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EU adequately updates product safety rules for today's market

EU institutions have [concluded](#) a reform of product safety legislation. While the new law reflects market developments such as the rise of connected products, it does not fully tackle the sale of dangerous or non-compliant products via online marketplaces.

This reform was necessary as existing legislation no longer reflected today's digital and globalised market. The new law, called the General Product Safety Regulation, ticks many consumer protection boxes [1]. For instance, the assessment of what is a 'safe' product will now have to consider cybersecurity, state-of-the-art market surveillance rules will apply to all products, and consumers will receive remedies in case of a product recall.

In contrast, the new rules lack ambition regarding the role played by online marketplaces in today's market. Consumer organisations have shown [over](#) and [over again](#) that these are a source of dangerous products. To close legal loopholes, it would have been necessary to define online marketplaces as an integral part of the supply chain that can be held liable for what they sell.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General, said:

"Consumers should be safe when they shop offline and online, which is why consumer organisations welcome new product safety rules that reflect today's market. For instance, in a world of connected products it is good that cybersecurity needs to be looked at when assessing whether a product is safe. In contrast, consumer organisations would have liked to see more political will to ensure that online marketplaces are held liable for what they sell."

Why this law matters to consumers

The General Product Safety Regulation is important because it: a) decides what makes a product 'safe'; b) gives powers to national authorities to keep certain dangerous products off the market; and c) determines who is responsible for what in the supply chain.

[1] The good points of the new General Product Safety Regulation:

- It brings legislation in line with innovation in consumer markets by including 'cybersecurity' as a requirement for products to be considered 'safe'.
- It makes all products benefit from the same – upgraded – market surveillance rules. This includes more powers for market surveillance authorities (such as the ability to do online mystery shopping) and better traceability of products in the supply chain (by demanding contact details of producers and importers).
- Consumers will receive remedies in case dangerous products need to be recalled, for instance an exchange for a safe product, a cost-free repair, or a money back option.

Next steps

EU institutions still need to formally sign off on the text during the first quarter of 2023. The new law will apply 18 months after the Regulation enters into force.