



COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE
PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Pauline Constant: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
Date: 19/12/2017
Reference: BEUC-PR-2017-022

EU urges stricter checks for safer goods

Today the European Commission proposed to beef up checks of consumer goods available in the EU such as toys, phones or TVs.¹ The main proposal is to increase EU Commission staff to assist Member States in better monitoring the merchandise that ends up on the market.

BEUC and ANEC welcome the Commission's efforts to advance consumer protection against faulty products. However, this is only a first step towards safe goods in the EU.

Monique Goyens, Director of BEUC, commented:

"Dangerous products should *never* end up in consumers' hands. Unfortunately, this is a far cry from reality, as consumer organisations across the EU regularly point out in their tests.² Heaters and tumble dryers that catch fire, toys with parts that children can swallow are just a few examples of harmful goods that should not reach consumers.

"The Commission's proposal is a strong signal that consumers' safety needs to be a priority. However, the proposal should go further and include *all* consumer goods, not just the ones with the CE marking. Moreover, new challenges arise for market surveillance with internet-connected products already coming into our homes. So the EU needs to be tough on how to ensure that they are safe and 'cyber secure'."

Stephen Russell, Secretary General of ANEC, said:

"It is Members States' job to see that only safe goods make their way into shops. So we are glad the Commission considers to step up its resources to assist national authorities in their colossal task. But this is not enough, Member States should also pump up their budget for market checks."

Concrete BEUC demands to the EU Commission:

- **Expand stricter surveillance to goods sold online**
- **Set up a pan-European accident and injury database**
- **Guarantee involvement of consumer groups in the future European network for market surveillance** (Union Product Compliance Board), for more transparency about the results of Member States market surveillance activities
- **Take off the CE marking off the products' packaging.** The logo misleads consumers who believe it is a safety seal. It should only appear on the technical documentation where it will be accessible to the market surveillance authorities. See [our letter](#) to EU Commission, Dec 2017.

Today consumer organisations of the BEUC network and its sister organisation ANEC have launched a campaign to denounce the shortcomings of the CE marking. These organisations are [Altroconsumo](#) (Italy), DECO (Portugal), [OCU](#) (Spain) and [Test-Achats/Test-Aankoop](#) (Belgium).

Background:

Consumer organisations regularly find through testing that many products available in the EU market are unsafe for consumers. However, many of these faulty products remain on the market because of insufficient market surveillance efforts.

The European Commission proposed in 2013 a legislative package to reform the General Product Safety Directive and to better organise market surveillance in the EU. Unfortunately the package got stuck in the EU institutions.

In 2016, the European Commission held a '[public consultation on the Internal Market for goods – enforcement and compliance](#)' to which BEUC [contributed](#). As the consultation showed that more action at EU level on market surveillance is necessary, the European Commission promised to make an additional proposal, i.e. the one published today.

ENDS

¹ The Commission's proposal only considers products are required to carry the CE marking. It means it excludes products which fall under the scope of the General Product Safety Directive, e.g. playground equipment, furniture, child care articles, textiles...

² Our members DECO (Portugal) and OCU (Spain) found that several electric heaters failed to meet European safety standards. Altroconsumo (Italy) and DECO had similar experiences with gas water heaters. ZPS (Slovenia) found dangerous toys that carry the CE marking. Which? (UK) found fire-risk tumble dryers.

Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs AISBL | Der Europäische Verbraucherverband

Rue d'Arlon 80, B-1040 Brussels • Tel. +32 (0)2 789 24 01 •
press@beuc.eu • www.beuc.eu • www.twitter.com/beuc

EC register for interest representatives: identification number 9505781573-45



This press release is part of an activity which has received funding under an operating grant from the European Union's Consumer Programme (2014-2020).