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HEALTH & CONSUMER DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Directorate B - Consumer Affairs
B3 - Product and service safety

Brussels, 2 July 2009
DG SANCO.B.3 D/230190

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE CONSUMER SAFETY NETWORK (CSN)

BRUSSELS – 16 JUNE 2009

The meeting was chaired by Mr Stefano Soro, Head of Unit 'Product and Service Safety'.

1. Adoption of the agenda

The draft agenda was adopted. The adopted agenda is attached as Annex 1.

The attendance list is attached as Annex 2.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the previous meeting

The draft minutes of the meeting of 27.03.09 were adopted without changes. The adopted minutes are attached as Annex 3.

Standardisation

3. Publication of Standards in the Official Journal of the European Union

The Commission representative reminded participants that, according to Article 4 of the GPSD, new standards can only be referenced in the OJEU if they are supported by a mandate from the Commission. In addition, any existing standards that have already been referenced in the OJ without a mandate need to be regularised.

The Commission thanked Member States for contributing to the list of existing standards not yet published in the OJEU. ANEC has commented on the list and a set of standards have been identified for publication. The Commission will now have to draft safety requirements in order to issue a mandate to CEN, who will then certify that the standard fulfils the mandate before it is published in the OJ. A candidate list of standards for publication will be submitted to Members at the next meeting prior to drafting the safety requirements.

The Commission representative then presented 3 different groups of published standards which need to be regularised and for which the Commission has already started drafting safety requirements. These concern stationary training equipment, gymnastics equipment and bicycles (including children's bicycles).

Member States were invited to submit comments on the draft safety requirements.

4. Draft Safety Requirements for Childcare Articles Mandate (Cluster 2: Risks in the Sleeping Environment)

The Commission representative presented the draft safety requirements for a group of childcare articles, which are used in the sleeping environment and for which standards are necessary. These include cot mattresses, cot bumpers, suspended baby beds, duvets and children's sleeping bags. A preliminary meeting has taken place with CEN and it is clear that the work involved will require the cooperation of several Technical Committees. It is proposed to have one combined standard to cover several types of such articles.

Specific Products & Risks

5. Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)

The German representative referred to their previous presentation on PAHs, which are chemical substances that can be found in several consumer products such as rubber tool grips, bicycle handle-bars and plastic clogs. Studies have revealed that high levels of PAHs are often used and some contain benzo(a)pyrene, which is carcinogenic.

At EU level, various regulations envisage restricting the use of PAHs, for example, maximum levels have been set for tyres. However, there are no restrictions at EU level governing products handled by consumers and no measuring data to estimate the risks, such as the amount of PAHs that is absorbed through the skin. The Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR, Bundesinstitut für Risikobewertung) has launched a research project for this purpose and has set up a Roundtable with industry and trade to look at the possibility of reducing the level of PAHs in consumer products. The results of their work will be communicated to Member States. However, Germany would like to see a common EU approach on this and encourages the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) to provide an Opinion.

Member States were then invited to share their views. Most Member States supported the idea of asking the Scientific Committee to get involved and to provide guidance on safe limits.

The Commission representative confirmed that the Commission would contact the colleagues in the Scientific Committee's Unit immediately to plan with them how the risk assessment on PAHs could be evaluated, as soon as available, by the appropriate Scientific Committee.

Service Safety Issues

6. Hotel Fire Safety

Ms. Kirsi Rajaniemi, Chairperson of the EU Fire Safety Network (EFSN), gave a presentation of the structure of the Network, its members- representatives from national authorities in 23 states- and activities. The EFSN's objective is to exchange knowledge and foster cooperation in the field of fire safety. It collects data and discusses relevant EU legislation, as well as national objectives regarding fire safety in the home, hotels and nursing homes.

The presentation was followed by an update by the Commission on latest developments in hotel (fire) safety.

With regards to HOTREC's self regulatory initiative on fire safe hotels, both the draft Charter and the performance-based methodology were discussed and broadly welcomed at the last meeting of the stakeholders' consultative group on 5 June. The relevant documents were presented to Member States at the last CSN meeting on 27 March 2009. Signatories of the Charter must commit to monitor certain activities and carry out a regular evaluation of risks. They are also required to promote the methodology to their national authorities and to report to the group. The Commission welcomes this initiative for self-regulation by the hotel industry but insists that not only the national associations are involved; a formal signature by each individual hotel operator should be obtained. The Commission would also like a clear commitment that corrective action will be taken in the event of any shortcomings uncovered either by inspections or as the result of an accident. The next meeting of the group will take place on 25 September, followed by the General Assembly of HOTREC in early-November where the Commission's requests are expected to be endorsed. A final draft of the Charter and the methodology will be made available for the Commission and the European Parliament in mid-November. The Commission representative also referred to the study carried out by *Golder Associates*, a consultancy from the UK. The project was launched in January 2009 and the findings of a pilot project carried out in the UK have received comments by the Commission. The study relates to accidents which occur in hotels, not just those caused by fire, but also accidents related to certain services provided by hotels, eg. accidents in swimming pools, solariums. An interim report is due in August 2009 and the final report, which will cover 14 MS in total, in December 2009. The Commission will eventually consider the results of the studies within its discussion on the revision of the GPSD.

