

Contact: Christina Vejsgaard Koch: press@beuc.eu
Date: 17/03/2022
Reference: BEUC-PR-2022-011

Continued presence of dangerous products shows dire need to regulate online marketplaces

A [compilation of research](#) by BEUC members – national consumer groups – shows online marketplaces continue to be a source of dangerous products. These marketplaces should be liable for selling such products, which is why BEUC urges policymakers to get ongoing reforms of EU law right.

In a new compilation, among others, we highlight the following products:

- **Illegal teeth-whitening products**
- **Dangerous toys**
- **An air fryer, that emitted smoke**
- **Inaccurate thermometers**
- **Hazardous and illegal chemicals in cosmetics**

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General, commented:

“Consumer groups’ research glaringly show that online marketplaces fail to prevent dangerous products from appearing on their sites. Making marketplaces liable under EU law, including for products from third-party sellers could help address the problem, and yet doing so seems to be considered taboo among policy makers.

“It is not too late yet to hold marketplaces accountable. The current discussions around the General Product Safety Regulation, Product Liability Directive and the Digital Services Act need to provide for an upgrade of the current legal framework, to make marketplaces accountable when hazardous products find their way to consumers, putting them at risk.

“Failure by the EU and its Member States to act will hinder a solution to the sale of dangerous products through online marketplaces for years to come, as all major legislative options will have been exhausted.”

Background

In 2020, the BEUC network showed that [two-thirds of 250 products bought from online marketplaces fail safety tests](#). We called upon the EU to make online marketplaces liable for dangerous products sold on their sites, and for authorities to place them under greater scrutiny.

Since then, the EU has been reviewing relevant laws in this regard, including those on digital services (on the role of online intermediaries in tackling illegal activities and content online), and product safety (on who is responsible for what in the supply chain). Until now, neither of the reviews has given online marketplaces liability for the huge role they play in today's consumer market. On 15 March 2022, the European Parliament's JURI committee has given its opinion on the GPSR and has insufficiently addressed this point.

A review of product liability legislation – which deals with what happens when a defective product harms a person – is awaited but delayed until September 2022 at the earliest.

Thankfully, some national authorities are using their powers. For example, [French authorities ordered the delisting](#) of platform Wish.com after finding it to sell many dangerous products.

About the tests

The tests compiled in BEUC's [report](#) are from United Kingdom (Which?), Sweden (Sveriges Konsumenter), Denmark (Forbrugerrådet Tænk), Spain (OCU), The Netherlands (Consumentenbond) and Germany (vzbv).

A wider overview of the work by consumer organisations in the BEUC network can be found [here](#).

ENDS

