

'Made in China' tops EU list of unsafe products

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From toy-shaped cigarette lighters to a short-circuiting plush rabbit that catches fire, a European safety watchdog warned Monday of a growing number of dangerous products for sale, with most coming from China.

The watchdog said it had issued 2,435 notifications of [unsafe products](#) ranging from children's playthings to clothing and appliances in 2014, which was three percent more than in 2013.

Sixty-four percent of the dangerous goods were made in China, including Hong Kong, the same figure as 2013, said the Rapid Alert System (RAPEX), which includes the 28 EU states as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

"For me, as a mother and already a grandmother, the high number of harmful products among toys is alarming, so please beware of what you give your children to play with," said Vera Jourova, the European commissioner for consumer affairs.

"It was also surprising how high a number of harmful products comes to the European market from China," she told a press conference in Brussels.

Toys topped the list of products stopped before they entered European markets or were seized afterwards, at 28 percent, followed by clothing (23 percent), electrical appliances (nine percent) and motor vehicles (eight percent).

They included soft toys with stuffing that could come loose and choke a child or those with detachable pieces that could be swallowed by them. In particular there were lighters that resembled toys such as model bicycles and basketballs.

Shoes and leather articles for example may be tainted with allergenic Chromium VI, while fashion jewellery may contain harmful heavy metals.

Just 14 percent of the dangerous [products](#) came from European countries, seven percent from unknown origins and two percent from Turkey, according to the watchdog.

Concern remains over the proportion coming to Europe from manufacturing giant China, which has huge market penetration in the 28-nation EU, Jourova said.

"The numbers and the situation is not improving," she added.

Jourova said the EU was working bilaterally with Chinese producers to help them better understand EU safety standards.

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