

**Welcome Message of the ILSE President**  
**on occasion of the**  
**World Drowning Prevention Day, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

Dear distinguished participants of our webinar,

Today we celebrate together the second time the World Drowning Prevention Day. It is a day for all of us to think about all these victims of drowning worldwide.

Today I like to thank all our lifesavers in Europe for their activities – in Ireland, in Albania, in Israel, in Greece or in Portugal. Together we are fighting for an Europe free of drowning.

Last year the United Nations General Assembly passed its remarkable Resolution on Global Drowning Prevention.

Drowning is not only a topic for Asia or Africa – it is a huge European problem too.

63 victims per day should be a strong reminder to all of us to stop this.

Over 2.5 millions preventable deaths worldwide in the past decade – but largely unrecognized relative to its impact. Drowning is a silent and hidden killer.

In the European Region, drowning causes the loss of 23.000 lives every year, not counting the victims of floods, water transport accidents, those of the refugee crisis and suicide. In addition, thousands – not rescued in time – are suffering lifelong disabilities as a result of non-fatal drowning accidents.

Just this year we are remembering in the Western Baltic Sea area (in Denmark, Germany, Sweden and Norway) 150 years of the worst storm surge people can commemorate. More than hundred people drowned – sailors and inhabitants of the coast. Thousands of people lost their homes, their animals, their ships and fishing boats. They lost the whole base of their lives.

One year and ten days ago we could experience the power of nature at the horrible flood disaster in another German region again with more than 180 deaths. Homes have been washed away due to heavy rain. Eleven meters water above normal nobody in that valley wanted to believe. They ignored all the warnings by the weather forecast.

Due to the climate change we will experience such disasters more often. Therefore we need an multi-sectural approach to prevent drowning.

International Lifesaving Federation of Europe co-operates together with WHO Europe to assist the European countries in their drowning prevention efforts. In the main focus of ILSE are the high burden countries in Europe.

ILSE encourages all Members to review the UN Resolution on Drowning Prevention, draw it to the attention of their members, stakeholders and communities, and to implement its recommendations into their plans and efforts for drowning prevention.

Drowning is an underrecognized public health issue, that affects all countries and regions.

Drownings are preventable.

People need to be informed that drowning is a serious water safety risk, that can be reduced by lifeguards. Statistics proves: supervision by lifeguards reduces the risk for drowning extremely.

The governments and administration must act: Drowning as a public health issue needs more attention and proven drowning prevention measures need more resources.

We can all act to end drownings – #DrowningPrevention

Stop the death and serious injury in the Water !

Everybody can do something !

Water Safety and Drowning Prevention need more regional and national attention !

Thank you for all your efforts.

Please support us also in the future !

Dr. Detlev Mohr

ILSE President