

## *Newsletter from PROSAFE*

### **Joint Market Surveillance Action 2011 is closing**

**Joint Actions 2011 (JA2011), a project coordinated by PROSAFE that brought together 28 authorities from 19 EU and EFTA countries, is coming to an end. With this occasion PROSAFE organised a final conference on 19 February 2014. The project targeted battery chargers, wheeled child conveyances, baby bathtubs, fireworks and lawn mowers.**

The Joint Action, which will formally end on 30 April 2014, was an umbrella project that brought together 28 authorities from 19 European countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. In addition to this, authorities from Finland, Turkey and Bosnia-Herzegovina decided to take part in some of the activities as observers outside the financial scheme.

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

- **Battery chargers (or External Power Supplies)**

The participating authorities checked 235 models of battery chargers, out of which 77 were taken for further testing at an accredited laboratory.

The result of the test was that various non-compliances were found in 52 of the tested chargers. This resulted in the following actions:

- 1 product was recalled from the market and the end-consumer;
- 12 were withdrawn from the market;
- in 39 cases, the business was invited to take actions and give feed-back to the authority.

After the tests, the participants assessed the risks and verified that the associated risks for consumers are low in general. Less than 10% of the tested products presented high or serious risk to the consumer.

- **Wheeled child conveyances**

The authorities visited in total 163 economic operators trading wheeled child conveyances. As a result 51 samples from 48 different brands were taken for further inspections and laboratory testing. These samples comprised 5 prams, 26 pushchairs and 20 combinations.

The result of the test was that 16% of the 51 samples were found to present a serious risk to the consumer. The risk level helps the market surveillance authorities determine the appropriate actions and measures to be taken.

In total, measures were taken in 41 of the 51 cases:

- 53% of the measures were minor.
- 16% involved sales bans or withdrawals from the market.
- 10% of the samples were recalled from consumers.
- RAPEX notifications were issued in accordance with the measures taken.

More than 80% of the measures were voluntary measures taken by economic operators. This is seen as a very positive signal from the industry.

- **Baby bathtubs**

The participants visited in total 270 economic operators and sampled 43 baby bathtubs from 36 different brands. Around 9% out of the 43 samples were identified to have a 'serious risk'. No recalls were required by the market surveillance authorities. However, 8 cases out of the 43 samples tested (19%) resulted in sales bans or withdrawals. The market surveillance authorities issued RAPEX alerts on 4 of these 8 cases. 26 cases (60% of the tested products) resulted in minor measures being taken by the market surveillance authorities.

It was very satisfactory to see that the cooperation between the businesses and the market surveillance authorities in most cases was very focused on eliminating the risks with products. Around 70% of the measures taken were taken voluntarily by the businesses in coordination with the respective market surveillance authorities.

- **Fireworks**

This activity focussed on 5 different types of fireworks: Small fountains, small potentially unstable batteries and combinations, small rockets preferably without a stick to stabilise the flight, flash bangers and roman candles.

The participants sampled 138 fireworks that were tested at one of the two accredited test laboratories that were contracted for this job. The testing focussed on those requirements with the highest impact on consumer safety.

The results from the market surveillance exercise were that 40% of the fireworks failed to comply with the physical tests required by the standard, and that 17% failed to comply with the marking and labelling requirements in either the legislation or the standard. Taking both these factors into account a total of 48% of the samples failed to meet the physical requirements or the product information requirements or both. The most common non-compliances were related to the ignition of the fuse, the functioning of the fireworks, the firework's stability during functioning or the sound pressure level. Authorities are following up these non-compliances with the economic operators involved.

Further to the testing of the products, this activity also produced a "Guide for Economic Operators and Market Surveillance staff on the Markings & Labels on Fireworks".

- **Lawn mowers**

This activity tested 25 lawn mowers divided on 7 robotic mowers, 4 electric cordless mowers, 7 electric corded mowers and 7 petrol mowers.

The result was that 17 of the 25 tested mowers were found to be non-compliant. Out of these 7 were found to have major non-compliances such as possibility to access the knives while the (robotic) mover was operating, the (robotic) mower failing to stop when lifted, inadequate rear wall extension and inadequate structural integrity.

This Joint Action did not comprise testing of ride-on lawn mowers. However, the participants did undertake some simple visual inspections that revealed that 5 out of 17 models 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 market situation.

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

### **Method development activities**

In addition to the product specific activities, the Joint Action has also focused 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 organizations, risk assessment, Continued Improvement of Market Surveillance by implementation of mutual assessments; priority-setting; and establishing a European Home Authority Principle.

Two particularly notable achievements should be mentioned:

- The Joint Action produced two e-learning modules, one on the General Product Safety Directive and one on carrying out risk assessment in accordance with the RAPEX guideline. Both modules can be accessed on [elearn.prosafe.org](http://elearn.prosafe.org) or from PROSAFE's website. The modules are available for anyone who will register.
- Links between the market surveillance authorities and customs authorities were further developed and the Joint Action produced various material that customs can use as part of their import control. This material included inter alia a checklist with instructions for inspection of battery chargers, an "atlas" of battery chargers, checklists and other information material on checking markings and labels on fireworks, and checklists on childcare articles.

PROSAFE has coordinated JA2011 with its other activities and pro-actively works to ensure that best practice is developed and implemented throughout all its activities. The final workshop provided an opportunity to share experience and best practice gained through the different product activities and the Joint Action as a whole.

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**Background information**

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the 28 participating authorities in the Joint Market Surveillance Action on GPSD Products - JA 2011.

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 2011 and the other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE. Explore the links to "Projects" in the left-hand column.

**Disclaimer**

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