



Safety Gate:

just a click to keep away from dangerous products



2018 results of the Rapid Alert System
for dangerous non-food products

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Foreword from the Commissioner



All consumers deserve safe products. If a product happens to be unsafe, consumers deserve quick action to remove it from the market. This is the main purpose of the Rapid Alert System. It is a remarkable example of how national authorities all over Europe overcome language and cultural barriers in order to work towards a common goal: to protect European consumers from dangerous products.

Thanks to this system, in 2018, the authorities of the 31 participating countries exchanged 2257 alerts on dangerous products.

But the Rapid Alert System is more than an alert database. By enabling the quick exchange of alerts about dangerous products which may reach any country in Europe, every country is able to check their own markets more easily and take further measures on the same products. This kind of follow-up actions amounted to a total of 4050 in 2018.

Being a consumer myself, it is very reassuring to know that there is a comprehensive European system that works to keep our market safe. It does so by stopping dangerous products from entering the internal market or by removing them when they make their way on to shops shelves. The Rapid Alert System is the hub that allows all information on dangerous goods to be swiftly shared between authorities across our countries so that appropriate measures can be taken all over Europe. This is also the reason why I have recently launched “Safety Gate” the new public face of the Rapid Alert System.

Of course, there is still a lot of work to be done, and the members of the Rapid Alert System, including the European Commission, are working to make sure that businesses and national authorities cooperate even further to ensure consumer safety.

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1. The Rapid Alert System for dangerous non-food products: how does it work?

According to the EU safety legislation, a product is safe if it meets all safety requirements under European or national law. It is the responsibility of businesses and national authorities to ensure that only safe products are offered for sale.

Businesses must:

- only place products that are safe on the market;
- inform consumers of any risks associated with the products they have supplied;
- make sure any dangerous products present on the market can be traced, so that, if necessary, they can be removed to prevent any harm being caused to consumers or the environment.

Designated national authorities are responsible for market surveillance. They:

- check whether products available on the market are safe;
- ensure product safety legislation and rules are applied by manufacturers and all actors in the supply chains;
- apply sanctions when necessary;
- take appropriate measures when necessary (such as recalling the products from the user, ordering the withdrawal of the product from the market, etc.).

Every day, national authorities send information to the European Commission on measures they have taken against products that pose a risk. The Rapid Alert System used for this purpose enables quick circulation of the information among the contact points of the network of **national authorities** responsible for market surveillance in the participating countries⁽¹⁾. As a consequence, the follow-up of these alerts by all authorities involved in the system is much easier, and dangerous products are removed from the market in a swift and efficient way.



⁽¹⁾ European Union Member States, plus EEA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

2. Main achievements in 2018

Highlight #1: A new Safety Gate which is user oriented

This year, the European Commission has made the public website even more accessible so that consumers, companies and authorities can read and make use of the information on dangerous products.

For the sake of clarity the website has been updated and renamed **Safety Gate**.

An important and significant change introduced on the Safety Gate is the fact that, thanks to an automated translation tool, the information is now available in the 25 languages of the countries participating in the system (EU official languages plus Norwegian and Icelandic). It is possible therefore to consult the **weekly reports**, individual alerts and the **search tool** in any of those languages. It is also possible to request a new **subscription** to receive the weekly reports or personalised weekly reports by email in a language other than English.

Highlight #2: A product safety commitment by 4 major online market places

To improve the detection of dangerous products marketed in the EU before they are sold to consumers or as soon as possible thereafter, the European Commission has facilitated the signature of the **Product Safety Pledge** by 4 major online marketplaces (Alibaba, Amazon, Ebay, Rakuten France) on 25 June 2018. By signing the Pledge, the companies have agreed to a list of commitments going beyond their legal obligations with the aim of protecting consumers.

The four companies signing the Pledge committed to:

- provide specific single contact points for use by EU Member State authorities for the notifications of dangerous products and for the facilitation of communication on product safety issues.
- consult information on recalled/dangerous products that is available in the Rapid Alert System and to take appropriate action in respect of the products concerned.



