



NCA welcomes EU Annual RAPEX report on dangerous products

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The National Consumer Agency today welcomed the publication by the European Commission of the 2010 annual RAPEX report on the rapid alert system for dangerous consumer products “Keeping European Consumers Safe”.

The RAPEX system is designed to allow the rapid exchange of information between European market surveillance authorities of any measures taken to restrict or prevent the marketing of non-food products, which pose a serious risk to health and safety.

The National Consumer Agency is the contact point in Ireland for RAPEX.

Since 2004, when the new General Product Safety Directive came into effect, the number of notifications has more than quadrupled from 468 to 2,244 in 2010.

The product categories most frequently notified through the RAPEX system in 2010 were:

Clothing, textiles and fashion items (625 notifications, 32%)

Toys (488 notifications, 25%)

Motor vehicles (175 notifications, 9%)

Electrical appliances (158 notifications, 8%)

Childcare articles and children’s equipment (72 notifications, 4%)

These categories of consumer products accounted for almost 80% of all products notified in 2010. 58% of all notifications identified China as the country of origin, reflecting the significant market penetration of Chinese manufactured consumer products in European markets.

The Commission’s report notes that this increase is due to better enforcement by national authorities, a greater awareness among businesses of their obligations and enhanced cooperation among member States.

Of these notifications 1,963 related to products considered to be a serious risk to consumers of which 119 products were found on the Irish market.

Breakdown of unsafe products found in Ireland

CATEGORY	NUMBER	TYPE OF DANGER	NUMBER
Motor Vehicle	58	Injuries	62
Toys	14	Fire	18
Cosmetics	12	Chemical	17
Electrical appliances	11	Choking	10
Childcare articles and children's equipment	6	Burns	4
Miscellaneous	18	Electric shock	3
		Suffocation	2
		Drowning	2
		Strangulation	1
Total	119	Total	119

26 of the notifications originated in Ireland while information in relation to 93 products was reported by other Member States via the RAPEX system and followed up by the Agency, thus demonstrating the benefits of RAPEX in identifying and removing dangerous products from the marketplace.

Breakdown of RAPEX Alerts notified by Ireland

CATEGORY	NUMBER	TYPE OF DANGER	NUMBER
Motor Vehicle	11	Injuries	12
Toys	2	Fire	2
Cosmetics	8	Chemical	9
Electrical appliances	1	Choking	2
Fitting & fixtures	2	Burns	1
Food-imitating products	1		
Furniture	1		
Total	26		26

The Agency wishes to acknowledge the high level of cooperation by businesses in Ireland in informing the Agency when they become aware that a product poses a risk to consumers and in taking remedial action.

The Agency should like to remind all businesses, manufacturers, suppliers and retailers of their legal obligation to immediately inform the Agency if a product poses a risk to the consumer.

The NCA will continue to work with businesses to enhance product safety in Ireland and ensure that only safe products are available to Irish consumers.