

Contact: Tania VANDENBERGHE  
+32 (0)473 12 03 72

28 November 2012

## Toys: who 'plays' with chemicals?

**In the weeks before Christmas, many parents will have the annual pleasure of choosing the right toys for their children. Although the new Toy Safety Directive, which entered into force in July 2011, certainly brought some improvements to toy safety in Europe, ANEC calls upon policy makers to take the health of children more seriously by significantly strengthening the chemical requirements for toys.**

Recent tests done by national consumer organizations<sup>1</sup> showed positive results in relation to warnings on toys, mechanical aspects and flammability.

Regrettably, even from the date of its full implementation in July 2013<sup>2</sup>, the revised Directive will still permit the use of many dangerous chemicals, such as carcinogenic, allergenic and hormonal disrupting substances, despite the potential risks to children's health. On the occasion of the second anniversary of the European Commission subgroup on chemicals in toys, ANEC and BEUC<sup>3</sup> made a critical review<sup>4</sup> of two years of discussions, and has to conclude that very little progress has been made in protecting children from dangerous chemical substances in toys.

Stephen Russell, ANEC Secretary-General, said: "It has become clear that the significant shortcomings of the Directive, such as the lack of adequate provisions to exclude exposure to CMR<sup>5</sup> substances generally, and particularly in toys intended for use by children under 36 months or in mouth-actuated toys, can be solved only by a fundamental revision of the chemical requirements of the Directive. Such revision is unavoidable as it is unacceptable that the health of children should be 'played' with further."

### **Buy safe, play safe**

In order to help parents buy only safe toys, and to avoid accidents with toys, some simple safety tips<sup>6</sup> include: choose toys suitable for the child's age, abilities and skill level; buy toys from trustworthy shops and online outlets; read all warnings and instructions.

- (1) December 2012 magazine, Test-Achats (Belgium), Comitato Difesa Consumatori Altroconsumo (Italy), DECO (Portugal) and OCU (Spain)
- (2) The chemical requirements of the Toy Safety Directive (2009/48/EC) will enter into force in July 2013
- (3) BEUC – The European Consumer Organisation
- (4) [ANEC-CHILD-2012-G-094final](#)
- (5) Carcinogenic, Mutagenic and/or toxic to Reproduction
- (6) 'Toy Safety Tips', by the European Commission, in cooperation with ANEC, BEUC, Member States, manufacturers and retailers. Click here: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/toys/files/toys-safety-tips/toy\\_safety\\_tips\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/toys/files/toys-safety-tips/toy_safety_tips_en.pdf)

**Contact person at ANEC: Tania Vandenberghe**

**Tel.: +32 (0)473 12 03 72**

**Email: [anec@anec.eu](mailto:anec@anec.eu)**

ANEC in brief

### ***Raising standards for consumers***

*ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and conformity assessment as well as related legislation and public policies. ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and represents consumer organisations from 33 European countries. ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.*

More information: [www.anec.eu](http://www.anec.eu)

ANEC-PR-2012-PRL-015