

IFAFRI NEWS

International First Responder Forum Newsletter



Photo: IFAFRI delegation visiting the European Crisis Coordination Centre (ERCC) in Brussels (June 2018)

IFAFRI 2019: What can we expect? An interview with the IFAFRI Chair Anabela Gago

The IFAFRI Newsletter team talked to Anabela Gago (Head of Unit "Innovation and Industry for Security", EC) about her first year as IFAFRI chair and her vision for IFAFRI 2019.

Why did the EC decide to take over the IFAFRI Chair from the U.S?

IFAFRI was established with the idea of a rotating chairmanship. After the United States initiated and led the Forum for three years, the group was looking for an IFAFRI member to take over the secretariat to continue the great success that had been made.

During the Annual Forum Meeting in Tokyo last year, I gladly accepted the chairmanship – and, in doing so, the opportunity to further develop the strategic agenda of the Forum throughout the coming years. Not only have natural catastrophes in recent years – from mega-fires to floods – reaffirmed First Responder innovation as a key priority for the EU; they have also outlined the crucial relevance of working together. If you look at the current IFAFRI members, you will see that the Forum has six European countries (Finland, Germany, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom) which make up more than 40 percent of the IFAFRI membership base.



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This position gives us a strong voice and at the same time the responsibility to take action so that the IFAFRI success story can continue to the benefit of the First Responder community worldwide.

The European Commission has been chairing IFAFRI for more than one year now. How would you summarise your first year as the chair? What were the highlights, what were the challenges?

I am happy to say that in my first year as IFAFRI chair my colleagues and I had a steep learning curve. IFAFRI is a young and very dynamic initiative and with a lot of activities taking place in the three working committees. Thanks to our friends from the U.S., namely Phil Waters (chair of the Stakeholders Engagement Committee) and his team, the transition phase has been a smooth experience. After a couple of months, the EC PMO has been able to take over most of the activities from the U.S. PMO. Of course, everything takes time, but now that the transition phase is over, we will be able to focus on the implementation of our strategic goals for IFAFRI.

How did you experience the transition from the U.S. chair to the European Commission?

My IFAFRI highlight 2018 was definitely the SOO Validation Meeting in Brussels, which took place in conjunction with the CoU Meeting in June. Getting more insights into the working procedures of the capability gaps committee, including seeing the committed contribution of a number of First Responders to the IFAFRI process, was a very inspiring experience to me. And of course, having the opportunity to meet First Responders and learning about their needs and day-to-day challenges is always of added value, not just for my work as IFAFRI chair and Head of Unit "Innovation and Industry for Security", but also from a personal perspective, taking into account in particular how my country, Portugal, was so severely affected by the phenomenon of mega-fires in 2017. Another highlight was the launch of the new IFAFRI website and video.



Both products got a makeover, and a 'look and feel' which will help us spreading the IFAFRI message and creating awareness for our mission. A challenge has been, and remains, to bring the IFAFRI and its potential to the attention of other EU Member States.

Why do you think are global initiatives such as IFAFRI important to drive innovation in the crisis management domain?

If we look at what is happening in the world and how climate change is leading to extreme weather situations and the exceptional accumulation of natural disasters, it is obvious that we need to make First Responders and their needs one of our top priorities. The people on the ground are the ones who are the first arriving at an emergency scene, be it flooding, a wildfire or a crime scene.

They are the most critical assets we have when trying to manage a crisis situation. What we as policymakers can and have to do is to improve their everyday work by joining forces at an international level and create incentives for industry to develop the technology that first responders need to succeed in their mission. This has to be our contribution and we have to do it right. The joint work also enables us to prevent duplication of research efforts. That (in turn) allows us to preserve public funding and, conversely, it also enables synergies, learning from each other and benefiting from research outputs developed by others. Our job as IFAFRI is to establish a critical mass so that industry eventually provides the right solutions for the right audience, namely our first responders. The work of the capability gaps committee and the SOO development process is therefore extremely important and very much needed to tackle the challenges of the 21st century.

What do you think are the most pressing IFAFRI-relevant issue areas in the EU at the moment?

From an IFAFRI perspective, I think the most pressing issues in the EU at the moment are threefold. **First**, we need to make sure that our research programmes and funding mechanisms are supporting the development of projects, which match what is really needed by the First Responder community.

Second, we need to find ways to reduce the gap between research projects and the actual development of a solution and thereby to speed up the market uptake of research outputs. It is therefore of critical importance to invest more thoughts into how this 'death valley' can be crossed.

Third, we need to make sure that industry is aware of the identified IFAFRI common capability gaps. The good news is that I believe we are on the right track: We are currently investing considerable efforts in drafting a Security Research Programme that is taking into account the six IFAFRI common capability gaps. We also spent some time in identifying existing close-to-market projects, which are in line with the gaps and will present them at Security Research Event in December. Two of those projects are actually exhibiting at the Security Research Event. In addition, in order to make Industry more aware of the work of IFAFRI and the gaps that have been identified by the member states, I am happy to announce that we are planning a dedicated IFAFRI EU Industry Day next year.