- react within two working days to authorities' requests to remove listings offering unsafe products. Companies should follow up and inform the authorities of the action taken.
- provide a clear procedure through which customers can notify dangerous product listings. Such notices are treated expeditiously and an appropriate response is given within five working days.
- take measures aimed at preventing the reappearance of listings for dangerous products that have already been removed.
- provide information/training to sellers on compliance with EU product safety legislation and require sellers on the platform to comply with the law.

The European Commission encourages other online marketplaces to sign the Product Safety Pledge to further improve the safety of products sold online for consumers in the EU.

Highlight #3: Cooperation agreement with Canada

The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and the European Commission provided the basis for starting negotiations on the exchange of information about dangerous products. **The administrative arrangement, signed in November 2018**, allows both parties to regularly exchange information on dangerous non-food consumer products. The exchange will contribute to EU Member States better targeting dangerous products circulating both in Canada and in the EU market and the detection of emerging product safety risks.



3. 2018 results

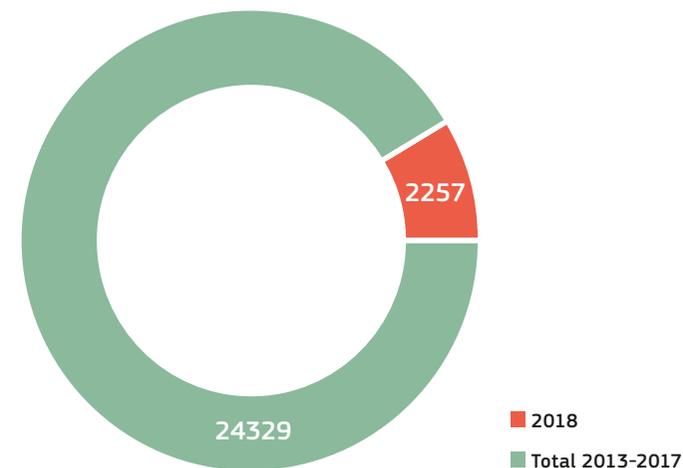
3.1. Alerts

Since the set-up of an information exchange tool about dangerous non-food products in 2003, the system has continuously developed in terms of improved quality and efficiency. With a database containing more than 25.000 alerts and over twice as many follow-up reactions, this is a successful achievement resulting from more than 15 years of joint cooperation between the Member States and the Commission.

Since 2010, the Rapid Alert System also covers professional products and products that pose risks other than those relating to health and safety, such as risks to the environment.

In 2018 alone, a total of 2257 alerts were circulated in the system.

