

Brussels, 3 July 2009

Consumers: New 'Business Application' to notify dangerous consumer products

In an address today to the European Business Leaders Convention in Helsinki, Meglena Kuneva, European Commissioner for Consumers, will present to business leaders the new 'GPSD Business Application': an on-line system for producers and distributors to notify authorities in Member States about dangerous consumer products on the EU market. Producers and distributors, have an obligation to alert all Member States where dangerous goods were found on the market under the General Product Safety Directive (GPSD, 2001/95/EC), up to now, such notifications had to be sent to each Member State separately. The new online system will make it possible for businesses to alert all Member States concerned at the same time in one step, simplifying and speeding up the process. This in turn is in the critical interest of any consumers who might be at risk from such products.

EU Consumer Affairs Commissioner Meglena Kuneva, said, "The introduction of the Business Application serves to make sure that any dangerous products discovered on the market are made known even more quickly than before. Furthermore, in this period of economic crisis this tool represents time and cost savings for business, since they will be able to continue to respect their duties towards consumers with a quicker and easier means of notification."

How does it work?

The "GPSD Business Application", is a secure Internet system, which has been operational since May 2009. It can be accessed by companies via the Commission's website <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/gpsd-ba/> - where companies can download the notification form. Once completed, a notification is submitted to the database of the application, where it will become available to authorities of Member States. Access to the database is restricted to Member State authorities only, and neither businesses nor consumers have access to it.

The 2008 RAPEX Annual Report (Rapid Alert System for Dangerous Consumer Goods) showed that out of the 1866 notifications received in the EU system in 2008, 48% were notified by business. The aim of the "GPSD Business Application" is to simplify and speed up the process for businesses to notify authorities about dangerous products so that the most immediate steps can be taken in the interest of consumer safety. In the future, the application could develop into a European database with information about the most relevant recall campaigns carried out in the EU by producers and distributors. This will allow the competent national authorities to better monitor the safety of consumer products on the EU market.

For more information on the "GPSD Business Application" (including a manual explaining how to prepare a notification) and on the producers and distributors' obligation to notify dangerous products), see DG SANCO website:

http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/safety/rapex/guidelines_business_en.htm