



Safety of imported Products

The Role of Customs

Presentation by Karlheinz Kadner at the EMARS Strategy Workshop in Paris at 11 July 2008

Customs as a Gatekeeper of the Internal Market

Customs has to be notified when goods are brought from third countries into the customs territory of the Community. There is a number of customs procedures the goods can be declared for according to the economic needs. Goods which are destined for placing on the market in the Community have to be declared for *release for free circulation*.

When goods are declared for release for free circulation and customs authorities have doubts about their compliance with product safety rules they notify the market surveillance authorities. These have to inform customs within three working days about measures to be taken with respect to the product.

Where a product has been found to be dangerous, or not in compliance with rules on product safety, it must not be released for free circulation.

Seminar "Preventing Imports of Dangerous Products"

From the procedure described above it follows that good results depend on a good co-operation between customs and market surveillance authorities.

In order to encourage such co-operation a seminar "Preventing imports of Dangerous Products" financed under the programme Customs 2013 was held in Saalfelden/Austria from 7 to 10 April 2008. For the first time experts from customs and market surveillance were brought together in such a forum on Community level.

The Conclusions from the seminar were:

- *To enhance a co-operative network between Customs and Market Surveillance authorities at an international level.*

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- *To improve targeting of controls of unsafe products by greater exchange of risk information*
- *To share experience, knowledge and best practices on co-operation and controls by providing guidelines.*

Exchange of Risk Information

The massive flow of goods across the borders and the need for a fast and smooth trade flow requires the use of risk management to select consignments for control. The Community Customs legislation engages Member States to exchange risk relevant information. The services of the European Commission ensure that information available from RAPEX is fed into the Community Risk Management System in a format that will help customs to tackle unsafe products when they are imported into the European Union.

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