Total number of alerts 2013-2017 compared to number of alerts in 2018



5 most notified products

31%



Toys

19%



Motor vehicles

10%



Clothing, textiles and fashion items

8%



Electrical appliances and equipment

7%



Cosmetics

5 most notified risks

25%



Chemical

25%



Injuries

18%



Choking

10%



Electric shock

8%

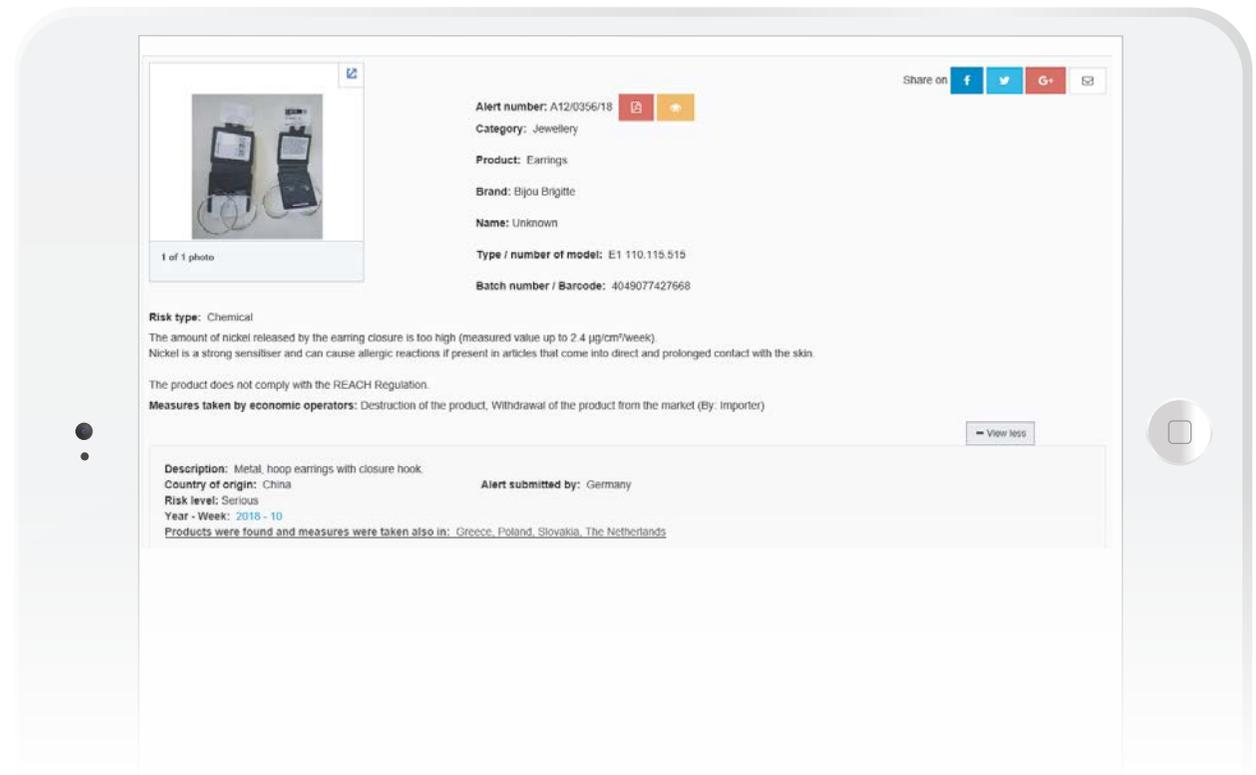


Fire

3.2. Follow-up

National authorities have an obligation to follow up on the products circulated in the Rapid Alert System. After checking their own national markets, these authorities must take the necessary measures if they find the same products in their territory and send this information through the system. In 2018, 4050 follow-up reports in respect of original alerts were circulated in the system.

Underneath each alert published on the Safety Gate it is possible to see which countries have followed up on that alert, found the same dangerous product on their markets and have taken the necessary measures to stop, withdraw, or recall the product.



The screenshot shows a detailed alert page for a product. On the left, there is a photo of two pairs of earrings. The main content area on the right contains the following information:

- Alert number:** A12/0356/18
- Category:** Jewellery
- Product:** Earrings
- Brand:** Bijou Brigitte
- Name:** Unknown
- Type / number of model:** E1 110.115.515
- Batch number / Barocode:** 4049077427668

The **Risk type** is Chemical. The description states: "The amount of nickel released by the earring closure is too high (measured value up to 2.4 µg/cm²/week). Nickel is a strong sensitizer and can cause allergic reactions if present in articles that come into direct and prolonged contact with the skin. The product does not comply with the REACH Regulation." The **Measures taken by economic operators** are: Destruction of the product, Withdrawal of the product from the market (By: importer).

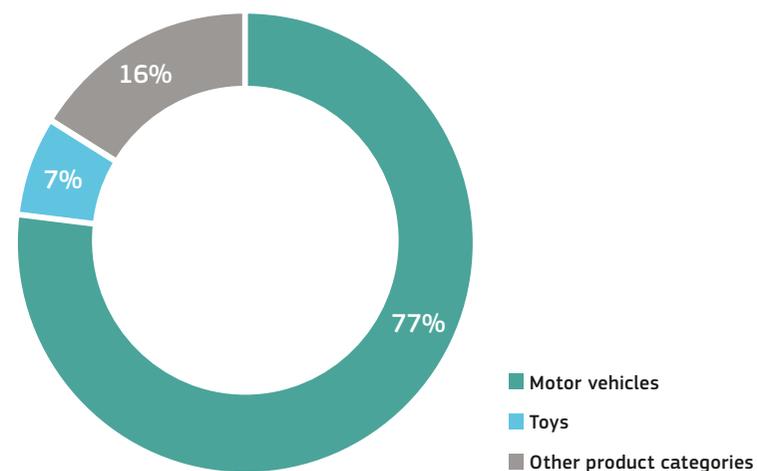
At the bottom, the **Description** is: Metal hoop earrings with closure hook. The **Country of origin** is China. The **Risk level** is Serious. The **Year - Week** is 2018 - 10. The **Alert submitted by** is Germany. **Products were found and measures were taken also in:** Greece, Poland, Slovakia, The Netherlands.

