



One-pager on draft mandate on Personal Music Players (PMPs)

What is the problem?

The October 2008 European Commission scientific opinion showed that 5-10% of the users of Personal Music Players risk permanent hearing loss within the next 5 years due to excessive use. Children and teenagers, who are habitual users of PMPs, are particularly vulnerable to high sound levels and need to be offered effective protection. At the moment, no technical standard defines a maximum sound limit for PMPs. Those now on the market can generate a sound level as high as 115 dB(A). By comparison, pedestrians are exposed to a sound level of 90 dB(A) from passing heavy traffic.

What are we asking?

In addition to limits related to time-exposure, proposed by the European Commission in the draft standardisation mandate, ANEC asks for a sound limit of 89 dB(A) to be the maximum permitted by default in PMPs, with secured access to a second maximum of 100 dB(A). This second maximum could be used only after deliberate manual activation (through entering a secure password) and is intended, for example, for people with hearing impairments to be able to increase the volume. In the case of PMPs designed to appeal to children, we want to see the maximum sound level fixed at a level below that where the probability of risking hearing loss is considered negligible. Please refer to our detailed comments on the draft standardisation mandate for more information (ANEC-ICT-2009-G-027).

Why do we ask for your support?

ANEC is convinced that the use of maximum sound limits for PMPs would allow the European standards work to proceed faster and enable the statutory provisions adopted or planned by some Member States to be taken into account. The consequence would be the offer of effective protection to consumers and an identified means of compliance for manufacturers and market surveillance authorities.

ANEC in Brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing and defending consumer interests in the development of technical standards, in the application of certification schemes to standards, and in the creation or revision of legislation on products and services. ANEC receives funding from the European Commission's DG SANCO and the EFTA Secretariat.