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European Parliament committee takes so-so decision on improving product safety law

There are pluses and minuses for consumers [in today's European Parliament internal market committee vote](#) on reforming the main EU product safety law.

Reforming this law, the General Product Safety Directive, is necessary as it no longer reflects today's reality of connected products and online shopping. BEUC [applauded last year's European Commission proposal](#) to reform the law into the new General Product Safety Regulation.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General, comments on today's vote:

"Safe products are the very start of consumer protection. The products we use daily should not harm us, physically or otherwise.

"State-of-the-art legislation is a must to keep toxic jewellery or smoke detectors that can't detect smoke out of our homes. We urge decision-makers to put the precautionary principle centre stage, and ensure online marketplaces are legally required to keep dangerous products off the market."

BEUC's view on today's decision

What's wrong with the European Parliament's committee report:

- It deletes the 'precautionary principle' from the scope of the regulation.
- It reduces transparency about which companies have been fined for safety breaches.
- It deletes an obligation for authorised representatives – which are formal contact points in the Single Market – to carry out random sample testing of products.
- It uses different terms, and therefore creates confusion, on the timelines in which online marketplaces need to take dangerous and non-compliant products down.

Good elements from the Commission proposal that remain in this report:

- Broadening the criteria for a 'safe' product.
- Requiring online marketplaces to inform consumers about recalled products.
- Making it possible for consumers to claim a refund of the initial purchase price in case of recalled products, as well as to complain in case of lack of remedy.

What's not sufficiently addressed in the reform of EU product safety law altogether:

- Clarifying the role of online marketplaces as so-called 'economic operators'. Without this, the legal requirement to only place safe products on the market does not apply to them. [Time](#) and [time again](#), BEUC finds these marketplaces to be a source of dangerous products.

Next steps

Parliament will now meet EU Member States and the European Commission to reach a conclusion on this file. The file will go to the Parliament plenary session for approval once these negotiations have completed.

ENDS

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