Product categories and risks subject to follow-up

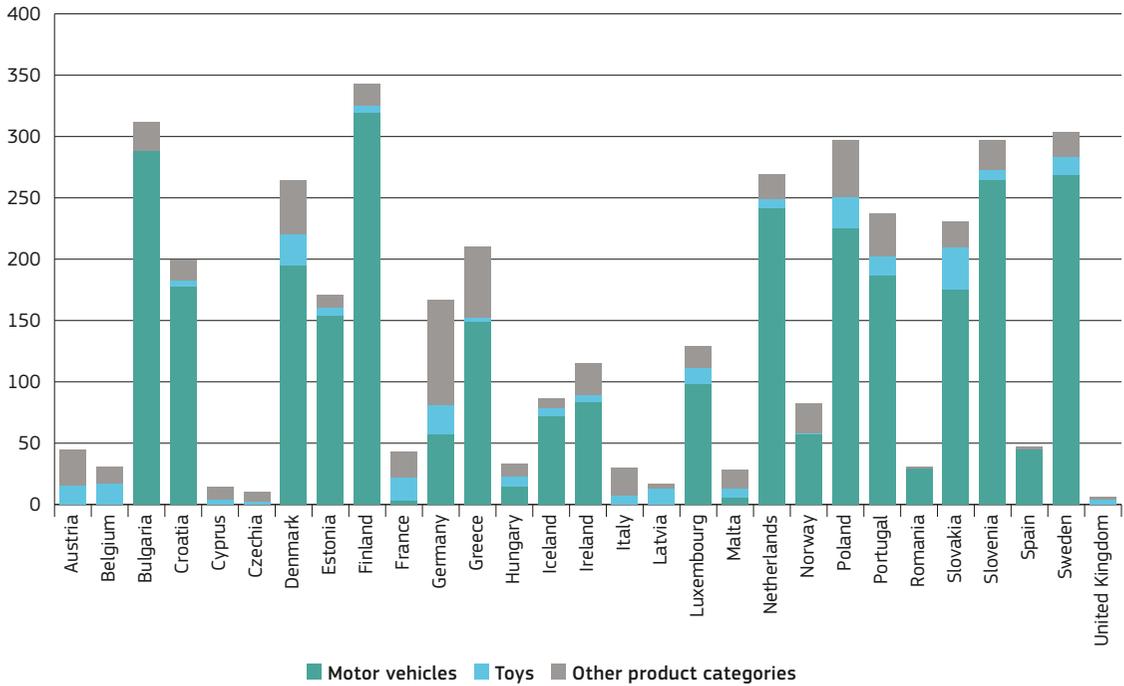
The follow-up actions in the system mostly concern alerts regarding recalls of motor vehicles or vehicle parts. This is due to the fact that, in this particular sector, there is a high level of coordination amongst manufacturers and distributors to recall these products at European level. All recalls of products of this category are organised by the businesses involved and reported directly to the national authorities, which pass on the information through the Rapid Alert System.

The main risk linked to motor vehicles is injuries, due to the risk of accidents which could be caused by the fault.

Apart from alerts concerning motor vehicles, Member States mostly report on follow-up measures they have taken against toys. Follow-up actions on other product categories are less prominent, generally because they are more difficult to trace on the market.



In almost all countries, the product category “Motor vehicles” represents the largest share of their follow-up actions.

