

**Contact:** Laurens Rutten: [press@beuc.eu](mailto:press@beuc.eu)  
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### Proposed EU customs rules could help block dangerous products

The European Commission today [published a proposal](#) to improve customs controls. This could help tackle the many challenges authorities face in checking the surge in e-commerce parcels entering the EU for dangerous or non-compliant products. While consumers expect and may think all imports are safe and comply with EU standards, the reality is more complicated.

BEUC welcomes today's proposals to create a better system for authorities dealing with customs, product safety, and environmental rules to cross-check if products comply with EU law. This should pool expertise from different authorities to check the increasing complexity of products.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General, commented:

"Import checks are there to prevent dubious products from entering our homes. We know customs agents are overwhelmed by the sheer number of parcels they need to check, and the increasingly complex risks they are expected to be experts at.

"The European Commission proposal to pool expertise and resources with other specialised authorities could better equip authorities to check imports. We urge the European Parliament and EU Member States to take note, as this is an indispensable step to protect consumers in global markets."

BEUC will now analyse the proposal in detail.

#### The consumer protection angle to customs

Consumer groups have found a flow of non-compliant, dangerous, or low-quality products coming into the EU. These include [hackable security cameras](#), [chemical-laden jewellery](#), and [malfunctioning smoke alarms](#) [1]. The volume of non-compliant products from outside the EU is also underlined by others, such as a [French consumer authority](#) and the [EU's own annual statistics on dangerous non-food items](#) (page 18).

Today's proposal follows a [2022 EU expert report](#) which highlighted that customs authorities face many challenges. These include a boom in the import of small packages of due to online shopping, which means a single container can contain many different products while millions of small parcels arrive by air. Customs also face an increase in the many safety and compliance risks that need to be checked – covering 350 pieces of legislation – and a lack of common implementation of existing rules.

Last year's EU expert report said "the probability that small consignments will contain non-compliant or dangerous goods is very high. It is not only that checking each parcel is impossible; it is that even checking all those that are identified as presenting a risk is unmanageable."

## Documentation

- BEUC view: [The consumer angle to EU customs reform](#)
- Study by BEUC and Germany's Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband (2017): [Online shopping outside the EU](#)

[1] These products were found by Consumentenbond (the Netherlands), Forbrugerrådet Tænk (Denmark), and Which? (the United Kingdom) respectively. At the time when these results were published, the United Kingdom was part of the European Single Market.

