



Project Partners European Corrective Action Guide

**Embargoed Until 24 June 2004**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **UNIQUE COLLABORATION BETWEEN BUSINESS, CONSUMERS AND MEMBER STATES LEADS TO NEW EUROPEAN GUIDE FOR PRODUCT RECALLS**

**Today - 24 June 2004 - in Brussels, PROSAFE, UNICE, EuroCommerce and BEUC presented a new European guide entitled “*Product Safety in Europe - a guide to corrective action including recalls - helping companies to protect consumers from unsafe products*”.**

The guide is voluntary and will help companies selling consumer products in the EU to carry out corrective actions more effectively and consistently. This is of particular interest for small and medium sized enterprises, which account for more than 98% of the total number of businesses in the enlarged EU.

The guide, available in 19 EU official languages, responds to the strong commitment of the parties involved to ensure safety of consumer products in Europe, whether they are made within or outside the EU. It encourages cooperation between producers, distributors and the authorities in all EU Member States, to improve the effectiveness of actions taken to protect consumers from unsafe products.

The guide contains recommendations for the following activities:

- Sharing of responsibility for corrective action between producers and distributors
- Writing company policies and procedures for corrective action
- Keeping good records to help trace products and identify customers
- Monitoring information about safety problems that arise by keeping good records of complaints and any other evidence of safety problems
- Assessing the seriousness of the risk that arises from unsafe products using a suitable method of risk assessment
- Deciding on the type of action to take, after estimating the seriousness of the risk
  
- Informing the authorities in EU Member States about the problem, as required by the revised General Product Safety Directive
- Using the media to communicate with consumers
- Dealing with consumers about unsafe products they have bought
- Carrying out the corrective actions and dealing with returned products
- Learning from the experience so that new products will be safer and future corrective actions can be carried out more effectively.

The guide was produced as a result of a project managed by Intertek ETL SEMKO Research & Testing Centre and the Consumers Association with financial and in kind contributions from the organisations represented on the Steering Committee and a grant from the European Commission (DG Health and Consumer Protection). The Steering Committee was composed of



**Project Managers: European Corrective Action Guide**

representatives from the national product safety enforcement authorities (PROSAFE), business (UNICE), trade sector (EuroCommerce) and consumers (BEUC).

An electronic copy of the guide in English accompanies this press release. All 19 language versions of the guide are available to download at the websites of Intertek RTC, PROSAFE, UNICE and EuroCommerce.

### **Background Information on Project Managers and Partners.**

(Further background information for journalists can be found at [www.intertek-rtc.com](http://www.intertek-rtc.com))

#### **Intertek RTC**

The Intertek Research and Testing Centre in the UK carries out testing and consultancy projects for the safety and performance of consumer products. [www.intertek-rtc.com](http://www.intertek-rtc.com)

For further information please contact: *Glenn Bosmans*, +44 (0)7971 112540

#### **Consumers' Association**

The UK consumers' organisation and publishers of Which? magazine. [www.which.net](http://www.which.net)

For further information please contact: *John Cox* +44 (0)20 7770 7563

#### **PROSAFE - Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe**

Established in 1990, PROSAFE is an organisation for the product safety enforcement officers throughout Europe. The group was established by common recognition of the need to build links in operational understanding and trust between enforcement officials charged with the task of working together to enforce community law. [www.prosafe.org](http://www.prosafe.org)

For further information please contact: *Jan van Leent* + 31 (0)70 448 48 23

#### **UNICE - Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe**

UNICE is the official voice of more than 16 million small, medium and large companies in Europe. Active in European affairs since 1958, UNICE's members are 36 central industrial and employers federations from 29 countries, working together to achieve growth and competitiveness.

[www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org)

For further information, please contact: *Carlos Almaraz*: +32(0) 2 237 65 57

#### **EuroCommerce - Retail, Wholesale and International Trade Representation to the EU.**

Created in 1993, EuroCommerce represents the closest link between industry and the 450 million consumers across the whole of Europe. With more than 100 members from 28 countries, it represents a dynamic and labour intensive sector, playing a significant role in the European economy. The sector comprises 4.7 million companies of which 95% are small enterprises and is a major employer providing jobs to 22.5 million people. [www.eurocommerce.be](http://www.eurocommerce.be)

For further information, please contact: *Patrice Pellegrino*: +32(0) 2 237.65.57

#### **BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation**

BEUC is the Brussels based federation of independent national consumer organisations from EU Member States and from other European countries. Our job is to try to influence, in the consumer interest, the development of EU policy and to promote and defend the interest of all European consumers. BEUC has 38 members in 28 European countries. [www.beuc.org](http://www.beuc.org)

For further information please contact: *John Cox* +44 (0) 2077707563.