

Reinforcement of joint efforts from market surveillance authorities and customs against dangerous cigarette lighters

PROSAFE and the market surveillance authorities in 13 European Member States are together with customs authorities reinforcing their activities against unsafe lighters to further step up action to enforce the lighters decision. It lays down legal requirements for cigarette lighters to be child resistant and puts a ban on novelty lighters.

The safety of lighters has been high on the European agenda for several years. PROSAFE has played an active role since 2006 in the planning of enforcement activities and since 2007 in the practical implementation of the activities when PROSAFE together with 13 Member States and with financial support from the European Commission began a Joint Action on non child-resistant lighters and novelty lighters.

These past efforts have brought the problems with novelty lighters almost to an end in many European countries. Significant efforts have also been made to decrease the number of other unsafe lighters on the European market. Those activities have included more than 4,500 inspections at importers, wholesalers and retailers, more than 5,500 checks of lighter models and almost 1,300 measures being taken against lighter models that were dangerous or where the economic operator was unable to present the required technical documentation. Customs inspected almost 8,500 consignments ranging from small packages to entire containers upon their arrival in Europe.

Now, the Member States taking part in the Joint Action initiate a second phase that means a stepping up of the activities over the next two months. This will include:

- Market surveillance inspections and investigations of lighter models.
- Border control by customs of lighters upon import to Europe.
- Laboratory testing of potentially dangerous lighters.
- Enforcement activities against non-compliant and dangerous lighters.

The activities will be undertaken by customs and market surveillance authorities from the Member States that take part in the Joint Action and from a number of other Member States who want to contribute to this particular exercise.

Background

This press release arises from the Joint Follow-up Market Surveillance Action on Child-Resistant Lighters and Novelty Lighters, which has received funding from the European



Union, in the framework of the "Programme of Community action in the field of Consumer policy (2007-2013)".

The Joint Action is coordinated by PROSAFE, "The Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe", a non-profit organisation that brings together market surveillance officers from all over Europe and across the world. Visit www.prosafe.org to learn more.

The RAPEX reports on lighters presenting serious risks to consumers can be found on the European Commission's website:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/dyna/rapex/rapex_archives_en.cfm

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