Keeping consumers safe: nearly 2500 dangerous products withdrawn from the EU market in 2014

Brussels, 23 March 2015

The European Commission published new figures today, showing that in 2014, nearly 2500 products, ranging from toys to motor vehicles, were either stopped before they entered the EU or removed from markets because they were dangerous for EU consumers. For 12 years, the European Commission and EU Member States have been working together to ensure that consumer goods placed on the European markets are safe. For this purpose, they use the Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products.

"Every product in Europe needs to be safe for our citizens. Products that can cause harm have to be removed from the market as quickly as possible. This is the reason why we have created the Rapid Alert System. Over the years it has proven to be very efficient in keeping European consumers safe. This is a very practical example of EU cooperation to the benefit of our citizens" said Věra Jourová, EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

The Rapid Alert System ensures that information about dangerous non-food products withdrawn from the market and/or recalled anywhere in Europe is quickly circulated between Member States and the European Commission. In this way, appropriate follow up action (ban/stop of sales, withdrawal, recall or import rejection by Customs authorities) is taken everywhere in the EU and consumers are informed. In 2014, there were 2755 such follow-up actions registered in the system.

The website of the Rapid Alert System attracted nearly 2 million visits in 2014, and new search tools allow consumers and businesses to better inform themselves about the detection of dangerous products and product recalls.

Thirty-one countries (EU together with Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) currently participate in the system.

Which products are posing risks?

In 2014, toys (28%) and clothing, textiles and fashion items (23%) were the two main product categories for which corrective measures had to be taken. Among the most frequently notified risks caused by these products were risk of injury, chemical risks and choking.

The most common chemical risks notified in 2014 were related to products such as shoes and leather articles (e.g. Chromium VI, a skin sensitising substance), toys and childcare articles (e.g. plastic softener, which can cause fertility problems), and fashion jewellery (e.g. harmful heavy metals).

Where are they coming from?

China remains the number one country of origin in the alert system. Last year, 64% of the total number of notifications on dangerous products related to products coming from China, the same as in 2013. The European Commission collaborates closely with China through the "Rapid alert system-CHINA" application to ensure that the Chinese authorities tackle any product safety issues on the ground.

The rapid alert system in numbers

2 435 Total number of notifications in 2014

This represents an increase of 3% compared to last year, which means consumers are better protected as more dangerous products were stopped.

2 755 Follow up actions in 2014

When Member States detect a product that is unsafe, they will post a notification in the rapid alert system. All the other countries will search for the respective product on their markets and those countries that find it will indicate which follow-up action (ban/stop of sales, withdrawal, recall or import rejection by Customs authorities) they have taken.
5 most frequently notified product categories in 2014

- Toys: 28%
- Clothing, textiles and fashion items: 23%
- Electrical appliances and equipment: 9%
- Motor vehicles: 6%
- Childcare articles and children’s equipment: 3%
- Lighting equipment: 3%

Notifications by country of origin of the notified product in 2014

- China, including Hong Kong: 64%
- EU-28 and EEA countries: 14%
- Unknown: 7%
- Other: 12%
- Turkey: 3%
For more information, please see:

Questions and answers
Factsheet
Product Safety page
Search tool for the alert system
Rapid Alert System national contact points

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