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**Date: 16/04/2014**  
**Reference: BEUC-PR-2014-015**

## **Safety of consumer products to improve**

All too often, it happens that lighters, kitchen tools or other products we buy turn out to be unsafe. This persistent presence of unsafe products has been addressed in a European Parliament vote updating EU's product safety and market surveillance laws. Positive developments include:

- The setting up of an EU-wide incident and injury database collecting data which allows producers to react to patterns of injuries and monitoring agencies to focus on risky products.
- Stronger sanctions and penalties against liable traders and producers, including publication of the name of the responsible company.
- An explicit obligation for surveillance authorities to check the safety of products sold online.
- Strengthening the precautionary principle which ensures withdrawing potentially unsafe products from the market based on a justified assumption that a product is dangerous.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation, commented:

"Products on sale in one European country can turn up in the shops of another or be delivered to consumers' homes. That is why market monitoring bodies need to be strong and well-resourced across the board. Obliging them to explicitly check products sold online is an obvious necessary step considering our fast evolving shopping habits.

"41 million injuries are sustained annually in accidents, resulting in an estimated €78 billion in healthcare costs across the EU.<sup>1</sup> This puts a huge strain on healthcare systems. Pooling injury data is a way to reduce the number of accidents because it will prompt manufacturers to improve their products and legislators to upgrade laws.

"MEPs' valuable improvement of consumer product safety will only see the light of day when governments finally speed up their efforts to pass this update. Bickering over whether or not labelling a product's origin should be mandatory should not prevent these important improvements from taking effect."

ENDS

Note:

<sup>1</sup> EuroSafe, Injury Database-Manual, Amsterdam 2012