

ANEC in brief

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending and representing consumer interests in the development of technical standards, in the application of certification schemes to standards and in the creation or revision of legislation on products and services. ANEC brings together national consumer organisations from the EU Member States and EFTA countries in order to define European positions on matters affecting consumer protection and welfare. ANEC receives funding from the European Union principally and EFTA. It relies too on the participation of volunteer experts which is considered a contribution in kind.

Consumer participation in standardisation is crucial. Consumer representation complements the business view, and goods and services based on standards developed with effective consumer participation can be more easily accepted in the market place. In the EU context, consumers ensure that the public interest is represented in the standardisation work that complements European legislation and broader public policy initiatives.

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Raising Standards for Consumers



***Window blind cords:
time for action ...***

➤ Background

Roller blinds and window blinds are found in many homes. Consumers expect products on the market to be safe, both for themselves and for their children. Window blinds are no exception from this expectation. Sadly, children are at risk of injury – and especially strangulation - from cords used to operate the blinds. Indeed, several children have died following such accidents.

Some years ago, the safety standard EN 13120 was improved after a child in the UK died from strangulation. Despite this revision, ANEC remained concerned as certain blinds (e.g. roman shades) are not covered by the standard, and alerted the need for an improvement of the standard to the European Commission together with some European Member States.

In some ways, the greater problem is the vast number of blinds already in use. Those blinds will fall outside any new or revised standard, and raising public awareness is the only answer.

What needs to be done?

Improvement of the standard...

- ANEC calls on standardisers to fulfill their obligations to the public interest and to involve child safety experts in the work, in order to ensure that all types of window blinds are covered by more stringent safety requirements related to child safety.
- In terms of technical solutions, we need blinds without cords or cords only where they are essential. If used, cords must not pose the risk of strangulation.

Raising awareness...

- ANEC advises parents to keep cords out of the reach of children and to ensure a cot, bed or playpen is not placed close to a window with corded blinds.
- We strongly encourage parents to seek guidance from retailers about the use of existing safety devices to reduce the risks from window blind cords.

➤ ANEC and child safety

The driving force behind ANEC involvement in standardisation related to child safety is to reduce the high number of accidents involving children. Another reason is the need to ensure a minimum quality of products used by and accessible to children. It is equally important to ensure that consumers can distinguish between products complying with minimum safety standards and those that do not.



Cordless blinds - Source: Yahoo