

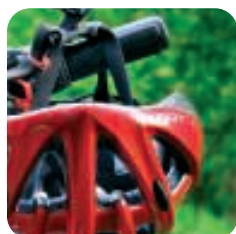


Keeping European Consumers Safe

2006 Annual Report

on the operation of the Rapid Alert System
for non-food consumer products

RAPEX



The Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection of the European Commission manages the Rapid Alert System for non-food consumer products (RAPEX). This report describes the activity of RAPEX in 2006.

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Further information on the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

The RAPEX weekly overviews can be consulted at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/rapex>

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007

ISBN 978-92-79-04931-6

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European Commission

Keeping European Consumers Safe – 2006 Annual Report on the operation of the Rapid Alert System for non-food consumer products RAPEX

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2007 – 36 pp. – 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 978-92-79-04931-6

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ISBN 978-92-79-04931-6



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Foreword



Consumer policy is a key element in reaching the Commission's objective of improving the quality of life for all EU citizens. Guaranteeing the safety of everyday consumer products, thereby protecting the health and safety of consumers, is critical for achieving this goal. The European Rapid Alert System for non-food consumer products (RAPEX) ensures that information about dangerous products which have been identified on the market is quickly shared between EU countries. The Commission plays an important role in the functioning of this system.

The present report describes the functioning of RAPEX in 2006 and includes detailed information about the number and origin of notifications, the type and origin of notified products, and the identified risks. In total, 924 products presenting a serious risk to the health and safety of consumers were reported through RAPEX last year, compared to 701 in 2005, which represents a 32% increase.

The report also looks at some of the progress made in 2006. An important development has been intensified cooperation at international level, particularly with China. Given the fact that China has rapidly become one of the biggest exporters of consumer products to Europe, the Commission has signed a Memorandum of Understanding and a Roadmap for safer toys to improve the safety of incoming products. 2006 also saw attention focused on a number of specific product safety problems, including those related to novelty lighters and mini-motorbikes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the European governments, business and consumer organisations, and all other stakeholders involved in the promotion of consumer product safety for their support and I hope that the information contained in this report will help to strengthen that support in the future.

Meglana Kuneva

European Commissioner for Consumer Affairs



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An introduction to RAPEX



1.1. What is RAPEX?

RAPEX (Community Rapid Information System) is a European rapid alert system for dangerous consumer products. It ensures that information about dangerous products identified by the national authorities is quickly circulated between the national authorities and the European Commission, with the aim of preventing or restricting the supply of these products to consumers. 30 countries currently participate in the system. The participating countries are all the European Union countries and the EEA countries: Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.



1.2. The legal basis of RAPEX

The Directive on general product safety 2001/95/EC (GPSD)¹ provides the legal framework for RAPEX. The RAPEX Guidelines complement the GPSD by defining the key aspects of the operation of the RAPEX system. The Guidelines were drawn up by the Commission in cooperation with the countries participating in the system.

Although some specific consumer products (like toys, cosmetics, electrical appliances, personal protective equipment, machinery, motor vehicles, etc.) are covered by specific or “sectoral” Directives, the RAPEX requirements in the GPSD apply also to these products when the relevant sectoral Directives do not provide for a similar rapid information exchange system.

Relevant **sectoral laws** for consumers include:

- Toys Directive 88/378/EEC
- Low Voltage Directive 73/23/EEC
- Machinery Directive 98/37/EC
- Cosmetics Directive 76/768/EEC
- Motor Vehicles Directive 70/156/EEC
- Personal Protective Equipment Directive 89/686/EEC

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 11, 15.1.2002, p. 4.

The GPSD is available at:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32001L0095:EN:NOT>

and the Guidelines at:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/prod_safe/gpsd/operational_guidelines_en.htm

Sectoral Directives are available at the EUR-Lex website:
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/>

Two guidance documents clarify the relationship between the GPSD and the sectoral Directives. They are available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/keydocs/index_en.htm

Sectoral laws foresee a safeguard clause notification procedure. The aim of this procedure is to check the grounds for national measures which aim to restrict the free movement of products covered by sectoral Directives. In contrast, the RAPEX system is aimed at rapid exchange of information on dangerous products, in order to protect the health and safety of consumers.

1.3. When is RAPEX used?

According to the GPSD, national authorities notify the Commission, via the RAPEX system, of **measures** taken to prevent or restrict the marketing or use of **consumer products** posing a **serious risk** to the health and safety of consumers. This obligation is laid down in Article 12 of the GPSD (see below).



What type of measures can be taken?

Both measures ordered by national authorities and measures taken voluntarily by producers and distributors are covered by RAPEX. The most common measures are a ban/stop on sales, withdrawal of a dangerous product from the market, providing information to consumers about the risks related to the use of the product, recall of a dangerous product from consumers.

What is a consumer product?

RAPEX is dedicated to 'consumer products'. Consumer products are defined as products which are intended for consumers and products which can be used by professionals and consumers (for example, a power drill). Products provided to consumers in the context of a service are also considered as consumer products.

The national authorities exchange information via the RAPEX system regarding consumer products such as toys, childcare articles, electrical products (e.g., lamps, lighting chains), lighters, cosmetics, motor vehicles, mini motorbikes, furniture, decorative articles, laser pointers, gas and heating appliances, recreational crafts, etc.

The RAPEX system does not cover all consumer products. For food and feed, a specific alert system (RASFF), similar to RAPEX is in place. Specific systems are in place also for medical devices and pharmaceuticals.

What is a serious risk?

A 'serious risk' is defined by the GPSD as one which requires rapid intervention by the public authorities and includes risks of which the effects are not immediate.

Additionally, the RAPEX system allows the exchange of information of measures taken by the national authorities in relation to products that present a moderate risk for consumers. These notifications come under Article 11 of the GPSD.

Finally, the Commission also circulates information via RAPEX concerning other products or measures which do not fall into either of the above categories. For example, this can be done in cases where the national authorities are not able to provide all the information necessary for the recognition of the product by the other authorities (e.g., model, brand, details of packaging) but it is important to highlight the risk that the type of product poses.

In short

Notification under Article 12: notifications of measures or actions taken in relation to products presenting a **serious** risk.

Notifications under Article 11: notifications of measures or actions taken in relation to products presenting a **moderate** risk.

Notifications 'for information only': notifications of measures or actions taken in relation to dangerous products, disseminated 'for information only' because they do not fall under Article 12 or Article 11.

1.4. How does RAPEX work?

The RAPEX system relies on close cooperation between the Commission and the following partners:

- national authorities
- producers and distributors

The GPSD identifies a clear set of obligations for all parties. These obligations are explained further in detailed operational guidelines. These are available at: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/keydocs/index_en.htm.

1.4.1. Role and obligations of national authorities

National authorities ensure that businesses respect their obligation to place only safe products on the market. To this end, they must designate competent market surveillance authorities with necessary powers to take measures to prevent or restrict the marketing or use of dangerous products. More specifically, the competent national authority must take appropriate measures if they find dangerous consumer products on the market. These measures must be proportionate to the risk and to the category of consumers. For example, in the case of toys containing small parts that can be swallowed by small children, the authorities generally require withdrawal of the product from the market or recall it from the consumers as these products pose a choking hazard to a very vulnerable category of consumers.

Each country participating in the RAPEX system nominates a single national **RAPEX Contact Point** which submits to the Commission detailed information about dangerous products found on its own market.



A list of the national Contact Points can be found at the end of this report or on our website http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/index_en.htm.

