



PROSAFE Joint Action
**Seamless surveillance by
close cooperation**



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News from PROSAFE

**Taking European Market Surveillance to the Next Level:
Cooperation on Product Safety Controls between the Chinese and European Product
Safety Control Authorities Enters the Practical Phase**

November will mark the beginning of the practical cooperation in the Joint Action China. Laboratory Comparison Tests will start beginning of November with the aim to verify that Chinese and European laboratories assess non-compliances the same way and arrive at the same conclusions. Shortly after, a practical pilot will launch in Shanghai, Shenzhen and Rotterdam to explore whether Chinese and European authorities can use each other's control information to target their own controls more efficiently on those goods that compromise the safety of the consumers and the wealth of our societies

European market surveillance authorities, PROSAFE and the European Commission have recently begun discussing how to "take market surveillance to the next level". The Member States and PROSAFE have been very successful over the past 10 years in developing a model for cooperation on market surveillance on the European market. The Joint Actions have undertaken activities against more than 25 different product groups and involved all EU Member States as well as a number of EFTA countries and a number of countries outside the EEA.

Still, the parties need to improve further and react on society's constant demand for improving the performance and efficiency of the market surveillance. One answer is to move the authorities' product safety controls up-stream in the supply chain. PROSAFE and the Member State Authorities explore several options, one of them through the Joint Action involving the General Administration of Quality, Supervision and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of the People's Republic of China. In this Action, 10 Member States together with AQSIQ are exploring the scope for cooperating to target potentially unsafe goods more efficiently.

This cooperation has reached the phase where practical cooperation is about to start. In the beginning of November, a number of carefully prepared test samples will be sent to 25 European and 11 Chinese laboratories. All these laboratories have signed up for participating in a Laboratory Comparison Test that will check the laboratories' ability to find all non-compliances in a toy and assess them in the same way. All laboratories will receive samples with the same non-compliances, test them and report the results back to the organisers. The organisers will compile and analyse the results.

The exercise will comprise three different types of non-compliances that are known to cause issues for toy safety:

- Migration of miscellaneous metals including Chromium, Organotins and others.
- Age grading of toys.
- Phthalates.

Results are expected early in the spring of 2016.

Further to this, a practical pilot will start before the end of 2015 in Rotterdam, Shanghai and Shenzhen. The idea is to exchange information between the involved authorities and to examine whether this will allow the authorities to lower controls on safe goods and focus on potentially unsafe goods. In practice, it means that the Chinese authorities will audit a number of Chinese toy manufacturers to check that they fulfil the criteria that will make them "Authorised Toy Manufacturers". A list of criteria has been prepared by the European and Chinese authorities. It purports to prove that a manufacturer:



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- is able to produce safe toys that comply with the requirements in the European legislation;
- has an efficient production control in place that will identify any product safety issues should they arise;
- is able to handle such issues fully satisfactorily and prevent unsafe toys from reaching the consumers;
- has shown to be trustworthy.

October 26th, the State Secretary van Rijn of the Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and Minister Zhi Shuping of AQSIQ signed an agreement declaring the parties' commitment to carrying out this exercise. The signing was witnessed by President Xi Jinping and Their Royal Highnesses of the Netherlands King Willem Alexander and Queen Maxima. A press release from the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority is annexed.

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Background information

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the 10 participating authorities in the Joint Market Surveillance Action on China - JA China.

The Action is coordinated by PROSAFE (Product Safety), 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.

On this website you will also find more information about other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE. Explore the links to "Projects" in the left-hand column.

Disclaimer

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The newsletter reflects only the views of the author. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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Press release

Summary.

The General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) and the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) in cooperation with 10 European Member States, will start to recognize each other's control information to guarantee toy safety and reduce overlap in controls. An agreement for this purpose will be/has been signed by State Secretary van Rijn of the Netherlands Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sports and Minister Zhi Shuping of AQSIQ. The signing was witnessed by H.E. King Willem Alexander, H.E. Queen Maxima and President Xi Jinping. Under the agreement, AQSIQ will certify Authorized Toy Manufacturers (ATM's) based on agreed safety criteria. Toys from these ATM's will fall in a reduced regular-control scheme in the Netherlands. Toy testing laboratories in China and Europe will launch a comparison program to guarantee the quality of test results. This means that the European import control authorities can focus their efforts on other goods that are less likely to be safe. This all results in better consumer protection and increased trade flows by minimizing overlap in Governmental controls. The signing was the conclusion of five years of development between AQSIQ and the NVWA.

Back ground.

After five years of development the Chinese Authority AQSIQ and 10 European Authorities, led by the Dutch NVWA and supported by the European Commission, start practically working together to improve the safety of consumer goods and reduce overlap in governmental controls.

With the signing of this agreement, parties agree on criteria toy manufacturers need to fulfill to be authorized as Authorized Toy Manufacturer (ATM) by AQSIQ.

The fulfilment of these criteria by a manufacturer, checked and accredited by AQSIQ, should guarantee the safety of toys exported to Europe.

Toys from these ATM-companies will fall in a reduced regular-import safety-control scheme in the Netherlands, due to the recognition of control information of AQSIQ by the NVWA.

With this agreement, The Netherlands act at the same time as the pilot-country of the European Prosafe project. With this project, consumers are better protected and overlap in controls will minimize. This means that the European import control authorities can focus their efforts on other goods that are less likely to be safe.

The outcomes of this project can lead to the extensions of this cooperation to other European Member States as well as to other products, like electrical appliances.

This project runs hand in hand with the Laboratory Comparison Programme where 11 Chinese and 25 European laboratories work together to guarantee and improve the quality of toy testing laboratories. This program is also part of the European/China joint action on consumer product safety.

The overall aim is to increase the cooperation between authorities throughout the world so they can use intelligence from each other to target their controls as efficiently as possible on those goods that compromise the safety of the consumers and the wealth of our societies.