

# Europe's safety police find more toxic toys and textiles

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From collapsing pushchairs to chemical-polluted shoes—an ever-rising number of toxic toys and skin-irritating textiles are being removed from supermarket shelves by Europe's consumer safety squad.

Products from China top the list of suspect items.

Thanks to better policing, Europe's Rapid Information System (RAPEX) issued 2,364 notifications of unsafe non-food products in 2013.

That was a 3.8-percent increase on the level the previous year, the European Union's Consumer Affairs Commissioner Neven Mimica said on Tuesday.

Shoes for example may be tainted with allergenic Chromium VI.

The steady increase in [unsafe products](#) detected since RAPEX was set up a decade ago—there were 200 notifications in 2003—marked progress, the commissioner said on releasing the annual RAPEX report.

"It's a recognition of better control, of better surveillance. We're seeing an increased efficiency in early detection."

Mimica said that clothing and toys were the items most frequently seized under the RAPEX system, which includes the 28 European Union states and Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

Toys and textiles each made up 25 percent of the goods, followed by electrical appliances, including mobile phones, at nine percent, motor vehicles at seven percent and cosmetics at four percent.

Overall, 64 percent of items detected originated from China including Hong Kong, in part because of China's massive market penetration in Europe.

To help Chinese producers better understand their obligations under EU standards, the bloc is working bilaterally with China.

Dangerous products of European origin accounted for 15 percent of the EU's notifications, including two percent from Germany, two percent from Italy and one percent from Bulgaria.

The portion of dangerous goods made in the EU has fallen sharply compared to 2004, when it stood at 27 percent.

EU member countries work together to improve safety and have completed improvements on child-care articles, fireworks, lawn-mowers and battery chargers. They are currently looking at high-chairs, cords and drawstrings in clothes, as well as kick-scooters and smoke detectors.

Last year the largest number of notifications were in Hungary, with 12 percent, Germany and Spain with 11 percent each, Bulgaria with 8 percent and Britain with 6 percent.

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