This information is submitted via a standard **notification form**, which includes details on:

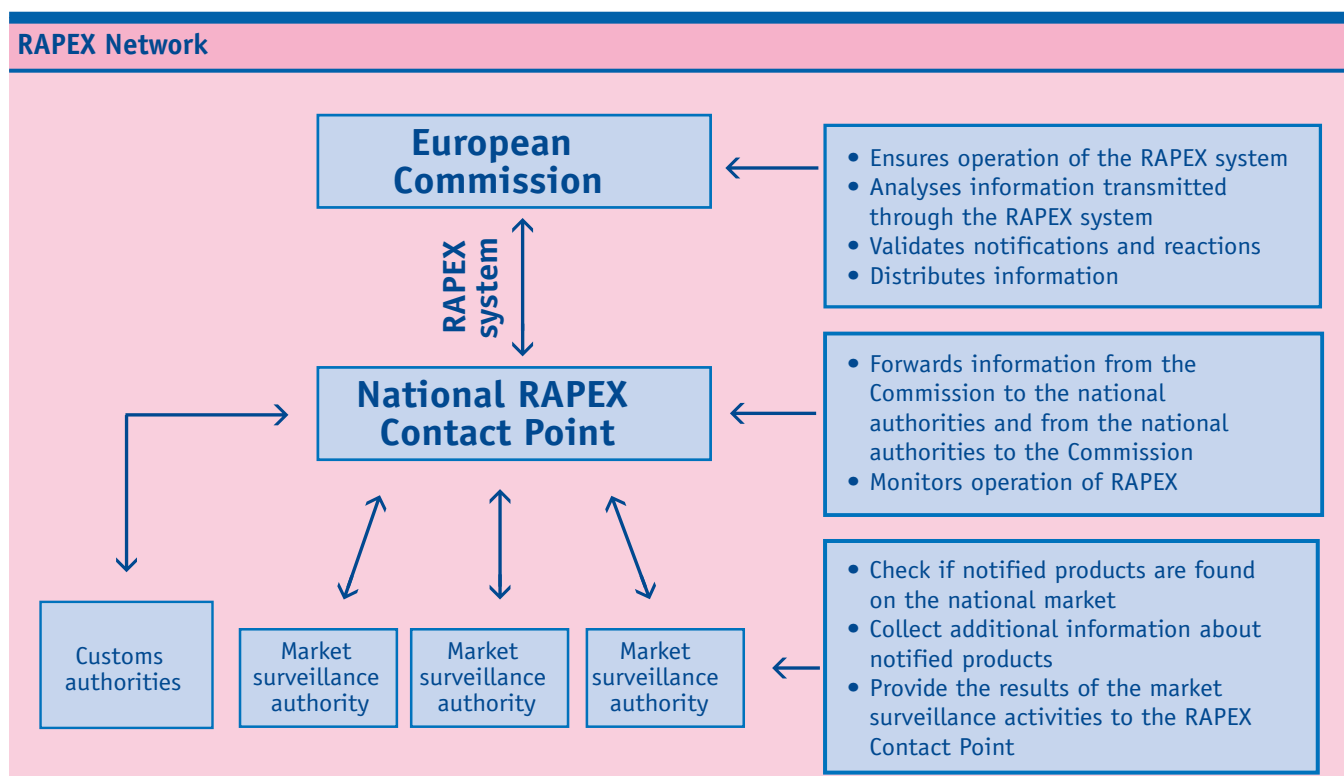
- product identification (name, brand, model, description, picture);
- risks posed by the product (type of risk, results of laboratory tests);
- measures adopted to prevent risks (type of measures, scope, duration, date of entry into force);
- distribution channels of the notified product (manufacturer, exporter, importer, distributors, countries of destination).

The Commission examines this information, checks the completeness and quality of the notifications and assesses their compliance with the law and the RAPEX Guidelines. This process is called **validation**.

The information received and validated by the Commission is circulated to the national Contact Points in all countries participating in the system. These then ensure that their respective national authorities check whether the product in question is present on their market and take appropriate action. The results of these market surveillance activities, including additional information relevant for other national authorities, are then reported back to the Commission through the RAPEX system.

National RAPEX Contact Points are also entitled to receive information on dangerous products directly from consumers.

The chart below illustrates the cooperation between the European Commission, the national RAPEX Contact Points and national market surveillance authorities:



1.4.2. Role and obligations of producers and distributors

Producers and distributors have to ensure that only safe products are put on the market. For this reason, economic operators in the supply chain are key partners in the functioning of the RAPEX system.

Producers and distributors are in a prime position to assess whether a product they put on the market is dangerous because, as professionals, they have the information about the product and they have contact with consumers. Therefore, once they become aware that a product is dangerous, they must immediately inform the national competent authorities, clearly identifying the product in question, the risks it poses and the information necessary to trace it. They must also inform the authorities of any measures taken to prevent further risks to consumers.

This information is then conveyed via the RAPEX system to the Commission and other countries participating in the RAPEX system.

The obligation of economic operators to inform the authorities about dangerous products is a key element in the market monitoring set up by the GPSD. National authorities are able to monitor whether the companies have taken appropriate measures to address the risks posed by dangerous products and to assess if additional measures are necessary.

To simplify the practical application of the notification obligation of producers and distributors, the Commission has developed an IT tool called '**Business Application**', which will enable economic operators to submit notifications to the national authorities through the internet. The new application will consist of two main elements:

- notification form - intended for producers and distributors
- database of all business notifications - intended for competent national authorities.

The application will become operational in the spring of 2007.

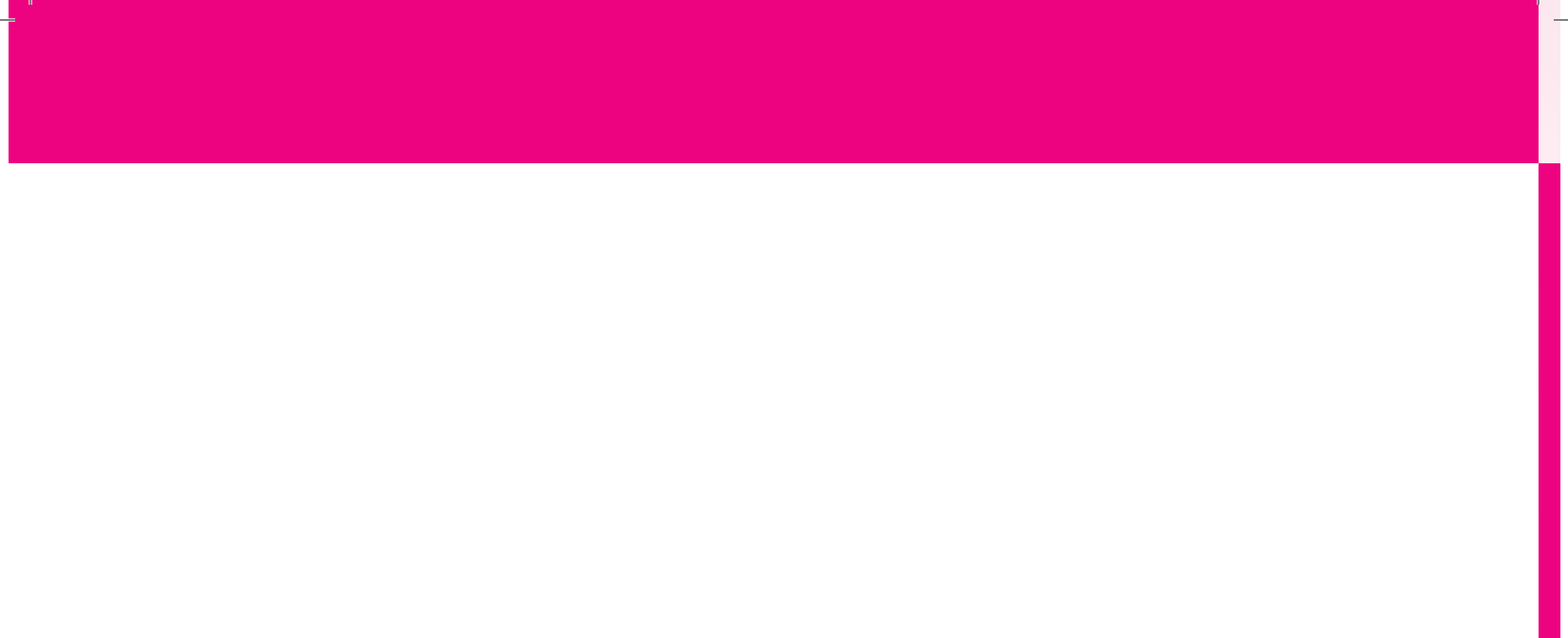


1.4.3. RAPEX website

The Commission publishes weekly overviews of notifications from national authorities of dangerous products posing a serious risk to consumers on its RAPEX internet pages. These are the European Commission consumer affairs internet pages which receive the highest number of visitors.

