



Next on the Consumer Agenda

Moving ahead while managing multiple crises



Product Safety Pledge +

The EU Product Safety Pledge¹, which was first of its kind when signed in 2018, was encouraging and rewarding signatory online marketplaces in the last five years to go beyond their legal obligations in order to better protect consumers' safety. This voluntary cooperation scheme, which complements the horizontal EU legal requirements, is an important element of the EU consumer protection toolbox.

This mechanism, which is facilitated by the European Commission, already proved it can improve the protection of consumers from dangerous products sold by third party sellers on online marketplaces. This is also confirmed by the raising interest in this important initiative: the number of the signatories increased from the initial four to now eleven online marketplaces², including both large international players and strong European platforms, and provides a large geographical coverage of the EU market.

This instrument has served as an inspiration for authorities of other jurisdictions (such as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Korea Fair Trade Commission and Korea's Consumer Agency and Health Canada). The OECD Working Party on Consumer Product Safety has also adopted a communiqué on product safety pledges³ and a policy guidance document on consumer product safety pledges⁴, encouraging the development of further such pledges at domestic and regional levels and identifying key commitments for inclusion in any such pledges.

Finally, the Commission also initiated an innovative Pilot project enhancing cooperation between consumer organisations and signatory online marketplaces. This Pilot was announced last November during the Annual Digital Consumer Event and is still ongoing.

In conclusion, the Product Safety Pledge has shown its relevance both in increasing the safety of products sold online and in offering a testing ground for innovative policy initiatives going further than existing legal obligations.

And as always this inspired the Commission and the signatories of the Pledge to explore how this voluntary cooperation framework can be deepened further in the interest of European consumers, and how the Pledge commitments can remain relevant in view of the changing legislative framework.

During the Consumer Summit 2023, five years after the signature of the first Pledge, the Commission is very proudly announcing the extended and deepened commitments linked to product safety under the umbrella of the new "Product Safety Pledge+". Pledging companies will be present in person to give their testimonials and confirm their commitments by signing the new commitment framework.

1 https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-11/voluntary_commitment_document_2021_v5_0.pdf

2 Allegro, AliExpress, Amazon, bol.com, CDiscount, eBay, EMAG, Etsy, Joom, Rakuten France and Wish

3 OECD (2021), „Communiqué on product safety pledges“, <https://www.oecd.org/digital/consumer/communique-product-safety-pledges.pdf>

4 OECD (2022), "Policy guidance on consumer product safety pledges", *OECD Digital Economy Papers*, No. 325, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/055a8a15-en>