

EU Product Safety Award

Rules of the contest

1. Objective of the Award

The [EU Product Safety Award](#) (hereafter “the Award”) is organised by the European Commission (hereafter “the Commission”) to reward companies that put consumer safety at the heart of their business. It offers prestigious recognition for those who innovate and go beyond the requirements set out in relevant EU legislation and standards.

By showcasing these best practices, the Commission wants to inspire other companies to go the extra mile for consumers, thus raising the level of protection across the EU. At the same time, the Award is meant to alert consumers to the importance of product safety.

2. Award categories

2.1. Thematic categories

The eligible initiatives should demonstrably improve consumer safety, going **beyond the requirements** set out in relevant EU legislation and the supporting standards.

They may concern the safety of **any type of consumer products other than food¹, medicines² and medical devices³**.

There are two thematic categories for 2021:

[Protecting the safety of vulnerable consumer groups](#)

This category focuses on the efforts to protect consumer groups that are vulnerable when it comes to product safety, e.g. because of their age (children and the elderly), physical or mental disabilities or conditions, or other personal or socio-economic characteristics.

¹ For more information, see the [Commission’s website on food safety](https://ec.europa.eu/food/overview_en): https://ec.europa.eu/food/overview_en.

² Medicinal products are regulated by different EU pieces of legislation. For more information, see the [Commission’s website on medicinal products](https://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use_en): https://ec.europa.eu/health/human-use_en.

³ Medical devices are products and accessories which fall under any of the following legal acts: [Directive 90/385/EEC on active implantable medical devices](#), [Directive 93/42/EEC on medical devices](#) (both replaced by [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/745 on medical devices](#), fully applicable from 26 May 2021), [Directive 98/79/EC on in vitro diagnostic medical devices](#) (replaced by [Regulation \(EU\) 2017/746 on in vitro diagnostic medical devices](#), fully applicable from 26 May 2022). Guidance is provided inter alia in documents: “[Definitions of ‘medical devices’, ‘accessory’ and ‘manufacturer’ - MEDDEV 2.1/1](#)”, “[Classification of Medical Devices - MEDDEV 2.4/1 rev.9](#)”, “[Manual on borderline and classification in the Community regulatory framework for medical devices](#)” and “[Borderline Manual September 2020](#)”. For more information, see the [Commission’s website on medical devices](https://ec.europa.eu/health/md_sector/overview_en): https://ec.europa.eu/health/md_sector/overview_en.

This may include for example:

- **Consumer products** that:
 - Are intended to be used primarily by vulnerable consumer groups (e.g. childcare articles, toys, aids for elderly people) and offer an outstanding level of protection to their users.
 - Are intended for the general population (e.g. household appliances, furniture or chemical products) and – in addition to being safe in themselves – address specific risks, limitations and foreseeable behaviour of vulnerable consumer groups.
- **Awareness-raising or other initiatives** aimed at highlighting and preventing product safety risks faced by vulnerable consumers.

Applicable EU requirements and standards

The [General Product Safety Directive](#) (GPSD) lays down a general obligation that only safe products can be placed on the EU market. In addition, specific safety requirements may be set out in other pieces of legislation (e.g. [REACH Regulation](#), [Low Voltage Directive](#), [Toy Safety Directive](#), etc.) depending on the product. For many products, voluntary [European standards](#) are relevant for assessing their safety. Other safety benchmarks to be taken into account are listed in Article 3.3. of the GPSD.

Combining safety and new technologies

This category focuses on the use of new technologies to enhance consumer safety. This may include for example:

- **Internet-connected and AI-based consumer products** that – in addition to demonstrating an outstanding level of safety and, if applicable, cybersecurity – are intended to provide their users with extra protection.
- **Processes or mechanisms incorporating new technologies** to ensure greater consumer safety. This can include for example solutions to improve the detection and recalls of dangerous products or to implement “know your business customer” principle⁴.

Applicable EU requirements and standards

The [General Product Safety Directive](#) (GPSD) lays a general obligation that only safe products can be placed on the EU market. In addition, specific safety requirements may be set out in other pieces of legislation (e.g. [Machinery Directive](#) and the [Radio Equipment Directive](#)). For many products, [voluntary European standards](#) are relevant for assessing their safety. Other safety benchmarks to be taken into account are listed in Article 3.3. of the GPSD. In this context, the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA) has published [Guidelines for Securing the Internet of Things](#).

⁴ See Art. 22 of the [Commission’s proposal for Digital Services Act](#).

The same initiative can be submitted only in one thematic category. Applications incorporating new technologies shall be submitted for category 2.