These overviews provide information on the product, the nature of the risk it poses and the measures that were taken to prevent these risks. This information enables consumers to check whether the products they use or plan to purchase have been notified through the RAPEX system.

The RAPEX website can be consulted at <http://ec.europa.eu/rapex>.



RAPEX notifications in 2006

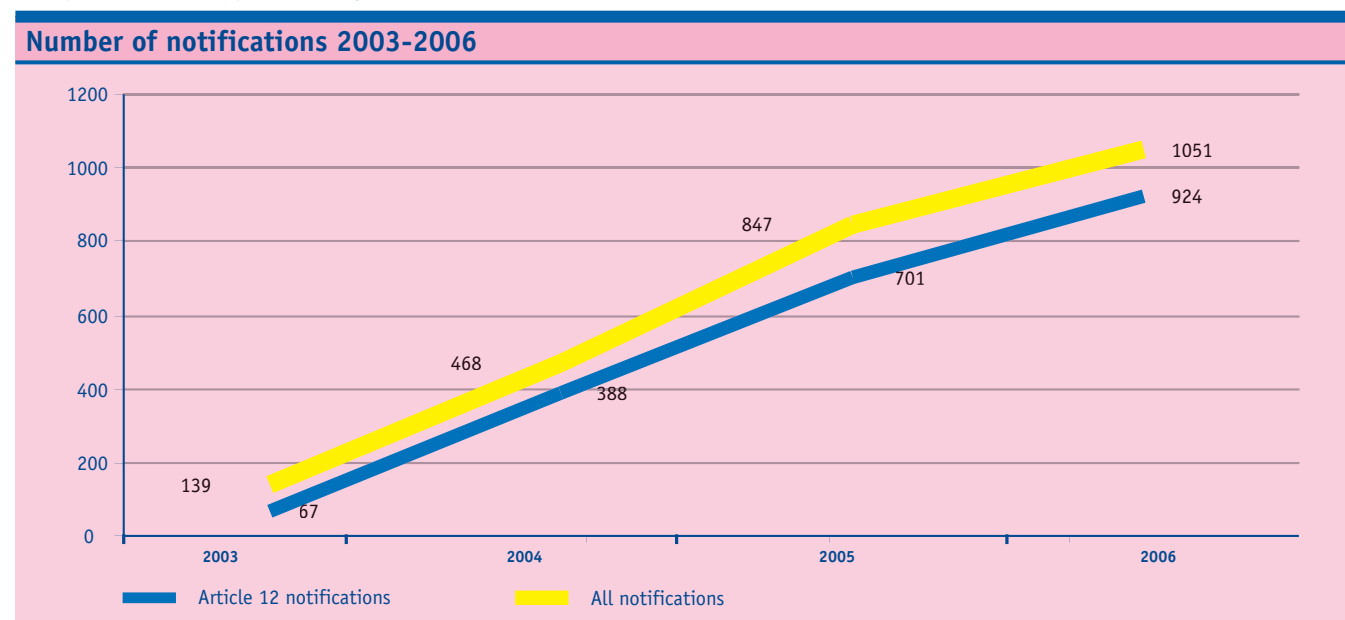
2.1. Total number of notifications

Situation in 2006

In 2006, the Commission confirmed the validity of **1 051** notifications:

- **924** of these notifications were published as notifications under Article 12 of the GPSD (measures taken by the competent authorities or voluntarily by producers and distributors for products presenting a serious risk);
- **23** notifications were treated under Article 11 of the GPSD (measures taken by the competent authorities on products posing a moderate risk);
- **104** notifications did not qualify for treatment under Article 12 or Article 11 and were disseminated for information only.

Comparison with previous years



The number of notifications validated by the Commission has risen steeply during the last few years. In the second year after the entry into force of the revised GPSD in January 2004, the number of Article 12 (serious risk) notifications has more than doubled from 388 in 2004 to 924 in 2006.

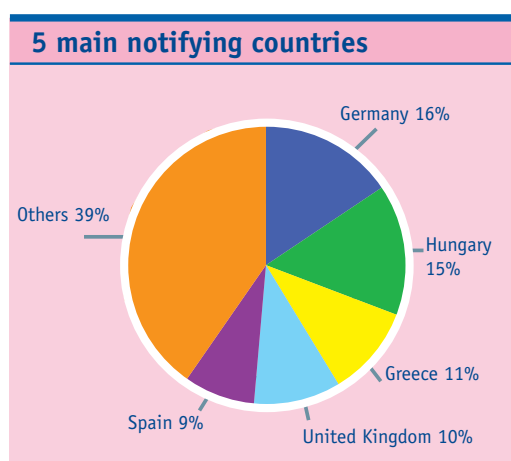
In 2006, there was an increase of 32% in relation to 2005 for serious risk notifications.

For all notifications combined (Article 12 and Article 11 notifications and notifications for information only), the figure of 1.000 notifications has been exceeded for the first time in the history of the RAPEX system.

These results can be ascribed to an increased awareness of product safety by national authorities and the business sector, EU enlargement in 2004, as well as to the several training actions and seminars the Commission has provided for various stakeholders (see next section).

In the following charts, the figures only concern RAPEX notifications that were validated by the Commission under Article 12 of the GPSD. Notifications under Article 11 and notifications 'for information' are not covered by the statistics.

2.2. Notifications by notifying country



Situation in 2006

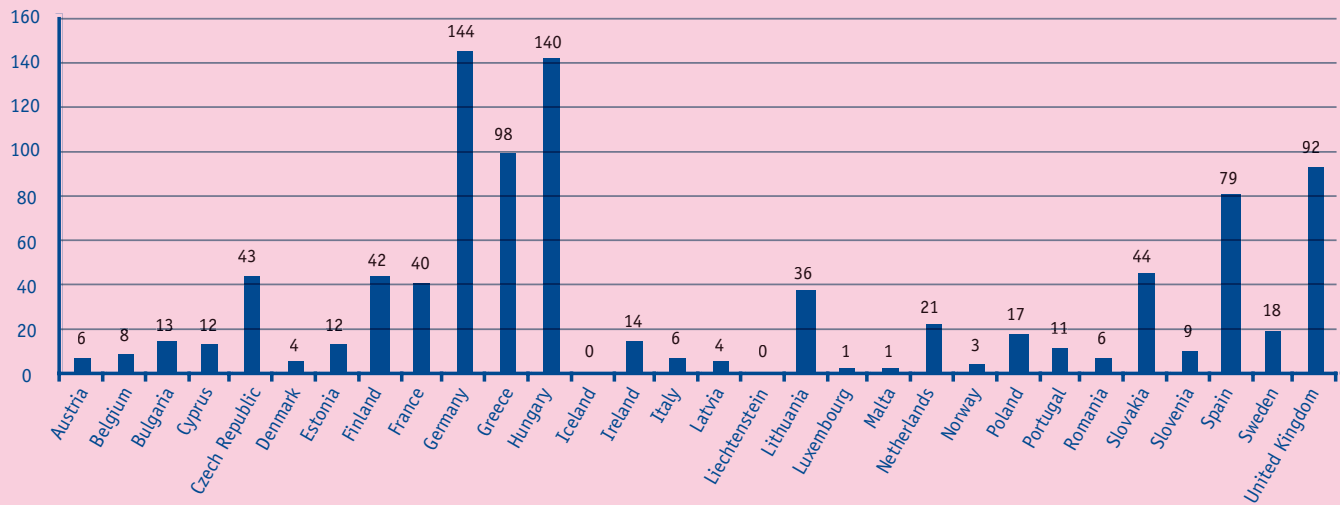
In 2006, all Member States of the EU (including Bulgaria and Romania) were active in the RAPEX system.