IFAFRI is a relatively young and very dynamic initiative. How do you envision IFAFRI's future development?

Our goal is to further strengthen IFAFRI by enlarging its membership base and by creating an effective mechanism to accelerate First Responder technology innovation. Here the role of the Stakeholders Engagement Committee is key in reaching out to industry. In fact, we see our role as being the supportive "connector" between the people on the ground and the industry: by connecting academia to first responders and industry so that innovative solutions that address first responders needs are the result of a co-creation process between all these actors.

It is also important to reach out to and influence decision-makers, and IFAFRI will soon look into how best to address that.

How can IFAFRI broaden its membership base?

In 2019, we are going to further reach out to European partners to create awareness for IFAFRI. Although government representatives lead IFAFRI, we see IFAFRI also very much as a bottom-up initiative primarily serving the First Responders on a national, regional and local level. Therefore, we have already created a long list of national and regional first responder events where we will send IFAFRI representatives to piggy-back and inform them about the goals and outputs of IFAFRI.

What can we expect to happen from IFAFRI in 2019? Which activities are foreseen? What are the priority areas?

For 2019, we have three main objectives: First, we want to further strengthen the Forum by adding new members. Second, we want to join forces with industry and create awareness for IFAFRI at international, national and regional level. Therefore, following an event with industry that took place in the US in August 2018, we are planning to organize an Industry Day in summer 2019 in Europe. The event is scheduled to take place in Brussels with participants mostly from the private sector and the innovation community from the first responders and security sector, and presenting investment tools directly supporting innovation.

The aim is to communicate IFAFRI's goal of enhancing and expanding the development of affordable, innovative technology for first responders worldwide to interested stakeholders. Further, it will allow IFAFRI to present details on its six high priority Common Global Capability Gaps. Third, we are also planning to organise an IFAFRI roadshow and visit First Responder Events to create awareness of IFAFRI and its important mission.

Committee Chair Updates: Annual accomplishments

K. PHIL WATERS

(Department of Homeland Security,
United States)
Stakeholder Engagement Chair

Successful Stakeholder Summit in Washington

The yearly work of the IFAFRI Stakeholder Engagement Committee culminated in a **Stakeholder Summit** held in Washington, DC in August 2018 with over 250 international participants. It was the first time the IFAFRI presented the outcomes of the work conducted by all of its committees to a group of stakeholders in North America. During the summit, we presented a clear understanding of the common global high priority capability gaps, a clear understanding of the first responder global market, and listened to industry and other technology providers tell us about potential solutions to the IFAFRI capability gaps.

Technology Showcase: ResponderX Labs and Amazon Web Services

As follow up to the IFAFRI Stakeholder Summit, ResponderX Labs and Amazon Web Services (AWS) scheduled a technology showcase in Washington, D.C. in October 2018. This event featured the demonstration of cutting edge technology from 11 companies. The purpose of the technology demonstration was to take a look at potential solutions that could address first responder high-priority capability gaps captured in the IFAFRI Common Global Capability Gaps.

Next Steps

Overall, these events were a great success, as they provided us with an opportunity to engage in two-way dialogue with first responders and developers, to further our goal of expanding the development and availability of affordable, innovative technology for first responders worldwide. For next steps, we will continue to communicate with the various companies that attended these events, to track the progress for devices that may potentially solve IFAFRI capability gaps. In addition, we are looking to schedule follow-up summits and technology showcases in other international locations.”

STEFAN TANGEN

(Civil Contingency Agency, Sweden)
Capability Gaps Committee Chair

The Capability Gap committee is now in the process of putting forward several new gaps to the IFAFRI to be included in the common global capability gap list. So far IFAFRI has agreed on 6 gaps. Under 2018, our members have been working hard on identifying their national gaps. The next step is to see what we have in common and the capability gap committee is now reviewing almost 50 new suggestions. Hopefully by the end of the year we will have a new list to present to the IFAFRI.

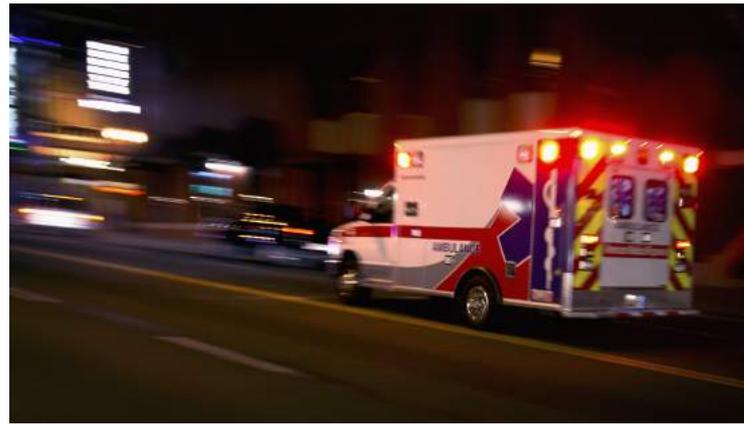


GRAHAM SMITH

**(Ministry of Defence, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, United Kingdom)
Research & Development Committee Chair**

The R&D committee has achieved most of the goals it sought to achieve when it was set up. The committee has developed an agreed technology foraging process and deep dive assessments have been created for all four capability gaps that were initially identified by the main Forum.

