



BEUC The European
Consumer
Organisation

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 IS PROUD OF ITS MEMBERS



AK ÖSTERREICH

Konsument.at

TEST aANKOOP **TEST achats**

Forbrugerrådet Tænk
Danish Consumer Council

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ΕΠΙΧΕΙΡΗΣΗ ΚΑΤΑΝΑΛΩΤΩΝ - Η ΠΡΟΤΕΡΙΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΕ

STOWARZYSZENIE KONSUMENTÓW POLSKICH

LEGAL SERVICES CONSUMER PANEL

cecu

Consumers Association of Ireland

ALTROCONSUMO
Il tuo punto di forza

cis
consumatori italiani per l'Europa

UC QUE CHOISIR

ULC

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THE SWEDISH CONSUMERS' ASSOCIATION

ZPS ZVEZA POTROŠNIKOV SLOVENIJE

Which?

ETL

citizens advice

FEOSZ

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consumentenbond

Financial Services Consumer Panel
An independent voice for consumers of financial services

OCU
La fuerza de tus decisiones

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

Details @ beuc.eu/publications/two-thirds-250-products-bought-online-marketplaces-fail-safety-tests-consumer-groups/html

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%)



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.

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)



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)

Details @ consumentenbond.nl/online-kopen/make-up-sets-voor-kinderen



BALLOONS

- 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



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**



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

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

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

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

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

www.beuc.eu
safety@beuc



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