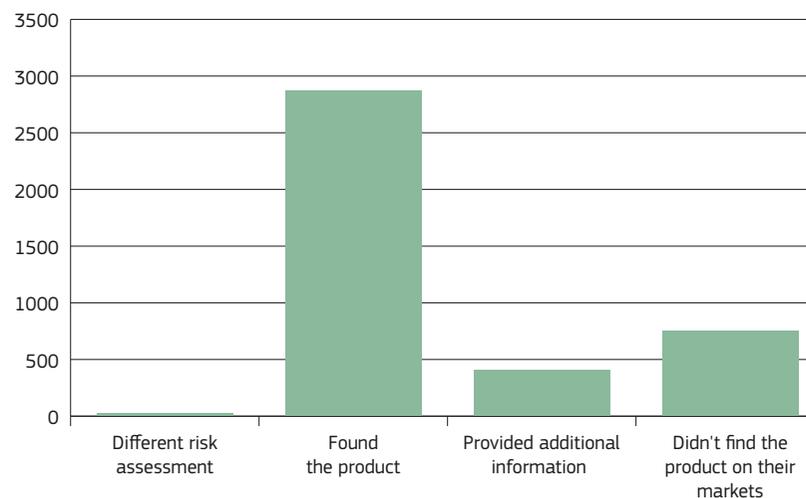


Follow-up information

In their follow-up reports, Member States indicate whether they have found the product or not, and, where possible, add any additional information to help trace the product.

Different national authorities may have different evaluations of the risk posed by the product, or may take different measures, according to the risk they have identified. In case of diverging opinions, the European Commission provides the setting for discussions in order to reach a decision that can set a reference for all countries participating in the system.

Most follow-up reports from authorities provide information that the product was found and that they took the same measures as were noted in the original alert. In 2018, 10% of the follow-up reports provided information which was not available in the alert originally published and only in 1% of the cases, was there any disagreement with the original alert. 19% reported that they had not found the product.



3.3. New challenges from new products: squeezable toys – what’s wrong with these?

In 2018, a series of alerts pointing at new squeezable or “squishy” toys have appeared in the system. Most of the 23 alerts for “squishy toys” or “squeezable toys” reported that they contained dangerous chemical substances such as N,N-dimethylformamide, N,N-dimethyl-aminoethanol, cyclohexanone and triethylenediamine, which pose a risk to the eyes, or cause mucous membrane irritation and liver damage.

In some cases, these toys may also pose risk of choking, suffocation or microbiological risks, all of which cause serious life-long health injuries, particularly to children.

Risks posed by squeezable toys

Chemical	10
Choking	8
Chemical+Suffocation	2
Chemical+Choking	2
Microbiological	1
Total	23

Alert number: A12/1877/18

Category: Toys

Product: Squeezable toys

Brand: Sanrio / Hamee

Name: SQUISH ME!

Type / number of model: HELLO KITTY / SIL-34688, KEROPPI / SIL-34688, MY MELODY / SIL-34688, POMPOMPURIN / SIL-34688, TUXEDOSAM / SIL-34688

Batch number / Barcode: Unknown

Risk type: Choking

Small parts can easily be detached from the toy.
A small child may put one of them in the mouth and choke.

The product does not comply with the requirements of the Toy Safety Directive and the relevant European standard EN 71-1.

Measures ordered by public authorities (to: Distributor): Ban on the marketing of the product and any accompanying measures, Recall of the product from end users, Temporary ban on the supply, offer to supply and display of the product

Description: Squeezable toys (squishies) in the shape of different baby animal characters with a ball chain attached to their top. Sold in a transparent plastic packaging. Size is approx. 7 cm x 7cm x 4.5cm. The product has been sold online.

Country of origin: Unknown **Alert submitted by:** Luxembourg

Risk level: Serious

Year - Week: 2018 - 60

Products were found and measures were taken also in: Poland

3.4. Products sold online: surfing for safe products

It is now very common for European consumers to buy products online. However, as is the case in bricks-and-mortar shops, some of these products may not comply with all the rules and may therefore be dangerous. As a result, national market surveillance authorities need to develop tools and further specialise in monitoring online offers. Some national authorities have dedicated web-screening teams to detect any products offered for sale that have been the subject of alerts in the system. In 2018, 16% of the alerts sent by the national authorities indicated that the products had been found for sale online.

In order to support the national authorities in their work, the European Commission has facilitated the signature of the Product Safety Pledge with 4 major online marketplaces (Alibaba, Amazon, Ebay, Rakuten France) on 25 June 2018. National authorities can now contact these platforms directly to signal that they have noticed a dangerous product for sale and that it should be removed from their platforms. The platforms have agreed to react within two working days to notices received from the authorities.

Since the signature of the Pledge, communication has improved between the signatories and the EU Member States authorities. The removal of the dangerous products is then notified in the Rapid Alert System.

