

ANEC in brief

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.

ANEC has signed the European Transparency Register and accepted its Code of Conduct: Identification Number 507800799-30

**European Association for the
Co-ordination of Consumer
Representation in
Standardisation, aisbl**

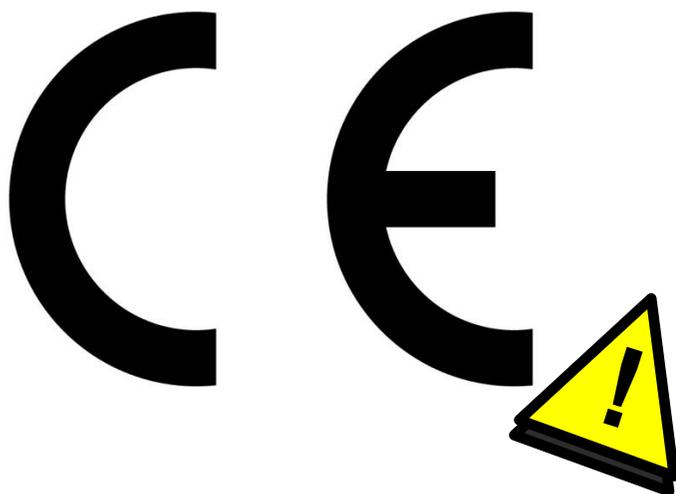
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Raising standards for consumers



CE Marking

**“Caveat Emptor -
Buyer Beware”**



What is 'CE Marking'?

CE Marking means "a marking by which the manufacturer indicates that the product is in conformity with the applicable requirements set out in Community harmonisation legislation providing for its affixing"^[1]

^[1]Article 2.20 of Regulation (EC) No. 765/2008, 9 July 2008

What does the acronym "CE" represent? Although CE Marking has been visible on products for more than 20 years, no agreed definition of its meaning exists. It is said to mean "Conformite Europeenne". This absence of a precise meaning adds to the confusion about CE Marking.

The aims of CE Marking are:

- to indicate the product's conformity with the relevant legislative requirements;
- to allow products to be placed on the market;
- to help ensure the free circulation of goods in the Internal Market;
- to permit checks by customs authorities and market surveillance authorities.

CE Marking is a legal requirement. It is not a safety mark nor quality mark.

CE Marking has never been intended for the attention of consumers. It is directed at customs authorities and market surveillance authorities as a claim of the compliance of the product with relevant legislative requirements.

Why ANEC does not support CE Marking

Even though CE Marking is not intended as a mark for consumers, its appearance on many consumer products (or their packaging) is misleading to consumers.

In a study for the European Commission carried out in 2010, 33% of consumers surveyed believed CE Marking to mean that the product was made in the EU while only 25% identified the logo as indicating compliance with relevant European legislation.

The results of a survey carried out in the same year by TÜV Product Service among United Kingdom consumers are more critical: Three-quarters (73%) of respondents said that they believed a CE Marking on an electrical product meant that it was safe. When it was explained that CE Marking does not prove that a product is safe, the respondents said they were "horrified and worried", or felt misled (79%), with more than one-third (35%) calling for the CE Marking system to be monitored by an independent organisation.

As so often, the Romans had a word (or two) for it. Caveat Emptor – or 'Buyer Beware' - is an appropriate tag because CE Marking offers no assurance to consumers that a product is safe or compliant with other legal requirements (e.g. those related to ecodesign).

For many consumer products, CE Marking is no more than a claim from the manufacturer that the product meets European legislation. The manufacturer does not even have to provide independent confirmation of the claim.

Also, only some products are required (and allowed) to bear CE Marking. Hence does the absence of CE Marking mean that a product taken at random is exempt or non-compliant? This also raises some curious examples. A cot for a baby must not bear CE Marking but a toy cot for a doll is required to bear CE Marking by the Toy Safety Directive. Does this mean a toy cot is "safer" than a cot for a baby? How is the consumer to know?

Then there is the problem of falsely-affixed CE Marking. The present system of market surveillance and enforcement, organised independently at national level by each Member State, is inadequate for policing the modern Internal Market and global supply chain.

For these reasons, ANEC wants to see CE Marking relegated to the technical file of a product that European law also requires. After over twenty years of the Internal Market for products, CE Marking should no longer be allowed to mislead and confuse European consumers.

