

Newsletter from PROSAFE

Early results from Joint Action 2014

In a workshop at the end of May in Ljubljana, PROSAFE presented the progress achieved by the participants in the Joint Action 2014. 53 market surveillance officials and stakeholders attended the two-day meeting. The workshop demonstrated that considerable progress had been made and that sampling and testing were well underway in all the five product groups in the Action. Preliminary test results are now available and reveal that the market surveillance authorities have again identified the riskiest products on the market.

The Joint Market Surveillance Action 2014 (JA2013), which has been running for sixteen months. The Joint Action is carried out by PROSAFE and 35 market surveillance authorities from 25 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom) plus Iceland and Norway.

Some of the main results from the activities are the following:

- **Safety barriers**

The twelve participating countries sampled a total of 106 safety barriers, 3 playpens and 3 multi-functional barriers (that can be used as 2 or more of the following functions: safety barrier, playpen, room divider, fireguard, etc.). Testing was performed according to the European Standards for safety barriers, for playpens, and the specific safety requirements for multi-functional safety barriers developed by PROSAFE during JA2014. Testing has recently completed and early results regarding safety barriers alone indicate a high level of non-conforming samples (69%) in regards to product information - marking and instructions and 57% on mechanical hazards.

In respect of mechanical hazards 27% of samples with the requirements related to gaps, 10% failed as they presented an entrapment hazard, 12% failed as they with presented a protrusion hazard and 16% failed the requirements related to the ssecurity of the safety barrier from an impact test. All 3 playpens examined failed the current European standard and 2 of the 3 multi-functional barriers did not meet the safety requirements imposed on them.

The relevant authorities are now undertaking risk assessments on these items, prior to undertaking appropriate follow up and enforcement actions on these results. Once the JA on safety barriers is completed, a report will be sent to the relevant CEN committee, which will include some comments from the MSAs involved regarding the test methods contained within the standard.

- **LED and CFL lighting**

This activity focusses on the safety of LED-lamps and CFLs that are used by consumers to replace conventional older incandescent and halogen bulbs. The percentage of CFLs will be 20% of all lamps to be investigated in the joint action. That will reflect the trend on the European lamp market in which the market share of CFLs is rapidly decreasing and that of LED-lamps increasing, respectively.

A total of 117 lamps have been tested in the activity by an accredited test laboratory. The lamps have been subjected to the most safety relevant tests. The initial results show that still about 27% of the tested lamps have defects that will or may endanger the safety of the users. Several lamps have many defects. In addition, 65% of the lamps have shortcomings concerning the required markings.

The obtained result is a slightly better than that of previous joint activity on LED-lamps performed by European market surveillance authorities in 2013 in which 57 % of the tested lamps (123 pcs) were non-compliant with the technical requirements and 73% of the tested lamps did not fulfil the administrative requirements. The participating authorities will further assess the test results, carry out risk assessments and take appropriate measures against the non-compliant lamps.

- **Fireworks**

The timing of the Joint Action has allowed the market surveillance authorities to undertake 2 major market surveillance exercises during the course of the investigation. The first was conducted during the winter 2015/16; the second will be conducted this winter. Included within the market surveillance exercise are those types of firework which present most risk to consumers, as well as those that are purchased in relatively large quantities. These are fountains, bangers, batteries and combinations, flash bangers, jumping ground spinners, rockets, Roman candles, spinners and a new type of firework, compound fireworks, which can include a combination of different types of firework.

The results from the 2015/16 market surveillance exercise are a matter of considerable concern as from amongst the 275 fireworks tested, 146 (53%) were non-compliant since one or more samples failed at least one of the serious and/or critical tests specified in EN 15947. A total of 129 (47%) did not meet the marking/labelling requirements. A number of fireworks were non-compliant when tested in the laboratory and when examined for their marking/labelling requirements. This is an issue that is currently being discussed with the trade association, the European Firework Association (EUFIAS).