2.2. Categories of beneficiaries

The Award will be granted to two different types of beneficiaries:

- **Micro, small or medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)**, as defined in [Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#), i.e. enterprises which (i) employ fewer than 250 persons (expressed in “annual working units”) and (ii) have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.
- **Larger companies:** all enterprises which do not qualify as micro, small or medium-sized enterprise.

It is envisaged that there will be up to **12 winners in total**, with gold, silver and bronze awards granted to three SMEs and three larger companies under each of the two thematic categories.

3. Who can apply?

The eligible companies must:

- Be registered in one of the 30 countries in the European Economic Area (the 27 EU Member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway) or have a subsidiary registered within the EEA.
- Submit an initiative that took place in at least one country of the European Economic Area and started at least 3 months before the deadline for applications (i.e. by 31 January 2021).
- Submit an initiative that complies with and goes beyond relevant EU legislation and standards.
- Operate in line with internationally-recognised Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) standards relating to human rights, labour, environment and fair operating practices.

Companies which received one of the awards in the 2019 edition are able to apply, under the condition that the initiative submitted for competition is entirely new.

The Commission shall exclude entities that are in one of the situations referred to in Articles 136 and Article 141 of the [Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union](#).

4. Procedure and key dates

4.1. Applications

Companies can apply via an online platform designed for this purpose (<https://product-safety-award-2021.eu>) from 1 March to 17 May 2021. Submissions are accepted in one of the official EU languages (except for Maltese and Gaelic). However, please note that submissions in languages other than English will be evaluated on the basis of machine translations.

The application consists of an eligibility section (including a declaration on CSR criteria) and an award section. The application forms are set out in [Annex 1](#).

Participants may be asked for further documents at a later stage e.g. for CSR screening or to verify the information contained in the application).

4.2. Selection of winners

There are three rounds in the selection process:

- Phase 1: The Commission (Product Safety and Rapid Alert System Unit of Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers) will carry out a **pre-selection** of the applications received, in consultation with national market surveillance authorities. Applications judged eligible and of sufficient quality will be submitted to the next phase.
- Phase 2: A **high-level Jury** - bringing together representatives from EU institutions and product safety experts - will choose the finalists.
- Phase 3: The finalists will be screened against internationally recognised **CSR criteria** before the final list of winners is drawn up.

All applicants will be informed by email of the contest results by the end of July 2021.

4.3. Award ceremony and networking workshop

The Award finale is planned to take place in Brussels. The winners will share their best practices with industry stakeholders and product safety experts at a networking workshop and receive their awards at a prestigious Award ceremony.

4.4. Key dates

1 March 2021	Applications open
17 May 2021	Deadline for applications
May 2021	Pre-selection by the Commission, in consultation with national market surveillance authorities
June 2021	Selection by high-level Jury and CSR screening
23 September 2021 (tbc)	Award ceremony and networking workshop in Brussels

5. Rights and obligations of applicants

The applicants commit to attend an Award ceremony and present their best practices at a networking workshop, taking place in Brussels on 23 September 2021(tbc), should they be granted one of the awards. The Commission will pay for the accommodation and travel (between one of the 30 countries eligible for the Award and Brussels) for one representative of each awarded company. Each winner will also have the possibility to propose one journalist whose participation in the closing events will be organised by the Commission.

The winners may use the logo and branding of the Award to promote their position as product safety champions without prior approval of the Commission. **No financial contribution will be given to the winners** and the Award itself will be purely symbolic.

The Commission will promote the rewarded practices through its website, social media, dedicated brochure and any other appropriate channels. It may use any information submitted in the applications (in particular the names and countries of the companies, the description of the best practices and what makes them innovative), unless the applicant explicitly requests that certain elements remain confidential (e.g. to protect their commercial interests).

The applicants authorise the Commission to publish any photos or videos taken by the Commission either in preparation or during the Award ceremony and the networking workshop. All such audio-visual material will be the sole property of the Commission.

6. Other conditions

6.1. Data protection

All personal information gathered during the Award process will be held by the Commission, which will use the data solely for the purpose of the Award and the campaign linked to it.

Any personal data will be processed by the Commission under [Regulation 2018/1725](#).

6.2. Conflict of interests

Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective running of the Award is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest (“conflict of interests”).

They must inform the Commission without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The Commission may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

6.3. Cancellation of the Award

The Commission may cancel the Award process or decide not to grant some or all of the awards without any obligation to compensate the applicants if:

- no applications are received,
- the Jury considers that there are not sufficient high-quality applications to make a meaningful comparison,
- the winner(s) do not abide by the rules of this Award.

6.4. Responsibility

Under no circumstances can the organisers be held liable for any accident, cost, direct or indirect damage which might occur as a result of participation in this Award.

Similarly, the organisers cannot be held responsible for any theft, loss, injury, delay or damage during the trip to Brussels.

