

## EMARS WORKSHOP

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### Consumer expectations on market surveillance

Consumers expect the products they buy and use in the European market to be safe. ANEC believes market surveillance and inspection are essential tools to this end.

Although most manufacturers are serious in their obligation to place safe products on the market, some are not. Of particular concern to consumers are products being imported into the EU market from third countries. According to European Commission, the share of electro-technical imported products in the total of non-compliant products detected by market surveillance authorities is between 70% and 99%<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, in the first 9 months of this year, RAPEX notifications increased of 50% compared to 2006. Almost half of the products posing a serious risk and notified during the period of reference, originated in China (472 cases; 47%)<sup>2</sup>.

In ANEC's opinion, for market surveillance to be effective, resources must be committed at national level and there must be an effective system of peer assessment of the national surveillance authorities. And there must be effective checks on the importer. We believe that improving market surveillance in the European Union will only be feasible by allocating adequate resources to national authorities in terms of people and funds.

ANEC acknowledges that the proposed Internal Market Package aims at better addressing those issues and we should welcome them. However, as consumers, we would prefer to avoid dangerous or unsafe products reaching the market at all. Hence we would welcome more in-process surveillance and inspection

ANEC also endorses the efforts to reinforce administrative co-operation and information exchange amongst Member States and with the European Commission. We believe the EMARS project contribution is very important to this regard.

Reliable accident data is not only an important tool for consumer organisations but also for strategic market surveillance in order to identify areas for action. Therefore, ANEC reiterates its call for long-term maintenance and improvement of the former EHLASS/ISS meanwhile IDB system and retention of its product safety basis.

ANEC would like to stress the importance of full transparency regarding enforcement activities. European citizens have a right to know which products have been subject to national measures (in particular, of non-compliances) and also how active their

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/internal\\_market\\_package/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/regulation/internal_market_package/index_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/stats\\_reports\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/stats_reports_en.htm)

authorities are. National enforcement agencies should prepare annual reports summarising the main results to be available in the public domain.

ANEC recognises the challenge of managing and inspecting a global supply chain where components of a product come from one part of the world, are then assembled in another part of the world and are finally sold in the Internal Market. However, open markets are built on consumer confidence. Consumers expect the products they buy and use in the European market to be safe.

ANEC welcomes EMARS' strive to improve market surveillance as deficiencies in enforcement of standards and safety law allow unsafe products to circulate in the Internal market and thus undermine the consumer confidence.

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### **ANEC in brief**

*ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing and defending consumer interests in the process of standardisation and certification, including policy and legislation matters related to standardisation. Our aim is a high level of consumer protection.*

*ANEC was set up in 1995 and represents consumer organisations from the EU Member States and EFTA countries. The European Commission and EFTA fund ANEC, while national consumer organisations contribute in kind. Our areas of priority are: Child Safety, Design for All, Domestic Appliances, the Environment, the Information Society, Services and Traffic Safety.*

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