The following five countries accounted for 60% of all notifications:

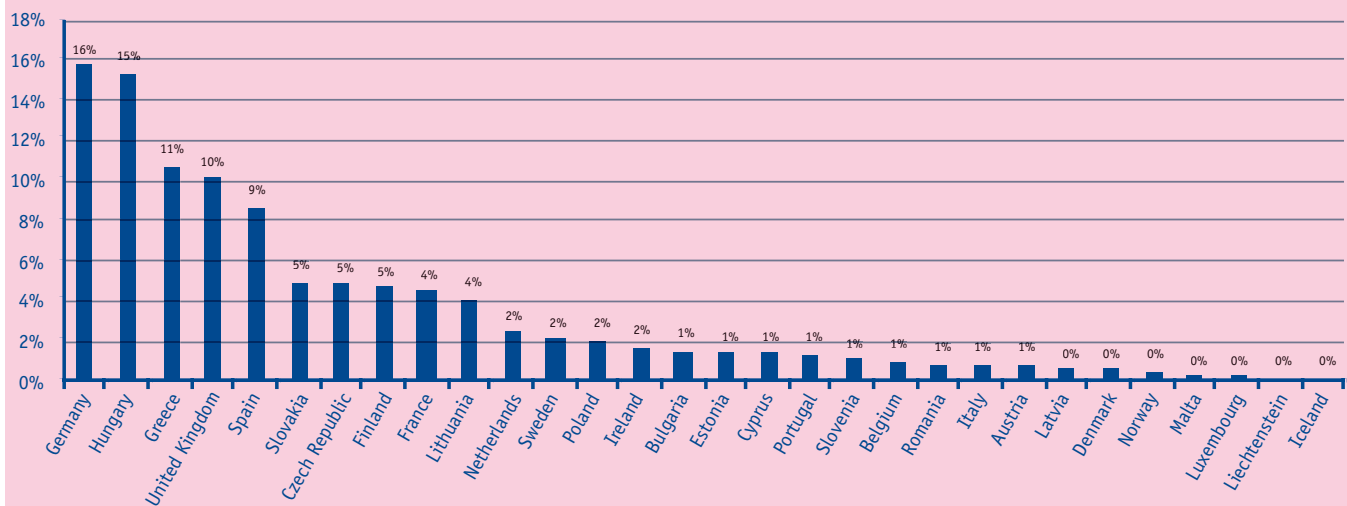
- Germany (144 notifications, 16%),
- Hungary (140 notifications, 15%),
- Greece (98 notifications, 11%),
- United Kingdom (92 notifications, 10%),
- Spain (79 notifications, 9%).

Uneven participation of countries in the system continued in 2006. This is an issue that is being addressed by the Commission. However, when consulting these statistics the varying size of the countries as well as the different production and market structures within the EU should be taken into account.

Number of notifications by notifying country (absolute values)



Notifications by notifying country (%)

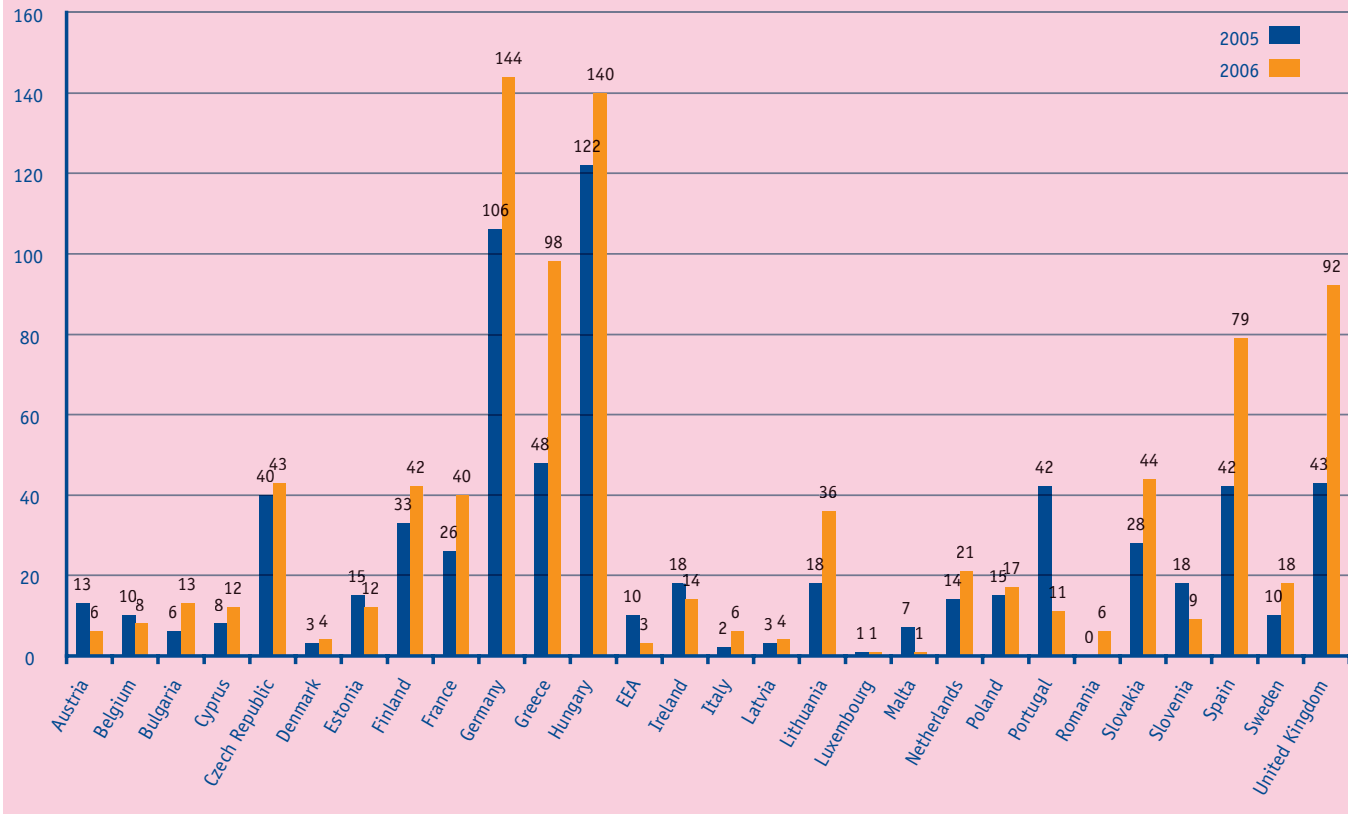


Comparison with 2005

Although figures confirm a 32% overall increase in the number of Article 12 notifications, in some countries the number of such notifications remained unchanged or dropped in relation to the previous year.

In 2006, the most active notifying countries were the same as in 2005, namely Germany, Hungary, Greece, United Kingdom and Spain. Steep increases in the number of notifications were reported for Greece, United Kingdom, Germany and Spain (in absolute numbers) and for Bulgaria, United Kingdom, Greece and Lithuania (in percentage terms).