A repository has been set up that can hold details of the unclassified R&D projects being conducted by members of the Forum that could have impact on the capability gaps (and also wider first responder research areas being investigated) and initial ideas are being formulated on how industry could be encouraged to develop against the capability gaps, including areas which they might previously have considered too risky to invest in.



Next year will see the challenge of integrating the existing R&D repository with the EC's Joint Research Centre Data Catalogue which will allow wider sharing of the unclassified research conducted by the Forum's members, reducing duplication and hopefully allowing more First Responders to benefit from R&D.

There will also be a drive in the coming year to incorporate the agreed capability gaps identified by the Forum into some of the national mechanism that are used to encourage innovation within industry; the EC have started this ball rolling by agreeing to include the IFAFRI capability gaps in their H2020 calls. If the gaps can be recognised and communicated in individual nations innovation drivers then R&D specifically targeted at the core gaps identified by the IFAFRI members will start to take place, bringing solutions to the capability gaps closer to the hands of First Responders – a key vision of IFAFRI and the R&D committee.





TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Stay up-to-date and learn about close-to-market projects which have relevance to addressing the IFAFRI gaps 1-6. In this issue, we are focusing on European research projects.

PROJECTS

ANYWHERE | 2016 - ongoing | **Present @ SRE**

This platform will support a faster analysis and anticipation of risks prior the event occurrence, an improved coordination of emergency reactions in the field and the self-preparedness of the population and activities at risk.

<http://anywhere-h2020.eu/media/>

EWISA | 2014 - ongoing

The project implements the actual strategic approach of Frontex, expressed in EuroSur through which an intelligence picture of possible threats against MS is obtained through the combination of radar pictures with video pictures and with the intelligence collected from the sensor stations together with the ones from the MS partners, from checked sources.

<http://www.ewisa-project.eu/>

INACHUS | 2015 - 2018

INACHUS aims to achieve a significant time reduction related to Urban Search and Rescue (USaR) phase by providing wide-area situation awareness solutions for improved detection and localisation of the trapped victims assisted by simulation tools for predicting structural failures.

<https://www.inachus.eu/>

MOBNET | 2016 - 2018

MOBNET designs a Search and Rescue (SAR) system for the location of isolated victims in the case of natural or man-made disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes or large snow storms. It will also help first responder services to find fugitives or smugglers hidden within buildings.

<http://www.mobnet-h2020.eu/>

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UPCOMING EVENTS

This section provides an overview of upcoming First Responder events in Europe and elsewhere in the world in early 2019. Don't miss out on them!

FIRST RESPONDER EVENTS

INTERSEC | 20 - 22 January 2019 | Dubai

Intersec is one of the leading security and safety exhibition with over 1.337 exhibitors from 129 countries. Technical solutions to security and safety issues are the main focus during this event.

<http://www.intersecexpo.com/>

EUROPEAN POLICE CONGRESS | 19 - 20 February 2019 | Bonn, Germany

An international congress for decision makers from police forces and security authorities and industries. Its intention is to strengthen the dialogue between the authorities and enable the participants to establish new contacts.

<https://www.european-police.eu/>

FEUERTRUTZ 2019 | 20 - 21

February 2019 | Nuremburg, Germany

FeuerTrutz is Europe's first trade fair and congress that combines solutions for passive, active and organizational fire protection.

<https://www.feuertrutz-messe.de/en>

SECURITY BRATIASLAVA | 13 - 15

March 2019 | Bratislava, Slovakia

21th International Fair of Security Technology, Information Security, Fire Prevention and Rescue Systems, connected with 14th International Symposium of Slovak Police Academy in Bratislava.

<http://www.securitybratislava.sk/en/domov/>

UPCOMING IFAFRI EVENTS

ANNUAL FORUM MEETING | 5 - 7 December 2018 | Brussels

The Annual Forum Meeting 2018 takes place in conjunction with the Security Research Event. The meeting kicks off with a field trip to the European Response Coordination Centre. IFAFRI representatives also get the opportunity to join the SRE panel discussion on Protection of Public Spaces. This is an exciting time for IFAFRI as we reflect on all the accomplishments thus far towards the development of more innovative and affordable technologies for first responders worldwide.

INDUSTRY DAY |

June 2019 (tbc) | Brussels

The **IFAFRI Industry Day** will be a half-day event with up to 100 participants mostly from the private sector and the innovation community from the first responders and security sector.

The aim is to communicate IFAFRI's goal of enhancing and expanding the development of affordable, innovative technology for first responders worldwide to interested stakeholders. Further, it will allow IFAFRI to present details on its six high priority Common Global Capability Gaps.