



Annex to ANEC-PR-2010-PRL-016

Cords and Chains in window coverings – a Hidden Home Hazard

DG SANCO Information event

Brussels, 2 December 2010

Statement from ANEC on consumers' expectations

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, children have died – and continue to die - following such accidents.

Improvement of the standard ...

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. Hence we welcome the initiative of the European Commission to issue a standardisation mandate to CEN. We call CEN and its members to fulfil their obligations to the public interest and to involve child safety experts in the work, in order to ensure that all types of window blind 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 ...

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 so raising public awareness is the only answer. ANEC, as well as our partners from the European Child Safety Alliance, welcome today's action from the European Commission on making parents aware of the risk that window blind cords can pose to children. We advise 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 blind cords.

ANEC strives for a high level of health and safety protection for all consumers, as expressed in European Directives. Products not complying with legislation simply do not belong on the European market and must not be offered to consumers.



ANEC - Raising standards for consumers – www.anec.eu

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 31 European countries. ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

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.