Number of notifications by notifying country Comparison 2005-2006



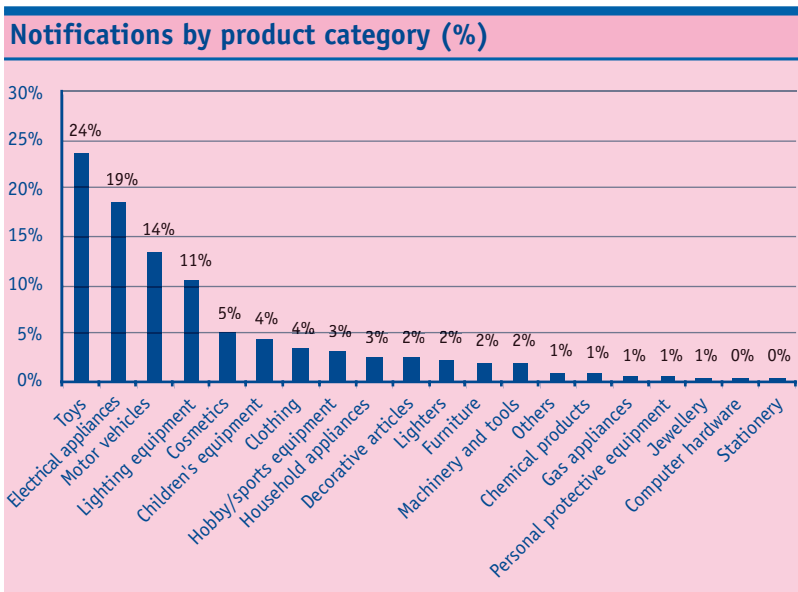
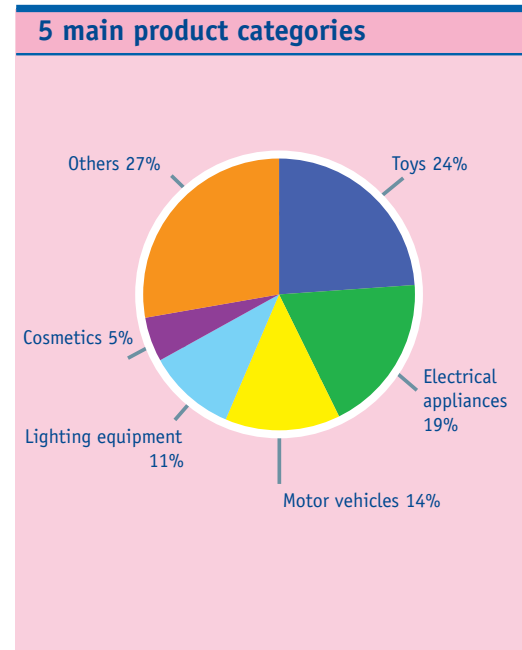
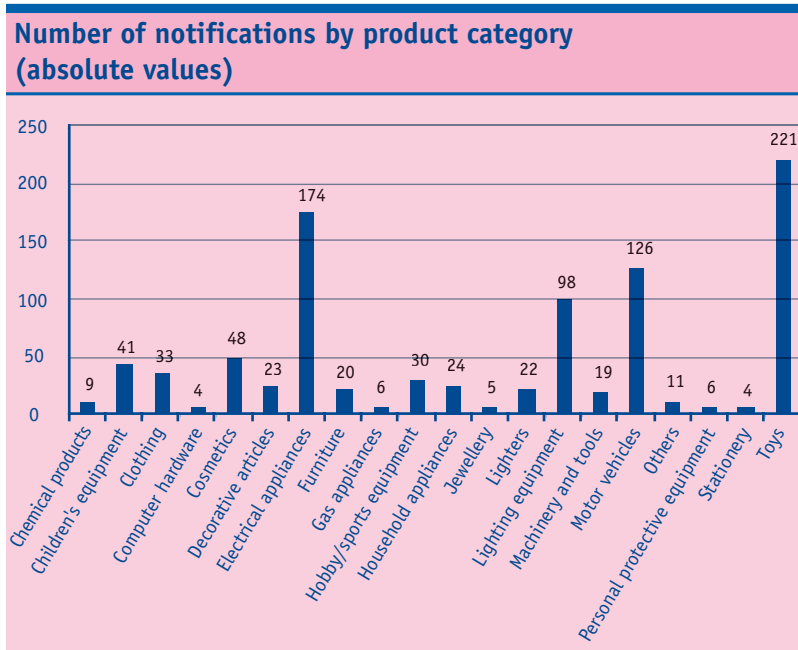
2.3. Notifications by product category

As in 2005, the lion's share of notifications concerned the following categories of products, which accounted for almost 75% of all the notified products:

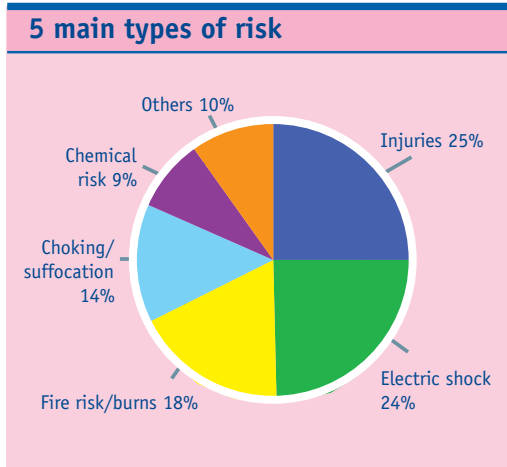
1. toys (221 notifications, 24%),
2. electrical appliances (174 notifications, 19%),
3. motor vehicles (126 notifications, 14%),
4. lighting equipment (98 notifications, 11%),
5. cosmetics (48 notifications, 5%).



Toys, electrical appliances and motor vehicles alone accounted for more than half of the notifications in 2006. This is in line with the previous year's results, with the main difference in 2006, being that, for the first time, toys took over from electrical appliances as the product category subject to the highest number of notifications.



2.4. Notifications by type of risk



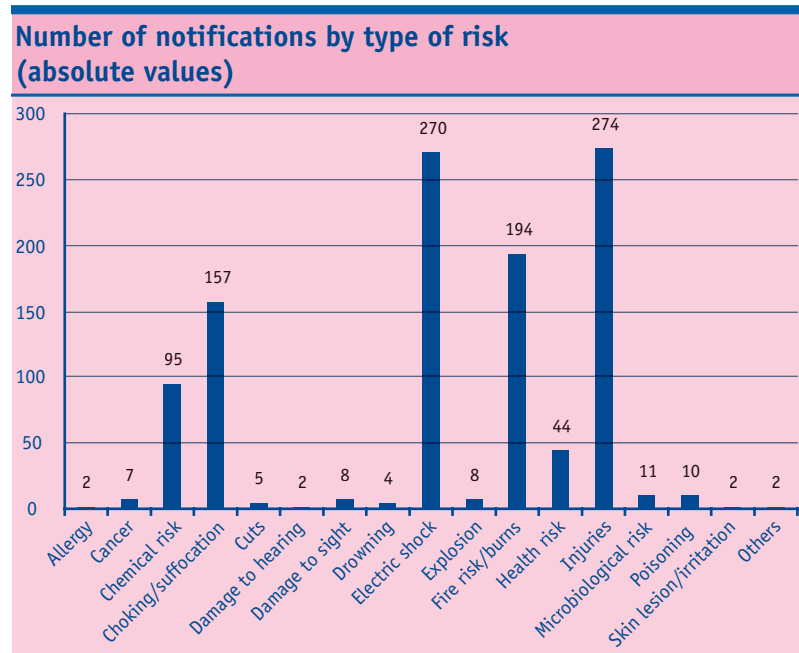
Some notifications concern products presenting more than one risk, therefore, the total number of notified risks is higher than the total number of notifications. In 2006, 148 notifications reported more than one type of risk. The total number of notified risks was 1095 for 924 notifications (or 1,2 risks per notification).

