## Dangerous goods on EU market call for improved product safety law

In 2019, more than 2,000 notifications of non-food products were made to the EU's rapid alert system (Safety Gate) as failing safety requirements. Each notification may represent thousands of faulty products. Toys, motor vehicles and electrical appliances were the product groups with most notifications. The figure could well be an undercount, as many dangerous products are possibly not identified.

An obstacle to tackling the problem of dangerous goods on the EU market is the current product safety law. This dates to 2001 and is not made for an era of online shopping and the Internet of Things. Consumers can now buy directly from producers who are established outside the EU, but who may be difficult to trace afterwards. And while more products can connect to the internet, these often lack basic security features.

The current product safety law is also weak on market checks and controls, meaning that authorities are hampered in their ability to scan the market for unsafe products [1].

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"Every unsafe product on the market is one too many. As long as legislation remains stuck in the early 2000s, authorities do not have the right tools to keep dangerous goods away from consumers. The EU must swiftly bring it in line with today's reality. For example, the law should consider that many unsafe products are sold online, such as teeth whitening products that are harmful to your gums. And it should take into account there are often issues with smart products that prove not to be quite so smart, such as connected dolls that spy on your kids."

Stephen Russell, Secretary-General of The European Consumer Voice in Standardisation (ANEC), said:

"It is important Europe moves quickly to create state-of-the-art legislation on product safety. Even though Member States agreed last year to improve enforcement for some products, we still lack a coherent and pan-European approach to market surveillance. We need more controls and inspections, and an EU-wide accident and injury database should be set up in order to underpin evidence-based legislation and technical standardisation."

[1] Although EU Member States last year agreed to improve market surveillance activities, this only applies to a restricted set of products, such as toys and mobile phones.

END

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