavaliūnas, Steve Cooper, Barbara Delaney, Tom Bell, Andrew Forteach and Henning Hansen who have assisted in the production of this issue.

*If you wish to feature any news from your organisation in the next IFEH Newsletter, please contact:
Bernard Forteach, Honorary Public Relations Officer, Email: pro@ifeh.org*