

Joint Market Surveillance Action on Toys (Grant Agreement no. 17.020200 / 08 / 507574)

During 2009, a number of market surveillance authorities from across Europe; namely, from *Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Slovak Republic, The Netherlands* participated in a special joint market surveillance activity focusing primarily on toys for children under 3 years of age. Over 1,400 economic operators were inspected in all. Additionally, Cyprus and Turkey also actively participated in this joint action.

Out of a total of more than 14,000 toys viewed and initially screened by market surveillance authorities during this joint exercise, around 580 samples were selected from the market for laboratory testing due to possible non-compliances detected by market surveillance inspectors. Apart from some minor non-compliances related to the markings on the toys themselves, a total of 200 samples failed to comply with the general requirements of the European Standard EN 71-1, in particular in relation to the respective mechanical and physical properties required for toys intended for children under 36 months.

Approximately 2000 toys, most of which out of the 14,000 toys indicated above, were initially screened with handheld XRF equipment to determine, in the first instance, whether they contained any elevated levels of heavy metal content. Just under 230 samples were then chosen and sent for laboratory testing to detect any possible migration of heavy metals. The tests revealed that 17 of the samples submitted were not in line with the requirements determined by the respective European Standard EN71-3.

Although the project mostly targeted manufacturers, importers, distributors and retailers, the Customs authorities were also involved working alongside some of the Member States. In total, around 160 shipments were inspected during this exercise. The results and intelligence extracted from this joint action will also be shared with Customs authorities in order to further assist market surveillance authorities in attaining a higher level of safety within the market.

A number of RAPEX notifications have already been issued by the respective Member States and measures are being taken to ensure that the unsafe toys identified are completely removed from the market. Others will be announced in the near future.

This joint market surveillance action on Toys is being coordinated by PROSAFE, (Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe). PROSAFE is a non-profit organisation established by market surveillance officers from various countries throughout Europe with the aim of sharing and learning experiences and to further develop best practice amongst market surveillance organisations. Further information regarding PROSAFE, this joint action on toys and other similar joint market surveillance activities can be found at www.prosafe.org.



The figures and possible percentages extracted from these figures do not represent in any way the actual level of compliances within the market, but rather show the extent of the surveillance activity carried out by this joint action. It is important to note that the main objectives of this joint action were not to determine the actual level of compliance within the market but rather to learn how to achieve greater effectiveness through joint market surveillance exercises across Europe.

There are a number of organisations which PROSAFE would like to thank and without whose support and encouragement this joint action would not have been possible, in particular, the European Commission. Special thanks goes to the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers and the Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry. Both were continuously involved throughout this joint exercise. PROSAFE also wishes to express its gratitude to all the respective market surveillance organisations involved in this joint action, whose dedication and efforts resulted in a very focused and effective market surveillance activity. PROSAFE would also like to thank the members of the TOY-ADCO market surveillance group through which PROSAFE ensured that the activities and results were shared with all the respective market surveillance authorities across the EEA. Finally, PROSAFE wishes to thank all the external stakeholders who actively participated in the open sessions organised throughout the course of this joint action and for the recommendations and suggestions they have put forward during the period.

Ultimately, there is much scope in continuing to organise similar joint actions to further enhance the effectiveness of market surveillance activities in coordination with the customs authorities. With this action we hope to have come one step closer to reaching our key objective, and that is to create together a safer Single Market.