

Newsletter from PROSAFE

Joint Action 2013 tackles product safety issues

On 26 January, PROSAFE hosted a well-attended workshop to present the results of the Joint Action 2013. This project, supported by the European Commission, saw 25 authorities from 21 European countries take action against unsafe products in order to safeguard European consumers.

Over the past two years, European product safety authorities have been cooperating in the Joint Action 2013 to identify and solve issues with unsafe products found on the European market. The Action provided a valuable platform for Member State market surveillance officials to work together and address product safety issues across the EU.

The key results from the Joint Action are as follows:

- **Cots and travel cots**
Approximately 150 inspections were carried out by market surveillance officials and, as a result, 50 samples were taken for further examination and testing. 92% of samples tested did not fully comply with legal requirements. In 22 cases, the authority ordered the supplier to stop sales and remove the product from the market. In another seven cases, the economic operator was requested to modify the product in order to make it safe.
- **Chemicals in (children's) clothing**
For this product specific activity more than 300 garments were tested. The tests focused mainly on clothing which comes into close contact with the skin and may be worn over a prolonged period of time, such as children's nightwear, swimwear, sportswear and shoes made from coloured plastics. Tests were also carried out on clothing worn by pregnant women. Each garment was tested for chemicals, and the results showed that 33 samples (11%) contained dangerous chemicals exceeding the threshold value. Member States have now taken action against these products.
- **Kick scooters**
This particular activity focussed on both toy scooters used by young children and sports scooters used by older children and adults. Tests carried out on 20 sports scooters and 48 toy scooters produced alarming results! Only two sports scooters and two toy scooters complied with all legal requirements. Thirty of the cases resulted in voluntary measures being taken by the suppliers to remove the risk for consumers. In another eight cases, mandatory measures were imposed by the authorities. In five cases, the product was recalled from the European market.
- **Smoke detectors**
This activity showed that the situation concerning low-cost smoke detectors is unsatisfactory. These are products typically purchased in DIY shops for less than 10 EUR and installed by the consumer himself. Out of the 64 smoke detectors inspected, 20 were tested. Seven failed the test and another four models had marking errors. Those Member States that participated in this activity are now following up on the non-compliant detectors from the project. In addition, several Member States are running, or plan to run, follow-up campaigns in their country.
- **Toys**
Ten Member States participated in this activity which focussed on toys intended for children below the age of 36 months. The authorities visited more than 300 economic operators (manufacturers,

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importers, wholesalers and retailers) and tested more than 600 toys. The results showed that almost half of the toys tested for mechanical flaws failed, despite the fact that such flaws can be easily detected in the final product. Approximately 7% of products tested for chemicals failed the test, primarily because they contained phthalates. Suppliers took voluntary measures in 31 cases, and the authorities imposed mandatory measures in a further 79 cases.

The Joint Action 2013 has led to the submission of 128 notifications in the Rapid Alert System from dangerous non-food products (RAPEX). Consumers can find more up-to-date information about measures taken on the European Commission's website

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/main/index.cfm?event=main.listNotifications.

The Project Leader for the Joint Action 2013, Mr. Gunnar Wold from Norway, is proud of the results: "PROSAFE has used this Joint Action model for several years and the results show its growing added value over the years. I am personally very satisfied to see the high number of dangerous products that are taken from the market by the participating authorities. There is no doubt that their work has contributed significantly to safeguarding the European consumer."

PLEASE NOTE!

These results are based on the activities carried out on the markets of the participating countries. As in any other routine market surveillance activity, the results represent the targeted efforts that authorities undertake to identify unsafe products.

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

The results do not give a statistically valid picture of the market situation.

The figures and statistics quoted in this Newsletter are correct as at the above date, but are subject to possible change.

Background information

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the authorities from the countries taking part in Joint Action 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 to learn more. On this website you will also find more information about the other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE. Explore the links to 'Projects' or 'Newsletters' on the website.

Disclaimer

This PROSAFE newsletter arises from the Joint Market Surveillance Action 2013, which receives co-funding from the European Union in the framework of the 'Programme of Community Action in the field of Consumer Policy (2007-2013)'. The content of this newsletter represents the views of the author and it is his sole responsibility; it can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency (CHAFEA) or any other body of the European Union. CHAFEA does not accept responsibility for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

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