In addition, the organisers can under no circumstances be held liable for cancellation, postponement or modification of the Award due to unforeseen circumstances.

6.5. Applicable law and competent court

Any dispute arising from the application, the interpretation or the validity of the present rules and this campaign shall be governed by Belgian law and any dispute arising shall be exclusively submitted to the competent court of Brussels.

6.6. Language versions

If there are discrepancies between the translated version and English version of any Award documents, the English version will prevail.

In case of a controversial interpretation and/or application of the different language versions, the English version will prevail.

7. Contact

For more information about the Product Safety Award, please visit the [Award website](#) or contact the helpdesk on contact@product-safety-award-2021.eu.

Participation in the Award assumes full acceptance of these rules. Failure to comply with the rules may result in disqualification.

Annex

APPLICATION FORMS

1. Eligibility questions

1. I confirm that my company is a business entity with an industrial or commercial character, not a body governed by public law.

2. In which European Economic Area (EEA) country is your business registered?

Belgium
Bulgaria
Czechia
Denmark
Germany
Estonia
Ireland
Greece
Spain
France
Croatia
Italy
Cyprus
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Hungary
Malta
The Netherlands
Austria
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovenia
Slovakia
Finland
Sweden
Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway

3. In which European Economic Area (EEA) country(ies) did the initiative that you are submitting for this Award take place?

Belgium
Bulgaria
Czechia
Denmark
Germany
Estonia
Ireland
Greece
Spain
France
Croatia
Italy
Cyprus
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Hungary
Malta
The Netherlands
Austria
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Slovenia
Slovakia
Finland
Sweden
Iceland
Liechtenstein
Norway

4. Specify the period during which the initiative you are submitting for the Award has taken place.

The initiative should have started at least 3 months before the deadline for applications for this Award (i.e. by 31 January 2021).

5. I confirm that my company has not been declared bankrupt nor is under bankruptcy proceedings.

6. I confirm that my company has met all its social security obligations in the country in which it is based.

7. I confirm that my company has met all its legal tax obligations in the country in which it is based.

8. I confirm that I have read the self-declaration on Corporate Social Responsibility and that I sign it with honesty and integrity.

9. I confirm that, should my company selected as a winner, a representative of my company can present our entry at a networking workshop and attend the Award ceremony taking place in Brussels on 23 September 2021 (tbc).

Please note that the Commission reserves the right to contact the preselected candidates for any supporting documents.

2. Award questions

Protecting the safety of vulnerable consumer groups

1. Title and summary of entry (Max. 100 words)

2. Innovation (Max. 1 000 words)

- Explain how the product or awareness-raising initiative that you are submitting for this Award is different from its predecessors or others already on the market.
- Explain how it meets an unmet need and goes beyond the EU legal requirements.
- Explain how the special needs, limitations and behaviour of vulnerable consumers have been taken into account.

3. Impact (Max. 1 000 words)

- Provide clear evidence of how the product or awareness-raising initiative that you are submitting for this Award contributes to enhancing the safety of vulnerable consumer groups.

4. Inspiration potential (Max. 500 words)

- Describe the potential of the product or awareness-raising initiative that you are submitting for this Award to serve as an inspiration for other companies, including in other geographic regions or in another sector.

5. Company product safety processes (Max. 1 000 words)

In replying to this question, please only focus on the aspects that are relevant to your company and have not been covered above.

Explain why your company is a champion in product safety. In particular, explain internal processes to:

- monitor and maintain the safety of its products throughout the lifecycle of the product,
- detect and recall dangerous products from consumers,
- communicate on product safety with consumers and use customer feedback,
- cooperate with public authorities and other stakeholders (e.g. product suppliers) on product safety,
- respond to the particular challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic,
- respond to sustainability challenges.

6. List one or more sources where the information about your entry can be verified (e.g. website, other source).

7. Attachments (maximum 5)

- If you are submitting a product, please attach its safety instructions, if available.
- You are also encouraged to attach any further information and/or audio-visual material

Combining safety and new technologies

1. Title and summary of entry (Max. 100 words)

2. Innovation (Max. 1 000 words)

- Explain how the product or process/mechanism that you are submitting for this Award is different from its predecessors or others already on the market.
- Explain how it meets an unmet need and goes beyond the EU legal requirements.

3. Impact (Max. 1 000 words)

- Provide clear evidence of how the product or process/mechanism that you are submitting for this Award contributes to enhancing consumer safety.

4. Inspiration potential (Max. 500 words)

- Describe the potential of the product or process/mechanism that you are submitting for this Award to serve as an inspiration for other companies, including in other geographic regions or in another sector.

5. Company product safety processes (Max. 1 000 words)

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