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Newsletter from PROSAFE

Joint Action 2015 - Europe fights unsafe products to protect consumers

The Joint Market Surveillance Action 2015 (JA2015) just passed its midterm and considerable progress has been accomplished in all the activities. The first test results are available and reveal that the market surveillance authorities continue to identify the riskiest products on the market. The Joint Action is undertaken by 35 authorities from 26 European countries, it is funded by the European Commission and coordinated by PROSAFE.

JA2015 organised a workshop from 30 to 31 May 2017 in Brussels to take stock of the work and results achieved in its first fourteen months. Some of the highlights from the activities are as follows:

- **Soothers and soother holders**

During the recent months market surveillance officials from the participating countries have inspected soothers and soother holders in shops, online stores and at manufacturer and importers. As a result, they identified some 200 products that were sampled and sent for testing due to suspicion of dangerous non-compliances. The testing takes place at an accredited test laboratory. Testing hasn't been completed yet, but the results reveal so far that the focussed sampling works very efficiently and the inspectors have indeed been able to identify the most risky products.

As a consumer, you can look out for dangerous soothers and soother holders by checking the RAPEX overview which can be found on the European Commission's website for unsafe products [Error! Bookmark not defined.](#)

- **Plasticised toys**

This activity looks at chemicals in plasticised toys. This includes phthalates, short-chained chlorinated paraffins (SCCP), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH's), bisphenol A (BPA) and other substances of concern that may present a serious risk to children if found in toys. The 17 participating countries have sampled 255 toys that have been sent for testing, mainly plastic dolls, inflatable plastic toys, bath toys and squeezable toys.

The testing identified a number of toys containing phthalates, BPA or SCCP in concentrations above the limits in the legislation. During the coming months, the Member State authorities will take action to ensure that the non-compliant samples are removed from the market and that the economic operators take the necessary action to ensure that no such samples are being sold anywhere within the European Market.

- **Playgrounds**

More than 1.000 pieces of playground equipment are to be inspected in the participating countries at indoor and outdoor playgrounds. The focus is on equipment that has already been installed and is in use.

The first tasks of the activity have been to prepare a manual for the market surveillance officers carrying out inspections on the field, to equip all participants with the appropriate test tool kit, and to train a small group of inspectors who can then further train their colleagues at home. All these activities purport to streamline the inspection process and harmonise the authorities' approach to faulty equipment across the participating countries. The participants have checked 172 pieces of equipment installed at 84 indoor playgrounds. Approximately half of them had at least one non-compliance compared to the safety requirements.

Owners of playgrounds are advised to ensure that the recreation areas are properly maintained and that they are inspected at least once a year to check for dangerous shortcomings.

- **Handheld electrical circular saws**

This activity focuses on handheld electrical circular saws used by consumers. It includes saws intended for professional use that are offered for rent to consumers in do-it-yourself shops.

Staff from the participating authorities have been busy visiting shops and inspecting websites from online retailers. During this activity, they identified 100 hundred circular saws that were taken for further investigation and testing at an accredited laboratory to check if they had dangerous non-compliances. These tests include an examination of the mandatory warnings and instructions on the tool or in the user manual.

Besides looking for unsafe products, this activity also checks if the safety standards work as intended or if improvement should be suggested to the standardisation committee.

- **Small electric household appliances (blenders, mixers and toasters)**

The participants have identified 135 appliances from the market that are suspected to be unsafe. Approximately half of them are from online stores. They have been sent for testing at an accredited laboratory, and the authorities have acquired technical documentation from the manufacturers to check it. Testing is in progress (and has even been completed for toasters), but results aren't available yet.

This activity also studies the current versions of the European safety standards to check for potential shortcomings that may result in unsafe products. At present, the group is looking into the possibility for the user to put a hand or a finger into a blender while the blades are running. This is possible for household blenders whereas blenders for professional use are equipped with a safety switch that stops the blades immediately if the user opens the lid of the blender.

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.

Tests were undertaken at accredited laboratories and focussed on those safety requirements that have the largest impact on consumer safety.

Method development activities

The Joint Action also features a number of activities to develop further the market surveillance procedures in the participating authorities:

- The Impact Improvement Activity that studies methods to increase the impact of the Joint Actions so that more businesses and consumers learn about the results from the Actions and act accordingly.
- The New & Emerging Issues Activity that examines ways to improve the market surveillance authorities' ability to react to safety issues that "pop up" when a new kind of products suddenly becomes the thrill of the season (recent examples include hoverboards and fidget spinners.)
- The Risk Assessment Activity that studies risk assessment methods and produces guidelines to help market surveillance inspectors assess risks with the products targeted by the Joint Action in a uniform way.
- The CIMS Activity that facilitates a systematic learning process whereby authorities can learn from each other through a peer review like scheme.
- The E-learning Activity that develops e-learning tools that market surveillance authorities, business and others can use to learn about product safety issues. The e-learning modules can be accessed

via www.prosafe.org. Access is free and open to everybody, but registration is required. The following e-learning material is currently available:

- The General Product Safety Directive
- The European Home Authority Principle (EHAP)
- Risk assessment
- Toys safety
- Cords and drawstrings in children's clothing
- Cots

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Background information

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the 35 participating authorities in the JA2015. The participants come from 26 countries spread over the entire Europe (Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom).

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 find more information about JA2015 and the other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE.

Disclaimer

This PROSAFE newsletter arises from the Joint Market Surveillance Action on GPSD Products - JA 2015, which received funding from the European Union in the framework of the 'Programme of Community Action in the field of Consumer Policy (2014-2020)'.

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