



## Let's avoid marking mistakes on product safety

As usual, when there are concerns ('Kuneva tells EU laggards to unite against toxic toys', 6-12 September), regulators call for more legislation or more bureaucratic requirements. But do we really need a so-called better CE marking? The CE marking is already a well-recognised safety mark. What we need to ensure is to check more often that products which bear the CE marking are entitled to do so. Whose role is that? That of national authorities, of course.

The EU institutions have done their work thoroughly over the years: EU health and safety regulation is designed to ensure the safety of consumers and workers. And if it is applied it does: a product lawfully placed on the European market is safe. Manufacturers are required to carry out a risk analysis on their products and perform conformity assessment tests. Then they are required by law to place the CE marking on their products.

The CE marking therefore stands as the visible symbol on a product whereby the manufacturer states that his product is in conformity to all applicable legislation that addresses health and safety issues. Are further marks or further regulation useful then? Of course not. No number of marks voluntary or otherwise, no amount of regulation can replace what is needed: the proper enforcement of existing legislation by national authorities at the borders of the EU and in the market, in other words market surveillance.

The Commission is trying to promote better market surveillance practices through promoting networks between national authorities and through the Rapex system. These are excellent initiatives, but they are only tools. Member states must focus more on market surveillance – the only efficient method of preventing the marketing of unsafe products.

Other marks should remain voluntary and they should not have the same meaning as the CE marking. If manufacturers wish to use other marks to highlight certain characteristics of their products (they are environmentally friendly, they answer a particular quality standard, etc), so be it. These are marketing decisions by manufacturers which should never be confused with legal obligations.

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