The five main risk categories were:

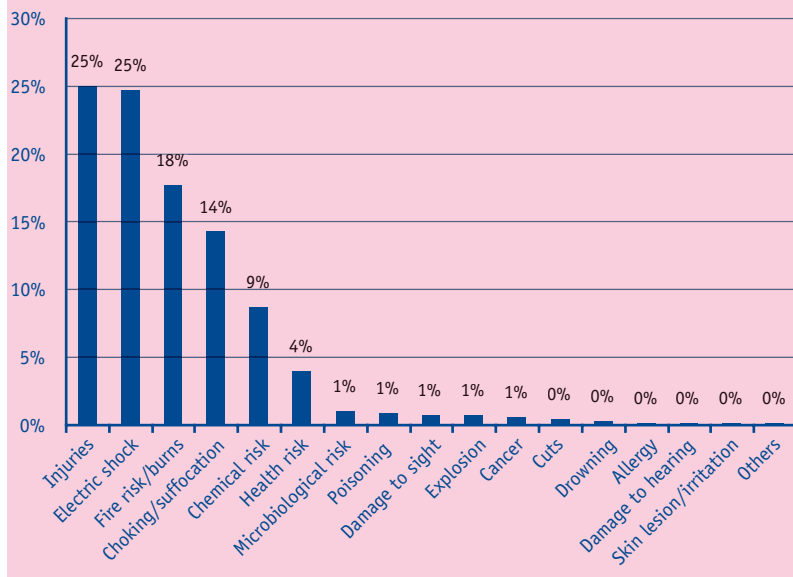
1. injuries (274 notifications, 25%),
2. electric shock (270 notifications, 24%),
3. fire risk/burns (194 notifications, 18%),
4. choking/suffocation (157 notifications, 14%),
5. chemical risk (95 notifications, 9%).

These results confirm previous years' trends, whereby the risk of getting injured and the risk of getting an electric shock have been the main types of risks to which consumers have been liable to exposure over the last few years.

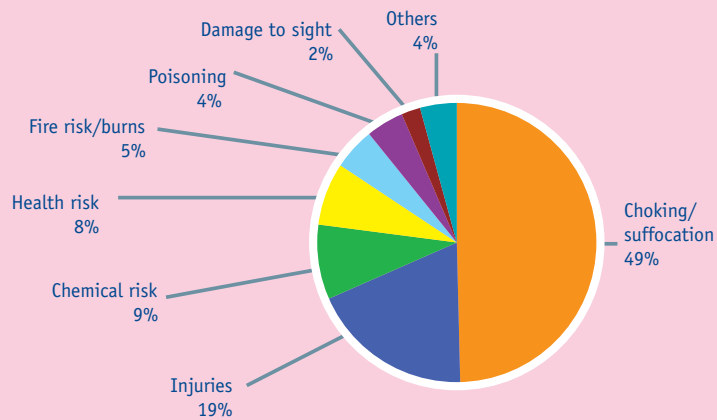
The total number of risks falling into the five main risk categories, account for 90% of all risks.



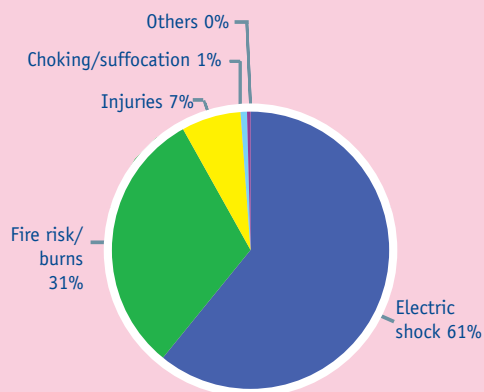
Notifications by type of risk (%)



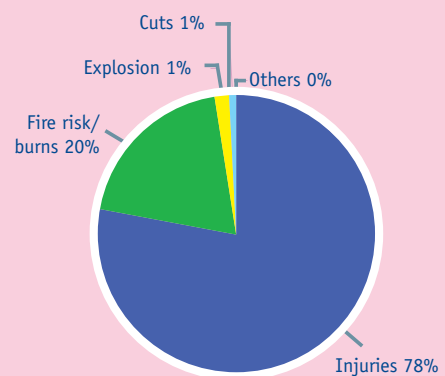
Risks related to toys



Risks related to electrical appliances



Risks related to motor vehicles

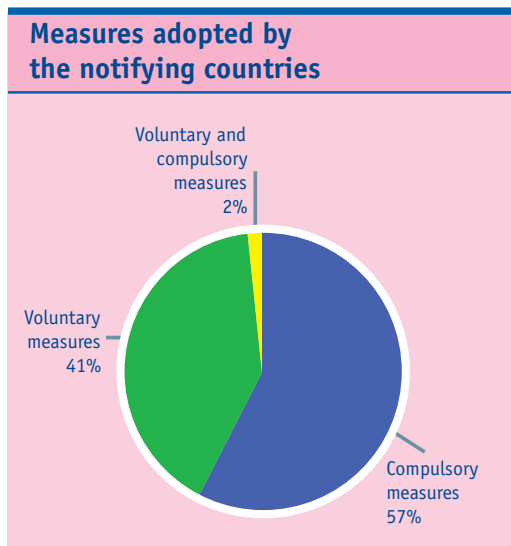




Risks of the three main product categories

Each product category is likely to expose consumers to a specific type of risk. For example:

- the main risk arising when playing with unsafe toys is choking/suffocation, often associated with the presence of small parts (50%);
- for electrical appliances the main risk is electric shock (61%), often combined with the risk of fire (31%);
- in the case of motor vehicles, the risk of injuries is the most frequent one (78%).



2.5. Notifications by type of measure

531 out of 924 serious risk notifications led to compulsory measures being ordered by the national authorities (57% of the total number). In 378 cases, the producer or distributor took voluntary measures (41%). In 15 cases, compulsory measures were complemented by voluntary corrective action.

The most common measures, whether taken on a voluntary or compulsory basis, are ban/stop of sales, withdrawal from the market, informing of the consumers and recall from the consumers.

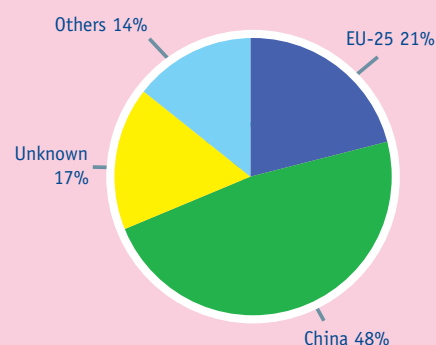
2.6. Notifications by country of origin of the notified product

China was indicated as the country of origin of the notified product in almost half of all cases (440 notifications, 48%). This is mainly due to the great amount of products imported to the European Union from China.