The Safety Gate includes a webpage with [tips for consumers to buy safely online](#). This information is available in the 23 official languages of the EU.

3.5. Coordinated actions: together is better

The European Union consumers' programme includes a budget of EUR 2.500.000 to support coordinated EU-wide actions to make the enforcement of product safety more effective. National authorities visit manufacturers, importers or retailers in their own countries to inspect and sample products. All of these products from across the EU are then tested together in the same accredited laboratory. Test results are jointly discussed and assessed in order to identify which of the products tested pose specific risks and to decide on coordinated measures to be taken against those products throughout the single market.

In 2018, 54 different authorities, all part of the Rapid Alert System network, participated in coordinated actions and tested, in a harmonised way, more than 750 different products, including electrical toys, children's cots and baby carriers, haircare products (hairdryers, curling tongs and hair straighteners), impact drills and climbing equipment. For those products found to be dangerous, and subject to measures by the corresponding authorities, alerts were sent via the Rapid Alert System for dissemination to the other national authorities and for publication on the Safety Gate.

Member States can benefit from a collaborative setting to act together and share knowledge and best practices. These coordinated activities allow Member States to join forces in a common effort to free the European market from dangerous products in a synchronised way.

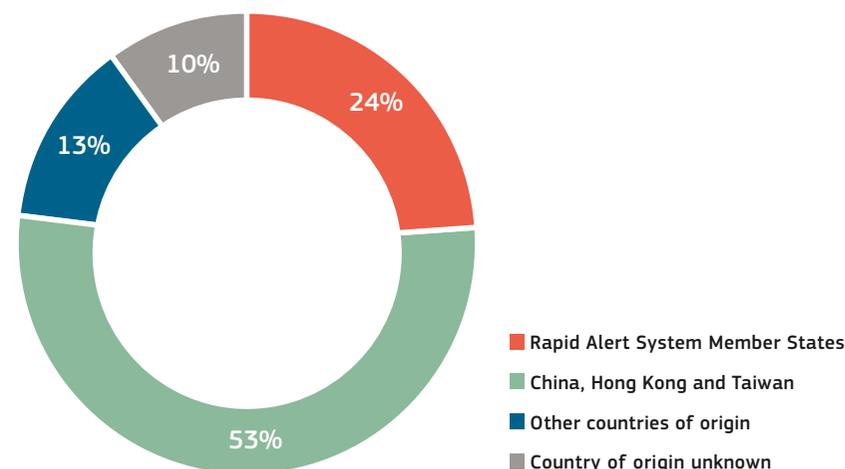
3.6. Tracing dangerous products around the world

In order to carry out measures effectively, Member State authorities need to know from where the dangerous products originate so that they can contact the manufacturer, retailer or distributor and instruct them to withdraw or stop the product from entering the single market. As many products come from third countries and since authorities across the world face the same or similar product safety challenges, international cooperation and the international dimension of the Rapid Alert System is very important in supporting Member States in their work.

In addition to a 10-year-long cooperation with China and the USA on the exchange of information, Canada has now also signed an arrangement with the Commission to exchange information on dangerous products. Such agreements help trace products around the world and identify waves of risks and new products.

In 2018, the European Commission organised the biennial **International Product Safety Week**, which brought together over 400 stakeholders and officials from over 50 countries to discuss about ways of working together to improve product safety and to protect consumers worldwide.

Alerts circulated in 2018 by groups of countries of origin:

