

PRESS RELEASE - BRUSSELS

180 toy companies call on von der Leyen to make online sellers play by Europe's safety rules

Manufacturers urge European Commission President to use the European Product Act to ensure someone in the EU is always accountable for products sold online

Brussels, 10 September 2026: 180 toy companies operating in the EU have written to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, calling on the European Commission to close a major gap in EU product safety rules as it prepares the European Product Act.

The signatories range from family-owned SMEs (SMEs represent over 99% of Europe's toymakers) to internationally recognised brands. They have one clear ask: **every toy sold to an EU consumer should have an identifiable economic operator in the EU responsible for its compliance with European law. Where no such operator exists, the online platform facilitating the sale should assume that responsibility.**

Why? Because today, if a toy does not comply with safety rules and, as commonly happens, its packaging does not have an identifiable economic operator, this means no one can be held accountable.

Toy Industries of Europe's latest mystery-shopping exercise found that 96% of toys bought from third-party traders on major online marketplaces were non-compliant with EU rules and 86% were unsafe.

The companies warn that when illegal and unsafe toys are sold online by traders established outside the Union, market surveillance authorities sometimes have nobody in the EU against whom they can enforce the rules. With no repercussions for selling illegal products, including unsafe and counterfeit toys, more of them will be put for sale online

Britta Loick, CEO at Playmais GmbH said :

"The current system for e-commerce is no longer fit for today's reality. As a medium-sized toy company, we invest heavily in safety, testing and compliance because children deserve the highest level of protection. But those rules need to apply equally to everyone selling into Europe. Our aim is for the European Product Act to finally change this."

The companies say the problem is about consumer safety, but also about fair competition. European manufacturers invest in meeting increasingly demanding EU requirements, while some sellers based outside the EU can avoid those costs and responsibilities.

The signatories support recent EU efforts to address systemic risks on the largest platforms. But these measures do not resolve the **basic question of who is legally responsible for an individual product when the seller is outside the EU and no accountable EU-based operator exists.**

Catherine Van Reeth, Director General of Toy Industries of Europe, said:

*“What makes this letter significant is that these are companies themselves speaking out – large brands, SMEs and family businesses that already invest every day in meeting Europe’s rules. They feel clearly that **a toy bought online, no matter who is selling it, should offer the same level of safety as a toy bought in a shop.***

“Europe has strong product safety rules. The European Product Act is an opportunity to make sure those rules remain enforceable as the way products reach consumers continues to change.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The open letter is signed by 180 European toy manufacturers, including SMEs, family-owned companies and internationally recognised brands.
- Toy Industries of Europe’s 2025 mystery-shopping exercise found 96% of toys purchased from third-party traders on seven major online marketplaces to be non-compliant and 86% unsafe.
- The signatories are calling for every toy sold to EU consumers to have a clearly identifiable EU-established economic operator responsible for compliance.
- Where none exists or can be identified, they are asking for the online platform facilitating the sale to assume that responsibility.