



Contacts: Caroline Hayat, Laura Degallaix (BEUC): 02 7431590
Tania Vandenberg (ANEC): 02 7432470
Date: 24/01/2008
Reference: PR 004/2008, ANEC-PR-2008-PRL-001

Toy safety: will the EU meet the challenge?

Tomorrow the European Commission should present a draft proposal for a revision of European toy safety directive. BEUC and ANEC are hoping for a strong message to protect Europe's most vulnerable citizens.

For our member organisations across Europe:

It is unacceptable that a toy contains dangerous chemical substances: We want a total ban on substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic or reprotoxic in toys. The same prohibition should apply to endocrine disruptors and allergens.

The precautionary principle is essential in this area: Given that there is not sufficient data on the risks posed to children, and that they are an especially vulnerable group, the only acceptable solution is to introduce the precautionary principle into the directive.

It must be possible to quickly adapt the directive to new developments, without having to go through a long co-decision process.

Third party certification should be mandatory for certain types of toys, for example those for children aged under three years, toys which present an element of risk which cannot be eliminated (for example toy irons which heat up), or toys which have previously caused serious accidents (such as toys containing magnets)...

The current system of CE marking (displayed by producers without any third party controls) on toys is not a guarantee of safety, even if the majority of parents think of it as such... The CE mark should under no circumstances appear on the toys themselves, but solely on the technical documentation.

"Warning labels" should only be complementary to strict security measures. Moreover, to be meaningful, the warnings should catch the buyer's attention, and be present on both the toy itself and its packaging. They should always give information on both the danger of the toy itself and the risks related to its use.

Finally, it is essential to have strict requirements for toys in food: In many countries, including the United States, it is now forbidden to put toys in boxes of cereal or in chocolates.

Stephen Russell, the Secretary-General of ANEC, said: "We should not allow our children to be exposed to avoidable risks. It is our strong wish for the revised directive to offer them the highest protection possible".

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General stated: "We are hoping that the Commission will come up with concrete measures to ensure that children won't be exposed to dangerous toys.