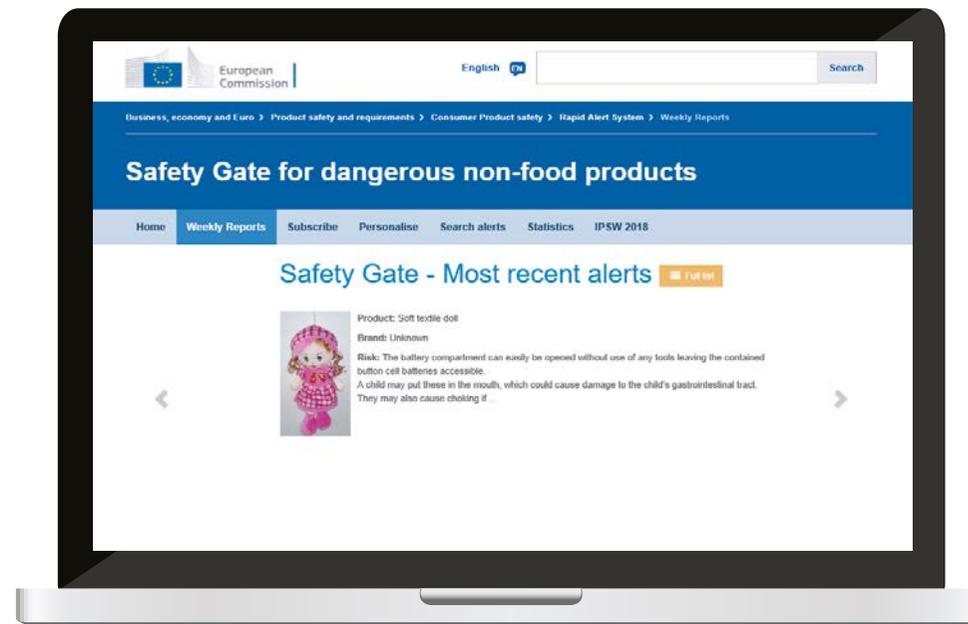


4. Find your way around the Safety Gate

If you want to know about the latest alerts published, or to see the weekly lists of alerts published:

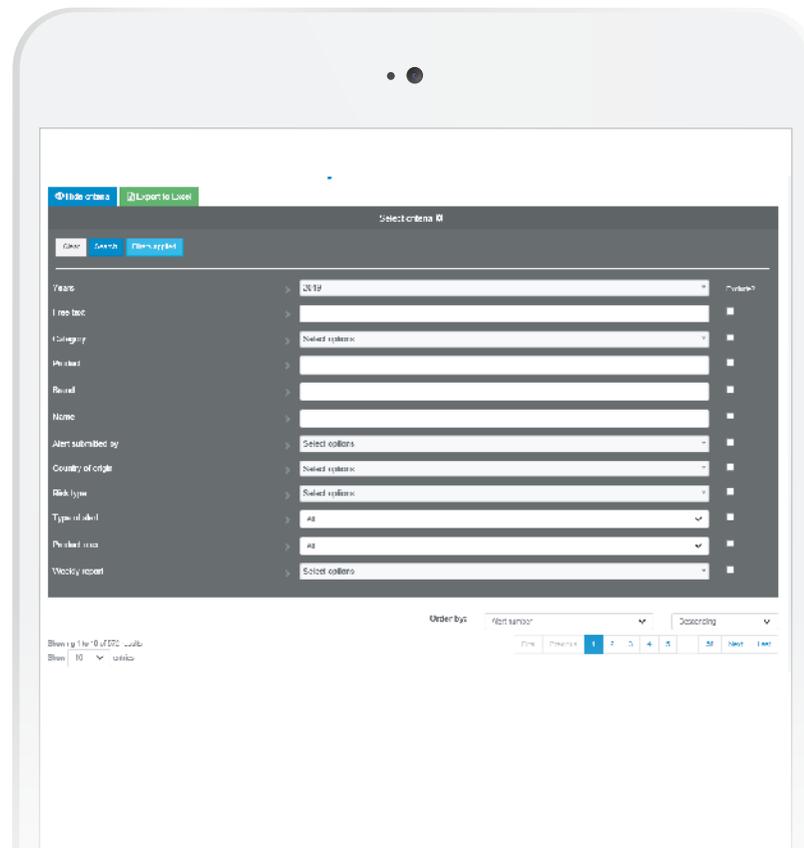
Select your preferred language for consulting the [weekly reports webpage](#). **English** 

Alerts will be displayed in the chosen language with machine-translated product and risk descriptions. In case of unclear translations, please always refer to the original English version.



If you want to search for specific alerts using different criteria:

Select your preferred language to [search for alerts](#) and the page will change to that language version. Alerts will be displayed in the chosen language with machine-translated product and risk descriptions. In case of unclear translations, please always refer to the original English version.

