

Contact: Johannes Kleis: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
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Major overhaul of EU product safety rules

The European Union is to update a landmark consumer law on the safety of non-food products sold within Europe. The General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) governs safety standards to prevent for example injuries from defective products and limit exposure to hazardous chemicals.

The EU's monitoring system (RAPEX), established under this law, has issued more than 1,000 warnings annually with potentially millions of unsafe products taken off the market as a result. An update is urgently needed to beef up national monitoring methods, improve product traceability and mandate the EU to more speedily pass safety rules.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, commented:

"If an unsafe consumer good enters the Single Market it can be freely sold to more than 500 million people. This is a prime example of European action being necessary to properly protect consumers in all 27 member states. National measures alone are not coping with the scale of risk. A consumer's passport should not determine whether the product one buys is safe or not."

"Today's plans include valuable improvements. Manufacturers will be required to improve the traceability of their products. The Commission will be able to take specific actions against products including a permanent sales ban. This chance to make products sold in Europe safer should not be missed by Member States and the European Parliament."

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