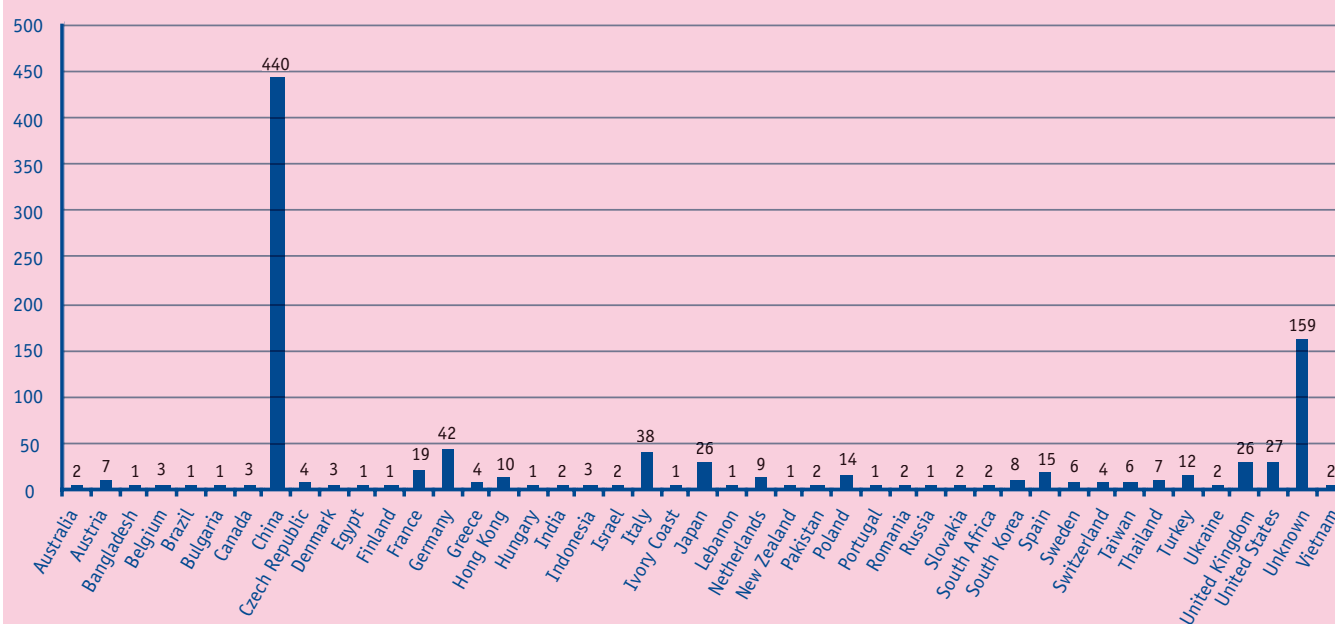
The 25 EU countries (EU-25) accounted for 195 notifications (21% of the notifications).

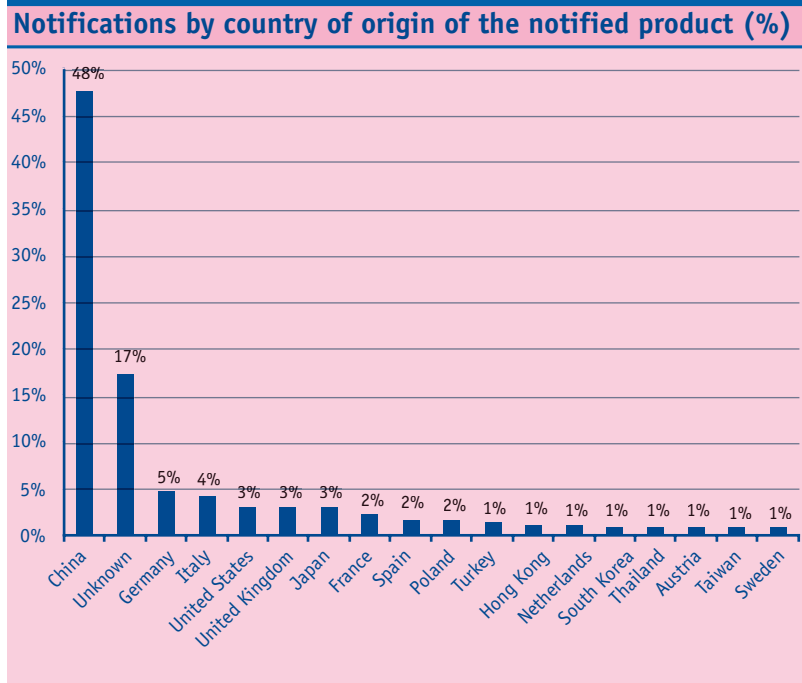
The number of notifications concerning products of which the country of origin was unknown was fairly high, totalling 159 notifications (17% of all notifications). This high percentage of products of unknown origin is a limiting factor in assessing the presence of dangerous products in the EU. However, a slight improvement can be noted compared to the previous year when 20% of notifications concerned products of unknown origin.

Notifications by country of origin of the notified product



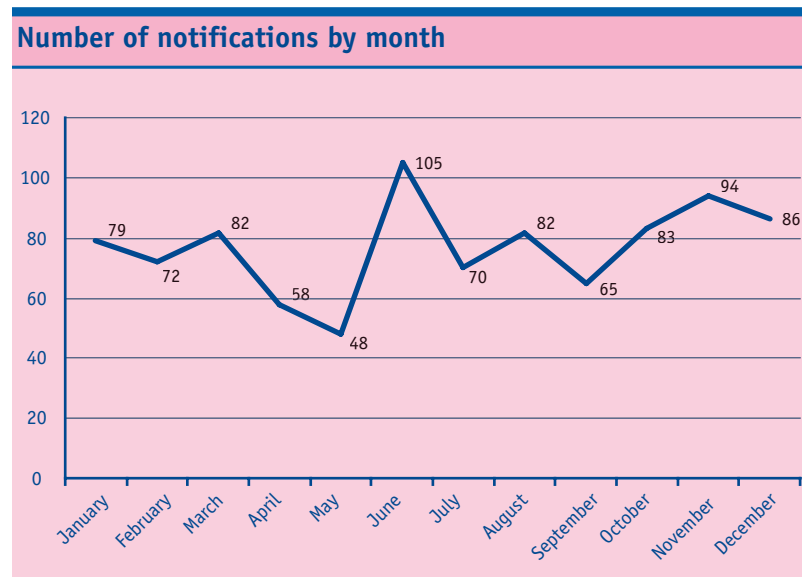
Number of notifications by country of origin of the notified product (absolute values)





2.7. Notifications by month

In general, the flow of notifications is quite even throughout the year. Yet, in June, November and December peaks are registered compared to the other months.



One of the reasons for this fluctuation can be found in the way some participating countries organise their market surveillance activities. In some instances, national authorities concentrate product inspection campaigns during certain periods of the year: the notifications that result from these campaigns are then submitted at almost the same time, thus causing erratic changes in the flow of transmission. Moreover, these campaigns are quite often carried out jointly by many countries.

Another reason for the fluctuation is the so-called 'seasonal products'. In the period before Christmas the number of notifications peaks because the national authorities are carrying out more checks on typical gift items, such as toys, lighting chains and decorative items. Similarly, before summer, more checks are made on items such as garden furniture.





Key developments in 2006

3.

2006 was an important year for a number of specific areas related to non-food product safety in Europe. Below you will find a summary of the main developments.

3.1. International cooperation

Globalisation is leading to growing international trade in consumer products. This development increases the need to improve cooperation regarding the identification of unsafe products, and to ensure that producers across the world are aware of the relevant safety requirements and apply them in practice. In 2006, the European Union made significant steps forward in co-operation with its two main trading partners; the United States and China.



China

In January, the Commission and the Chinese government signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** with the overall objective of establishing better communication and collaboration on consumer product safety and to support Chinese authorities in their efforts to ensure product safety, in particular for consumer products exported to the EU. The Memorandum puts in place a number of practical measures, including joint meetings, exchanges of information and follow-up on emerging safety issues. One tangible measure taken in May 2006 is that RAPEX information concerning products of Chinese origin has been made available on a read-only basis to the Chinese government, thereby allowing immediate follow-up on notifications regarding unsafe products.

Besides this general framework, a specific **Roadmap for safer toys** was signed in September 2006. This agreement aims at ensuring that toys exported from China to the EU are safe and outlines a strategy for improving the safety of toys manufactured in China. The Roadmap, supported by both the European and Chinese toy manufacturers' associations, includes practical measures regarding training and technical assistance, exchanges of RAPEX information between the EU and the Chinese authorities, and tracing, feedback and follow-up mechanisms for dangerous products. It also contains a commitment from the Chinese authorities to strengthen inspection and supervision of toys exported to Europe.

The full text of the Memorandum of Understanding and the Roadmap for safer toys can be consulted on our website: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/prod_safe/intl_coop_en.htm

The full text of the Guidelines can be consulted on our website: http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/prod_safe/intl_coop_en.htm.

