



## The myth of the FM researchers in their ivory tower

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## EuroFM Reports

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### Practice Network Group

Karin Schaad, Chair



For the EFMC 2015, which will take place in Glasgow from the 1st to 3rd June, preparations are being made on a daily basis now. The venue and program are all set up, hotel rooms and airplane tickets are, for the most part, already booked and everyone is looking forward to spending a wonderful time in Scotland, getting information on a variety of current subjects and meeting acquaintances from previous conferences.

EuroFM is always seeking to improve its organizational structure, methods and ways of working in order to be of more added value for its members. The EuroFM Practice Network Group (PNG) currently seeks to know how its current

member national FM associations consider the initiatives that have been started up by the PNG and in what way those associations might like to contribute. In addition, the PNG would like to do an inventory on possible further initiatives the FM national associations would be interested in for EuroFM to start up.

In the meantime, the corresponding survey announced in February was put together and sent out to all National FM Associations after the beginning of April. Therein, the respondents are asked to answer questions about the current value propositions of EuroFM in general. More specifically, one of the aims of this survey is to find out what FM-related European level topics are considered the most current and relevant by the respondents and as such, should be discussed with other FM professionals at future EuroFM Practice Network group meetings. Last but not least a few questions in this short survey are considering the way PNG is currently functioning.

The filled in questionnaires are expected back shortly and results will be presented at one of the two PNG sessions which will be held in Glasgow first thing on Monday and Wednesday mornings, with the meeting on Monday being at least in part dedicated to the hot subject of BIM and its value for FM (for more details

please refer to the PNG invitation e-mail or the EuroFM website).

As stated in the last EFMI Issue, the Practice Network Group wants to discuss topics of interest to the FM professionals at every meeting, in order to make meetings more attractive to members. In the future, one or two topics from the top of the list put together from the results of the survey will be published in the PNG Agenda, so PNG members will know what to expect and can prepare for the discussion. Within the next PNG meeting, we would like to discuss the Topic "Facility Leadership", which was put forward at the last PNG meeting.

At the PNG meetings, we will also get updates on open issues from the meeting held in The Hague in February, such as the Knowledge Portal, the Key Competences of FM as seen from different perspectives, the FM Data Report or progress made on the ISO Standard and the EU Coalition.

We also hope that many practitioners will attend the "Joint Business and Research Session" at the end of the EFMC meeting, as we are looking for more interaction between all the Network Groups. One of the purposes of EuroFM being an Association of Associations is to bring together Research, Education and Practice in order to enhance cooperation and benefit from each other's skills and experience. Practitioners should be able

to tell researchers what kind of input from research would be helpful for their daily business, and on the other hand, researchers should be able to offer solutions for practice issues based on their research and get feedback on them from seasoned practitioners in order to further the development of FM as a profession. Taking it from there, FM professionals working in the field of education will then be able to teach the new insights and thus allow young professionals to start their careers with innovative and up-to-date know-how.

All Practice Network Group members are very welcome to give input about any other FM-related topics they wish to bring forward or discuss at the PNG meeting or give suggestions about what should be further investigated.

In order to allow for better coordination and to make sure there is enough time for everyone who wishes to present a topic, please contact me in advance at [karin.schaad@bluewin.ch](mailto:karin.schaad@bluewin.ch).

I am very much looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible at our very interesting conference in Glasgow in June. The program sounds promising and there will be something of interest for everyone, totally aside from being a great networking experience and a possibility of making scores of new friends within the FM community!

So, see you soon!

### Education Network Group

Pekka Matvejeff, Chair



After the successful London meeting last Fall, EuroFM Education Network Group has put lots of effort into fulfilling the needs and aspirations of our members. The efforts were concretized further in The Hague meeting in

February, 2015. Based on the feedback, we have decided to focus on a few things, in which our members and other stakeholders seem to have greater expectations.

Our way of doing things is to involve FM students as much as possible to work in different projects for the benefit of the FM industry. In practice, one Dutch student has already started a Thesis project, which includes an inventory of all FM curricula in European Universities of Applied Sciences. Along with this, we have started to make more visible all excellence/honors programs offered in our member universities. All this work is targeted especially to our PNG and CANG members, so that they would be able to be in the front line,

when "picking out" and recruiting the potential future FM leaders graduating from our universities.

Another important project that we have just launched is the developing of the internship process offered by European Universities of Applied Sciences. There is a great potential of skilled and enthusiastic students ready to enter trainee-positions in organizations. Again: our intention is to help especially our PNG and CANG member organizations, as well as other stakeholders to benefit from this future FM potential. We also invite all our IFMA partners and national FM associations to join this development process.

I would like to address special thanks to our active ENG members, who have put lots of effort into these developments during the previous months. In order to be successful, we would like to invite all our members, no matter which part of the industry you represent, to bring in your ideas for developments and also join us in the fruitful networking. We all know that networking is a two way street: it is giving and getting. Usually, one should give something first in order to get something back in return. Joining the work is the easiest way to get to "the wells" of all the knowledge and information one is striving for.

Don't forget our Student Poster Competitions in Glasgow!

### Research Network Group

Susanne Balslev Nielsen, Chair



**The myth of the FM researchers in their ivory tower**

The researchers in the ivory tower is an old saying about researchers being so disconnected from the practical concerns of everyday life that their research is of little or even no use for practitioners. In the following I argue that this is a myth, and that it does not represent the reality of researchers in the EuroFM Research network group.

My first argument is the collective drive for collaboration with other EuroFM members when developing new research and development projects. At the last members meeting in den Hague, for instance, the RNG discussed how we could create a EuroFM process that would ease the collaboration and matchmaking with other EuroFM members, including associations, practitioners, corporation's members and Education. As a result, we concluded that a shared, updated address list and contact information of all EuroFM members is vital in this process if collaboration between research and practice is to be supported efficiently.

My second argument is the shared research practice, which addresses concrete problems and opportunities in the formulation of research projects. The research in the research network group is generally—if not always—oriented towards solving practical problems within FM, and striving to drive the profession

towards a desired future practice. If you study the research of the individual researchers through publications in, e.g., Google scholar, Researchgate or publications in the EuroFM portal you will find that case studies and practice study is commonly used.

My third argument is the drive for discussing research results beyond the research community. The 14th EuroFM research symposium in Glasgow is for the 14th time facilitating knowledge sharing in open forums for both practitioners and researchers.

Having said this, I admit that there might sometimes be gaps that are too wide to bridge. The gaps are often related to diverse interests or to the use of a different language. FM is a broad field of practice, and to become an expert within this broad field a researcher has to focus and specialize on specific issues or topics. As FM researchers, we compete with researchers from other practice fields, and

we need to emphasize FM as academic discipline to raise the academic reputation of FM research. The consequence is that we sometimes have presentations and discussions, which need to be theoretical and might therefore seem distant from the everyday practice concerns.

Nevertheless, despite the two counter arguments, I still strongly believe that the FM researchers in EuroFM are not in their ivory tower. The gaps between researchers and those with practical FM concerns can be bridged when there is a shared interest, a shared willingness to understand each other's approaches and the possibility to meet face-to-face. EFMC2015 in Glasgow is the next large event where we will have this opportunity. I can only encourage all participants to make the most of this opportunity – let's network and search for the next partnerships in FM research and development.