The Member States are about to start collecting specimens from amongst those being placed on the market in the run up to New Year 2017. The results from testing these products will be included in the final report of the Joint Action.

- **Power Tools**

This activity focusses on hand held electric angle-and straight grinders in the lower end of the market. The 12 participating market surveillance authorities have sampled 60 grinders of different brand, model or type. 10 % of them were ordered online to reflect the growing importance of e-commerce. Testing has taken place in a laboratory specific accredited for the relevant harmonised standards EN 60745-1:2009 and EN 60745-2-3:2011 and later amendments. The final results uncovered that none of the tested grinder-samples passed all standard clauses! Most frequent non conformities found (in sample %):

- 75 % - Instruction manual and safety instructions (clause 8.12),
- 73 % - Proper functioning of the restart prevention device (clause 21.18.1),
- 50 % - Heating and excessive temperatures during normal use (clause 20.101.5),
- 48 % - Tool marking (clause 8.1).

The follow-up phase has started and risk assessments concerning are in preparation.

Special point of attention for the follow up is that the (electronic) restart prevention device (non-conformity 73 %) just became compulsory in April 2016 due to the standard amendments EN 60745-2-3:2011/A2:2013 (DOW 2016-02-25) and A11:2014 (DOW 2016-04-21).

- **Toys**

Joint market surveillance activities on toys are being developed on an annual basis as from 2014 onwards. This activity is focusing its attention on risks associated with acoustic toys. 16 surveillance authorities are participating in this product activity.

Over 460 samples were tested from various categories such as toy mobile phones, rattles, squeeze toys, cap-firing toys to percussion, wind toys and other types of acoustic toys.

With the help of an external expert on acoustics, risk assessment guidance on acoustic toys has been developed and utilised by all the participating authorities. This is ensuring a more coordinated and synergised approach in both risk assessment and enforcement amongst all the 16 participating authorities.

A number of samples were found to be dangerous and the participating authorities are taking the necessary action to remove them from the market. RAPEX alerts have already started to be issued. The results of this project will be published during the final meeting, which is expected to take place during the first quarter of 2017.

Caution!

The above results are based on samples of products from the markets in the participating countries. As in any routine market surveillance activity, the results represent the targeted efforts that authorities undertake to identify unsafe products. They do not give a statistically valid picture of the situation of the whole market.

The samples were tested at accredited laboratories. The tests focussed on those safety requirements that have the largest impact on consumer safety.

Method development activities

In addition to the product specific activities, JA2014 has again focussed on a number of horizontal issues. They included outreach to China, international co-operation, coordination of dissemination and use of results by all Member States, stakeholder outreach and other communications activities, follow-up with standards organisations, risk assessment and Continuous Improvement of Market Surveillance (CIMS) by implementation of mutual assessments. The two CIMS reviews were undertaken in Poland and France. A number of different issues have come to the fore. Work has begun on chemical risk assessment and an effort has been made to sample products online.

One of the most tangible achievements of these activities has been the development of a new e-learning module on cords and drawstrings in children's clothing. The module discusses and explains the present legal requirements, presents one case study (on a child's bikini) and provides guidance to market surveillance inspectors. However, the content is of interest to all organisations working with children's clothing including businesses. The module can be accessed freely via PROSAFE's website (www.prosafe.org).

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Background information

This information is issued by PROSAFE and the 35 participating authorities from 25 countries in the Joint Market Surveillance Action on GPSD Products 2014 - JA 2014.

The Action is coordinated by PROSAFE (Product Safety Forum of Europe), a non-profit organisation that brings together market surveillance officers from all over Europe and across the world. Visit www.prosafe.org to learn more. On this website you will also find more information about Joint Action 2014 and the other Joint Actions coordinated by PROSAFE. Explore the links to "Projects" in the left-hand menu bar.

Disclaimer

This PROSAFE newsletter arises from the Joint Market Surveillance Action on GPSD Products - JA 2014, which received funding from the European Union in the framework of the 'Programme of Community Action in the field of Consumer Policy (2014-2020)'.

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