

## *Newsletter from PROSAFE*

### **Mid-Term Conference presents the Good Progress in Joint Action 2013**

In a workshop in beginning of May in Warsaw, PROSAFE presented the progress achieved by the participants in the Joint Action 2013. The two-day meeting was attended by some 35 market surveillance officials and stakeholders. The workshop showed that sampling and testing is well on the way for all five product groups addressed by the Action. Preliminary test results already reveal that the market surveillance authorities have been able to pick the most risky products from the market in their work.

The Joint Market Surveillance Action 2013 (JA2013), which has been running for nearly 1½ year, is an umbrella project that brings together 25 authorities from 21 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In addition, authorities from Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina take part in some of the activities as observers outside the financial scheme.

JA2013 organised a conference from 6 to 7 May in Warsaw, Poland, hosted by the Polish Office for Competition and Consumer Protection. The aim was to showcase the progress half way through the activities. The workshop was well attended with some 35 delegates that followed presentations from the Activity Leaders, participated in discussions and provided their feedback in the two days.

Some of the main results from the activities are the following:

- **Cots and travel cots**

The participants sampled 50 cots, 20 of which have already been tested at the laboratory. The results suggest high non-conformity rates in the tested samples, which is taken as an indication of the skills of the market surveillance inspectors that were able to pick those samples that were most likely to fail.

Besides sampling and testing, this activity also studies whether the standard EN 716 (with amendments) assures an adequate level of safety for the products. The group has instigated a number of tests that go beyond this standard to see if they will result in better and safer products. Areas they are examining include a check to establish whether a travel cot can be folded from underneath, additional durability tests and tests for cots being used in combination with changing tables. The result of this exercise will feed into the standardisation work undertaken by CEN.

- **Chemicals in (children's) clothing**

This activity focusses on chemicals in clothing worn close to the skin for prolonged time by vulnerable people (children and pregnant women). The chemicals being examined are azo dyes, cadmium, lead, chromium VI, formaldehyde, organotin and phthalates.

The choice over the testing methods turned out to be difficult. Some are described in the legislation, others in standards, and some are being developed by the laboratories.

The activity has sampled a little more than 300 garments in two phases. The first phase focused on summer clothes and resulted in 153 products being sampled. The second phase focused on winter clothes and resulted in 149 samples. Each individual garment was subjected to a number of tests depending upon the nature of the garment and which chemicals were suspected to be found. Therefore, almost 1.500 individual tests have been carried out on these pieces of clothing. The result was that some 11% of the samples did not comply with the safety requirements.

- **Kick scooters**

The scope of this activity includes both toy scooters used by young children and sports scooters used by older children and adults for tricks or transportation. The participants have decided to divide the sampling of potentially non-compliant scooters into two stages due to the seasonal nature of the kick scooter market in some of the participating countries. Sampling is in progress. The plan is to sample 68 kick scooters - 20 sports scooters and 48 toy scooters. Testing of the scooters sampled in the first phase is in progress.

- **Smoke detectors**

This activity focusses on low-cost detectors typically purchased in DIY shops and installed by the consumer himself.

The participants have sampled some 20 different detectors that currently are undergoing testing at an accredited test laboratory. The procedure is quite lengthy as part of it is an endurance test that lasts several months, so no results are available yet.

A second task taken up by this activity is the establishing of an overview of the legislation governing the use of smoke alarms in the participating Member States. The result will be published in the final report next year.

- **Toys**

This activity focusses on mechanical and chemical risks in toys intended for children below 36 months. This scope means that age grading also becomes an issue of interest for the participants.

The sampling activity finished in March with more than 600 products taken out from the market. The testing procedure implies that each toy is subjected to those tests where it is presumed to be most likely to fail, so two toys may go through different tests and a specific toy may go through more tests. The current programme stipulates that more than 700 individual tests will have been carried out when the testing is over.

The results so far indicate that a high number of toys have noncompliant small parts. This indicates that the market surveillance inspectors have been able to pick products in the shops that were likely to fail this safety requirement. As regards the chemical requirements, some 12% of the tested toys did not comply.

### **Caution!**

The above results are based on samples of products from the markets in the participating countries. As in any routine market surveillance activity, the results represent the targeted efforts that authorities undertake to identify unsafe products. They do not give a statistically valid picture of the situation of the whole market.

The samples were tested at accredited laboratories. The tests focussed on those safety requirements that have the largest impact on consumer safety.

### **Method development activities**

In addition to the product specific activities, JA2013 has also focussed on a number of horizontal issues. They included outreach to China, international co-operation, coordination of dissemination and use of results by all Member States, stakeholder outreach and other communications activities, follow-up with standards organisations, risk assessment and Continuous Improvement of Market Surveillance (CIMS) by implementation of mutual assessments.

One of the very tangible achievements of these activities is the issuing of a new e-learning module on toys and the new Toys Safety Directive. It discusses and explains the present legal requirements, it presents two case studies (on chemical properties of toys and on age grading of toys) and it offers guidance to market surveillance inspectors. However, the content is of interest to all organisations working with toys including businesses. The module can be accessed freely via PROSAFE's website ([www.prosafe.org](http://www.prosafe.org)).

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**Background information**

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the 25 participating authorities from 21 countries in the Joint Market Surveillance Action on GPSD Products 2013 - JA 2013.

The Action is coordinated by PROSAFE (Product Safety 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](http://www.prosafe.org) to learn more. On this website you will also find more information about Joint Action 2013 and the other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE. Explore the links to "Projects" in the left-hand menu bar.

**Disclaimer**

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