

The Consumer Voice in Europe

Illegal consumer products sold on online marketplaces

Results from consumer research and testing

Pelle Moos, PhD 2020 ECHA Forum Open Session via WebEx, 29 October 2020



BEUC The European Consumer Consumer Organisation BEUC IS PROUD OF ITS MEMBERS













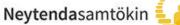












































































DANGEROUS PRODUCTS SOLD ONLINE: A CONSUMER SURVEY

 Online marketplaces act as an increasingly popular link between consumers and sellers, incl. websites based outside the EU

• Six BEUC members tested 250 electrical goods, toys, cosmetics and other products bought from online marketplaces such as Amazon, AliExpress, eBay and Wish.com

• Result: 66% of tested products fail EU safety laws with possible risks to consumers including electric shock, fire or suffocation



BEUC The European TOYS FROM AMAZON, EBAY AND WISH



 Platform response: Illegal products removed BUT 3-6 months later they were back

- 29 plastic toys bought on Amazon, eBay and Wish
- 9 products (31%) contained illegal amounts of phthalates:
 - 8 with DEHP (2.1 21%)
 - 4 with DIDP (0.12 1%)
 - 4 with DINP (2.6 10%)
 - 1 with DBP (0.15%)





BEUC The European CHEAP JEWELLERY

- 7 pieces of cheap jewellery bought on Wish and LightInTheBox
- 5 exceeded the legal limits:
 - 4 released nickel up to 344 times the limit
 - One bracelet contained 38% cadmium (almost 4,000 times the limit)



 Platform response: Wish removed illegal jewellery, BUT 6 months later it was back. LightInTheBox did not react.



BEUC The European Consumer Organisation BINOCULARS FROM EBAY

- 16 out of 17 binoculars bought on ebay contained chemicals of concern in high amounts, including:
 - 2 products with illegal levels of PAHs (11 others exceeded the German GS recommendations)
 - 1 product exceeded the limit for SCCP
 - 4 products contained phthalates above the forthcoming limit (test performed in 2019)





BEUC The European Consumer Consumer Organisation MAKE-UP SETS FOR CHILDREN

- 11 make-up sets for children bought on Amazon, Wish.com and AliExpress
- Only 2 products had all required information, such as ingredient list, etc.
- Information often incomplete, INCI list contains spelling mistakes or is in Chinese.
- Eyeshadows tested for heavy metals:
 - Lead detected above 2 ppm in 8 products (950 ppm in one product)
 - Antimony detected in two products (> 5 ppm)





- 5 balloons bought on Wish, LightInTheBox and Amazon
- All exceeded legal limits
 - Up to 15 times for nitrosamines
 - Up to 27 times for nitrosatable amines
- Response: illegal products removed from Wish and Amazon; no reaction from LightInTheBox





BEUC The European Consumer Consumer Organisation TEETH WHITENING PRODUCTS

- 11 teeth whitening products (gels, strips, pens) for home use bought on Amazon, LightInTheBox and AliExpress
- 7 products contained illegal levels of hydrogen peroxide (>0,1%)
- Hydrogen peroxide found 70 times above the legal limit in 2 products, making them illegal for professional use





BEUC The European SAFETY PLEDGE - AN EMPTY PROMISE?

Safety pledge - voluntary commitment, initially by 4 online marketplaces, to remove dangerous products from their marketplace - when notified

BUT

- Unsafe and non-compliant products should not be made available for purchase in the first place
- Dangerous products once removed often reappear because the marketplaces fail to control the sellers or the products upfront



BEUC The European CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Improve regulation of online marketplaces
- Improve market surveillance and better use of SafetyGate (Rapex)
- Clear communication: who are you buying from, now you are buying from outside Europe...
- Raise awareness amongst consumers

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Details @ beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2020-
068_beuc_and_anec_views_for_a_modern_regulatory_framework_on_product_safety.pdf
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Details @ beuc.eu/publications/beuc-x-2020-031_making_the_digital_services_act_work_for_consumers_-_beucs_recommendations.pdf



BEUC The European QUESTIONS TO THE FORUM

• How do authorities check products sold online, including on online marketplaces and from websites based outside the EU?

 What is your assessment of the rise in unsafe/non-compliant imports entering the Single Market? Is this primarily a problem of cooperation between market surveillance authorities and customs and/or a lack of resources? Or are there other factors at play? What short term improvements could be made to prevent dangerous products from reaching consumers?



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Thank you for your attention

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