United States

European and United States regulators face many identical challenges regarding product safety. Many products are common to both markets, so a product identified as dangerous on one market could still be circulating on the other. Exchanging information on product recalls, emerging health and safety issues and standardisation activities can help both sides improve the effectiveness of their activities. In the context of specific Guidelines, already agreed in February 2005, last year saw increased co-operation on a number of issues of mutual interest, including on specific products such as child resistant lighters and lead in children's products. The EU and USA also joined forces to spur the further development of the International Consumer Product Safety Caucus, a forum for the exchange of information on product safety issues between a broader group of regulators, including China, Japan, Australia, South Korea, Mexico, Canada, Turkey and others.

3.2. Risk assessment

The consistent implementation of the GPSD requires a coherent use of agreed criteria and tools for the assessment of the safety of consumer products. Guidance for such assessment is provided by the RAPEX Guidelines. However, experience has shown that the effective practical application of the Guidelines requires further work. Against this background the Commission has set up a Working Group for the Improvement of the Risk Assessment Guidelines (IRAG), consisting of experts from Member States. The IRAG Working Group is making progress against the background of other similar, but distinct activities on risk assessment in the EU and at international level. The intention is to adopt improved risk assessment guidelines, possibly in early 2008.

3.3. Specific issue of concern

During 2006, a number of specific product safety issues were considered.

Cleaning and sealing sprays

In March, the Commission published three German notifications concerning cleaning and sealing sprays. The sprays were allegedly based on nanotechnology and initially it was thought that nano-particles were involved in the intoxications which were associated with these sprays. More than 110 incidents of health disorders had been reported in Germany after consumers had used these products. The sprays were voluntarily withdrawn from the market by the producer. However, it was concluded that the products in question did not contain nano-particles and, subject to further chemical analyses, that the health disorders were caused by the chemicals in the product combined with the inhalation of a fine mist consisting of particularly small droplets delivered through the spray mechanism.



Lighters

After many years of discussion, in May last year the Commission adopted a Decision requiring Member States to ensure that, as of 11 March 2007, cigarette lighters are child-resistant when placed on the EU market. From the same date, the Decision also prohibits the placing on the market of lighters which resemble objects such as toys, food and mobile phones (so-called 'novelty lighters') that are particularly attractive to children. Certain lighters are excluded from the scope of the Decision, but must comply with the general safety requirements for these products. Similar requirements have already been in place in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand since the mid-nineties. They have proved instrumental in saving a significant number of lives, and in particular children's lives.



Mini-motorbikes

In the first half of 2006, the Commission was alerted to the increasing numbers of cheap, unsafe mini-motorbikes being imported into the EU and resulting in a significant number of RAPEX notifications. These products are reduced-scale copies of normal motorbikes with internal combustion engines. Several Member States reported serious design and construction defects in such products, which on some occasions had caused serious accidents. In response, the Commission requested the Member States to take all necessary urgent measures to protect the safety of consumers, including the withdrawal from the market of unsafe products to prevent further accidents. Many countries responded to this request, thereby significantly improving the safety of the users of these products.



3.4. RAPEX seminars

In 2006, the European Commission organised nine training sessions addressed to different national authorities in charge of product safety (including customs authorities). This aimed to strengthen their knowledge of the functioning of the RAPEX system and the implementation of the GPSD. These sessions took place in Bulgaria, Romania, Sweden, Czech Republic, Denmark, Poland, Slovakia, Lithuania (jointly for Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian authorities) and in Brussels (jointly for Greek and Cypriot authorities).

In addition, the Commission hosted two RAPEX Contact Points meetings in Brussels (on 18 January and on 12 September) thus optimising the cooperation and the communication between all parties.

3.5. New IT application

One of the key developments for RAPEX in 2007 will be the implementation of the so-called GRAS (Generic Rapid Alert System) platform. This new IT system will function as a common basis for all rapid alert systems managed by the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection, and will cover, in particular, biological and chemical risks, food and feed, as well as dangerous non-food consumer products. GRAS will ensure a more efficient operation of RAPEX and should result in a higher number of notifications in 2007.

Conclusions and challenges for 2007

4.

Three main conclusions can be drawn from the present situation:

- The increased number of notifications and increased participation of countries in the RAPEX system confirm the growing role of RAPEX as a reliable, useful and effective tool for monitoring the circulation of unsafe products on the market and for enabling appropriate corrective measures to be taken. RAPEX also promotes the exchange of best practices between national authorities. It has been instrumental in promoting the establishment of a close-knit community of national enforcement authorities in 30 countries. These authorities are cooperating more and more to stop dangerous goods from reaching consumers. This cooperation is underpinned by substantial investment by the European Commission and the EU countries, notably in the form of joint cooperation projects on the exchange of best practices, joint surveillance actions and training initiatives. It is having a substantial impact in significantly improving market surveillance in several European countries, thereby benefiting citizens and legitimate businesses and will be further expanded in 2007, in particular through an action to promote exchanges of enforcement officials between authorities. The effectiveness and importance of RAPEX is further emphasised by several requests made by third countries to access the system.
- International cooperation and exchange of information with key EU trading partners (China and United States) strengthened the effectiveness of market surveillance in the EU. RAPEX is regarded as an example to follow by several countries and regional organisations and has played a vital role in allowing the Commission to promote and export the European regulatory model and standards to other parts of the world.
- Thanks to the information exchanged via RAPEX, appropriate decisions were taken by Member States to counter the risks posed by certain products (e.g., mini-motorbikes) that threaten the safety of consumers.



In 2007, the Commission in cooperation with the countries participating in the RAPEX system will launch and continue a variety of actions to improve the functioning of the RAPEX system. In particular, efforts will be made to:

- raise the awareness of consumers, business and other stakeholders of the role and benefits of RAPEX;
- ensure more active national participation in the RAPEX system;
- ensure that data transmitted through the RAPEX system are exhaustive and reliable;
- enhance cooperation on dangerous products with third countries;
- finalise the improved risk assessment method;
- launch the new RAPEX IT application.

Glossary

5.

AQSIQ

General Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine from the People's Republic of China

Article 11 notification

Notifications of measures or actions taken for products presenting a moderate risk

Article 12 notification

Notifications of measures or actions taken for products presenting a serious risk

Compulsory measures

Measures taken by the national authorities (*e.g.*, ban of sales, informing of the consumers, withdrawal from the market, recall from the consumers) or by the customs authorities (*e.g.*, rejection of import)

CPSC

United States Consumer Product Safety Commission

EEA-countries

(*as used in this report*) countries that are members of the European Economic Area (EEA) but are not members of the European Union, namely Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein

EU-25

All EU-countries minus Bulgaria and Romania (acceding countries in 2006)

For information only notification

Notifications of measures or actions taken which the Commission disseminated to the National Contact Points for information only because it was decided that they did not fall under the scope of Article 12 or Article 11

GRAS

Generic Rapid Alert System, a general IT platform for all rapid alert systems of the Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection

IRAG

Working Group for the Improvement of the Risk Assessment Guidelines, consisting of experts from the Member States

MoU

Memorandum of Understanding

National Contact Point

Representative of the network of all national level authorities of a particular country considered by the European Commission as the single contact point for that country

Voluntary measures

Corrective measures voluntarily taken by the producer or distributor (*e.g.*, stopping of sales, informing of the consumers, withdrawal from the market, recall from the consumers)

Contacts

6.

Important websites

Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection:
http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

RAPEX:
<http://ec.europa.eu/rapex>

Business notifications:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/prod_safe/gpsd/guidelines_en.htm

Lighters:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/prod_safe/gpsd/lighters/index_en.htm

Sectoral Directives:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors_en.htm

The National Contact Points

A list with all the contact details of the National Contact Points is available at:
http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/cons_safe/index_en.htm

The Commission's RAPEX Team

The Commission's RAPEX Team operates 24/7 and can be contacted at:

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