7. Injury/accident data collection systems

The Commission representative provided an update on DG SANCO's webpage on existing injury & accident data collection systems related to the use of consumer products. Member States were asked if they have such systems and whether they are accessible to the general public. For further information on the content of the website, a document can be consulted on the Circa site. Member States are invited to make comments and suggestions. The webpage will be available on DG SANCO's website as soon as possible. It should be continuously improved, so Member States that *do* have systems monitoring injuries and accidents or related projects should inform DG SANCO so that the data can be kept up-to-date.

8. Future of the Injury Data Base (IDB)

Dr. Rupert Kisser from the Austrian Road Safety Board (KfV) gave a detailed presentation on the European Injury Data Base (IDB), the main stakeholders involved, the type of data contained in the database and its main features. Only 13 Member States provide data for the moment but 10 countries are considering implementation. The IDB website is hosted by DG SANCO and is publicly available at <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/idb/>. The main objectives in 2009 are to test a European clearinghouse in order to answer queries without further cost, and to test a mechanism for fast retrieval of product and service related data. The IDB serves several stakeholders and can provide risk assessment information such as severity of risks and the nature of incidents caused by certain products. At the moment, the IDB stores information about approximately 4 million cases.

During the presentation, Dr. Kisser introduced Dr. Wim Rogmans, the General Secretary of EuroSafe. EuroSafe is an important partner of the IDB, with 46 members. It hosts a number of knowledge networks including the IDB network.

Future objectives of the IDB include the creation of a specific network of reference hospitals. Member States were asked to collaborate by using the IDB, to provide input and knowledge for further development of a consumer safety reference network and to become involved in an IDB pilot project.

9. Service Safety Standardisation

The Commission representative gave a short update about CEN's Final Report in response to Mandate M/371 on safety and delivery of services, which was issued by DG ENTR in 2005 to ask for projects on standardisation programming in the service sector. The final report has been evaluated by 4 DGs: ENTR, EMPL, MARKT and SANCO. One project CHESSS (CEN Horizontal European Service Standardisation Strategy) has led CEN to the conclusion that a horizontal approach to service standardisation would bring benefits. Other recommendations include the creation of a CEN workshop agreement for accessibility services and recruitment consulting services, a glossary of keywords and terms for engineering consultancy services and the creation of a standard in the field of services relating to homes for the elderly, reception services in companies, IT outsourcing. The Commission will discuss the recommendations internally and report back to the GPSD Committee.

Joint actions and exchange of officials

10. Joint Action Applications 2009

Since this point had already been discussed in detail during the GPSD meeting the previous day, the Chair proposed to remove this point from the CSN agenda.

11. Future of Market Surveillance

The Commission representative informed Committee members about a call for tender to be launched before the summer addressing issues related to market surveillance in the EU. An external consultant will carry out a study to recommend ways in which current market surveillance framework can be improved, particularly in view of the forthcoming review of the GPSD, based on an analysis of future challenges. Member States will be informed of the results of the study and be invited to give their opinion.

12. Call for Tender on Flame Retardants

The Commission representative provided information about a call for tender for a study on flame retardants, which was launched on 18 April 2009. The aim of the study is to acquire up-to-date knowledge on flame retardant substances currently applied in consumer products. Tasks include notably: (i) the creation of an inventory of the flame retardants used in consumer products, and (ii) the collection and evaluation of toxicology, exposure and risk assessment data on those chemicals. The results of this study should enable the independent Scientific Committee(s) to provide an Opinion on the safety of these flame retardants (covering both human health and environmental aspects). The deadline for submission of proposals was 19 June 2009. Evaluation of the proposals will take place in June/July with a view to launching the study in September 2009. The duration of the study is one year, so results are expected by September 2010.

13. Child Safety Report Cards

The Commission representative gave a short presentation about the child safety report cards produced by Child Safety Alliance, and co-funded by the Commission. The report cards assess countries on the level of safety they provide to children. During the meeting, Member States participating in the project received leaflets providing information on the evaluation of safety levels in their own country. The report cards allow countries to identify priorities and provide guidance on where to focus future action by identifying both their strengths and weaknesses in the area of child safety.

14. Food-imitating products

Following a number of RAPEX notifications concerning food-imitating and child-appealing chemical products, the Commission has asked the Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety to assess the potential risks posed by such products. However, in order to answer this question, the Committee needs further information and particularly information on accidents involving food-imitating and child-appealing chemical products. The Commission has therefore published a call for submission of data and other information on DG SANCO's website at: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_risk/committees/04_sccs/sccs_call_info_01_en.htm The Commission representative asked Member States to contribute to this appeal and to submit any relevant information within the deadline of 3 July.

The next meeting of the CSN will take place in the autumn.

ANNEX 1 : Draft Agenda

ANNEX 2 : Attendance List

ANNEX 3 : Adopted Minutes