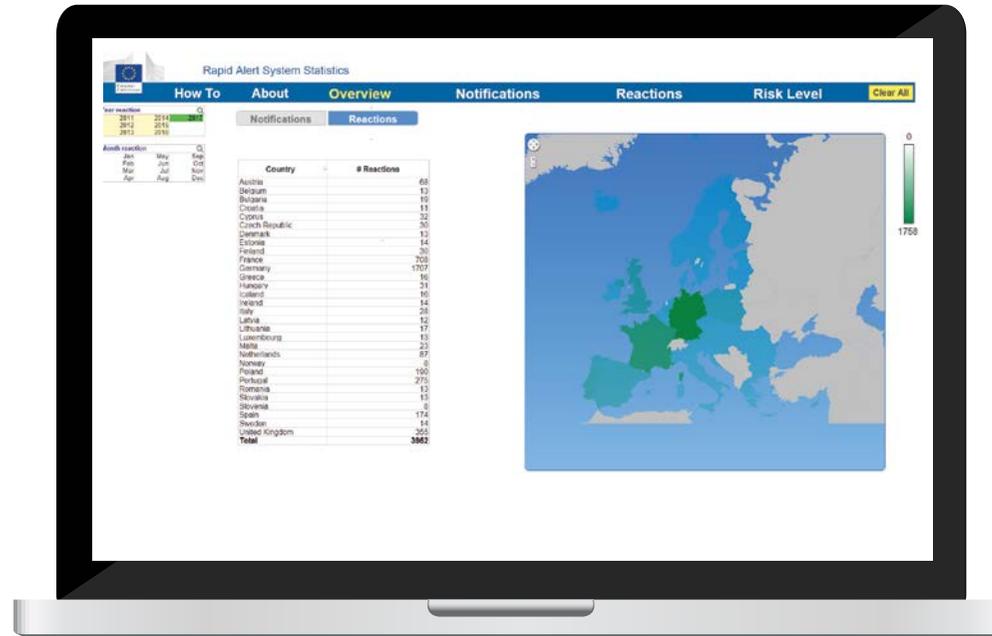


If you want to see the numbers and create your own statistics according to different criteria:

on the alerts webpage, click on [statistics](#):

This will direct you to a specific space where you can extract statistics, produce graphs and Excel sheets according to your needs.

User instructions can be found on the “How to” tab.



What's in it for your business?

Consult our legislation webpages to find out more about how products should be produced and made available on the market:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/product-safety-and-requirements/consumer-product-safety/standards-and-risks-specific-products_en

Send a report to a national authority about a dangerous product you have taken measures against by using the **Business Gateway**:



5. About this report

The data in this report relates to information received from national authorities on measures taken against unsafe non-food products. It includes various risks identified by these authorities, including predominantly risks to the health and safety of consumers and risks to the environment. The report also takes into account information exchanged among the Member States but not published on the website. It should be noted that this report presents statistics on the functioning of the Rapid Alert System and does not, by any means, represent a comprehensive picture of all dangerous products existing on the Single Market, nor does it give an overview of all market surveillance efforts undertaken by the authorities participating in the network.

Glossary:

Alert: an alert submitted by a country participating in the Rapid Alert System concerning a measure taken against a product (be it a consumer or a professional product), which is considered by the national authority to pose a risk.

Follow-up: feedback received from countries participating in the Rapid Alert System on actions they have taken concerning the products that are the subject of alerts.

Market surveillance authorities: authorities designated by each Member State as being competent to monitor the compliance of products with the general safety requirements and to take the appropriate measures according to the [General Product Safety Directive](#) (GPSD). These authorities are also obliged to keep the European Commission informed about any dangerous products that they find. The European Commission passes on such information to the other Member States through the Rapid Alert System.

Economic operators: any business or organisation dedicated to producing, distributing or selling products.

Contacts in the Member States:

https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/repository/content/pages/rapex/docs/rapex_contact_points_en.pdf

Contacts in the Member States for businesses:

https://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumers_safety/safety_products/rapex/alerts/repository/content/pages/rapex/docs/rapex_appointed_authorities_en.pdf

Key documents:

Directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety (GPSD)

Instructions for using the Business Gateway for producers and distributors

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/417 of 8 November 2018 laying down guidelines for the management of the European Union Rapid Information System 'RAPEX' established under Article 12 of Directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety and its notification system (notified under document C(2018) 7334)

