



PRESS RELEASE FROM TOY INDUSTRIES OF EUROPE

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Illegal Traders Top EU Alert System Damaging the Reputation of Responsible Toy Companies

- *Today's publication of the EU Safety Gate Report shows children's safety is being put at risk by unsafe and fake toys bought from that illegal traders*
- *The report echoes the findings of TIE's June 2020 report ["EU Toy Safety : the problem of un reputable sellers on online marketplaces"](#)*
- **Sub-standard toys represent just a tiny fraction of toys sold in the EU**
- **94% of alerts for toys were related to manufactures with no connection to any European toy associations**

Brussels, 7 July 2020: Illegal toys again topped today's EU Safety Gate report, a Europe-wide alert system to warn consumers about dangerous goods. TIE, which represents reputable manufacturers of toys, says the vast majority of toys sold across the EU are made by responsible firms and that sub-standard products only represent a tiny fraction of the toys available in Europe.

In 2019, toys from illegal traders were the product that appeared most often on Safety Gate - the EU-wide alert system for dangerous goods. These toys represented 29 percent of all products flagged by EU member states, followed by motor vehicles, electrical appliances and cosmetics, and clothing.

Worryingly, approximately two fifths of the 644 toys that were flagged last year did not even identify the maker. This is a basic obligation under the EU's strict toy safety rules as authorities need to be able to easily contact the manufacturer if a recall or changes to the product are necessary.

Sub-standard toys represent just a tiny fraction of toys sold in the EU

The vast majority of toys are made by reputable companies who invest time and money in making sure they are safe for children to play with. This includes making sure products are easily identifiable and that they have processes in place to quickly address any issues that could occur.

One way for reputable companies to demonstrate their responsibility to safety is to become part of toy associations like TIE and its national association members. This gives companies who want to do the right thing access to expert advice and training and helps to raise standards across the board. The high prevalence of toys from dishonest traders in the Safety Gate statistics - 94% of alerts for toys were related to manufactures with no connection to any European toy associations, a large part of which were 'ghost' companies that cannot be traced – shows how important it is for authorities to work intelligently and adapt their methods to people who clearly have no intention of following the rules.

TIE report echoes Safety Gate findings

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In June 2020, TIE [published a report](#) which shows that in a test exercise 97% of toys bought online from third-party sellers were non-compliant with EU law and 76% of those safety-tested were deemed dangerous for children.

TIE sees insufficient responsibility taken by online marketplaces and lack of clear legislation as the major enablers of the problem. With e-Commerce proving so vital to economy and society, every effort needs to be made to build consumers' trust in buying online. Online marketplaces host unverified and un reputable third party sellers as part of their business models rather than weeding them out.

Unfortunately, the authorities responsible for market surveillance often suffer from a lack of resources. That's where measures like focusing on suspect traders and making sure that actions are taken to deter repeat offenders can help.

The upcoming Digital Services Act, together with the revised EU General Product Safety Directive, due to be revised in 2020, must help to remedy the situation by making online marketplaces accountable for taking actions to prevent, react to and screen un reputable seller activity.

Catherine Van Reeth, Director General of Toy Industries of Europe (TIE), the voice of reputable manufactures in the EU said "Toy safety is always the number one priority for TIE. Our members are reputable companies who work hard to bring safe and secure play experiences to children. Criminal traders are in fact making a profit from putting children at risk by intentionally ignoring the rules. EU policy must be changed and serious penalties should be imposed to keep these dishonest traders off the market."

Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) is the voice of the reputable EU toy manufactures. Our mission is to promote the right of every child to play safely and securely and to promote fair practices and fair legislation, allowing responsible toy companies to continue to grow.

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