



Majority of Europeans 'worried by dangerous lighters'

BIC, the leading manufacturer of stationery products, lighters and shavers, and independent pollsters APCO Insight today published a new poll that shows that 87 per cent of Europeans are worried by information that pocket lighters with the capacity to kill and maim are openly on sale across the continent.

According to European Commission figures, 40 are killed and 1900 injured every year in Europe because of accidents with lighters, many of them children. However, nearly 75 per cent of lighter models tested by Prosafe don't meet the required safety standards, despite an emergency European Commission decision banning the marketing of non-compliant lighters. The vast majority of these are imported lighter models.

The situation is different from country to country, with some authorities being effective at policing the European safety requirements. Nearly half of consumers were 'very worried' that pocket lighters that have been banned in other countries, some of which have caused injuries or death, were on sale in their countries, and 64 per cent strongly agreed that pocket lighters sold in the EU must conform to safety requirements.

Stephen Russell, Secretary-General of ANEC, the European consumer voice in standardisation, said: *"Potentially dangerous lighters are still finding their way into the hands of consumers. ANEC is calling for the creation of a European-wide framework to ensure the better coordination of market surveillance activities among all Member States. In the meantime, we ask retailers and distributors to exercise vigilance and test the products they sell."*

The survey also threw up some major surprises. Nearly two in three respondents (63 per cent) thought up to 50 per cent of imported products sold in Europe are checked at the port of entry. According to contact with authorities, less than one per cent of non-food goods are checked.

The survey follows the European Commission's decision to give the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA) in the Netherlands 10 weeks (according to EU Procedure) to explain its position on surveillance of potentially dangerous lighters being imported through the Port of Rotterdam, following a complaint filed by BIC .

Francois Clement-Grandcourt, Deputy General Manager BIC lighter division, said: *"In North America, there was a 60 per cent reduction in child injuries when the law was properly enforced. That means we all have a moral obligation to remove dangerous lighters from our markets."*

Phil Riggins, Director of APCO Insight said: *"These figures demonstrate widespread and deep concern amongst consumers across Europe at the scale of this problem and lack of action to combat a known public health risk, particularly to children."*



Notes to editors

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About the Survey

- Survey of 1,500 European consumers in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK.
- Interviews conducted online in the local language of each country.
- Nationally representative quotas set on gender and age.
- Fieldwork 25 – 28 February 2011.
- The purpose of the study was to better understand awareness of and reactions of consumers to dangerous lighters in Europe.
- Some totals shown in this report do not add to 100% due to rounding, exclusion of “don’t know” or “no answer” responses, or the fact that more than one response was allowed.
- Full survey results available from APCO Insight

About APCO Insight

APCO Insight, a global opinion research and strategic communication consultancy, works with many of the world’s leading companies, associations, non-profits and public-sector organizations on a diverse range of communication, reputation and issue management challenges. For more information about APCO Insight, please visit www.apcoworldwide.com.

About BIC

BIC is a world leader in stationery, lighters, shavers and promotional products. For more than 60 years, BIC has honored the tradition of providing high-quality, affordable products to consumers everywhere. Through this unwavering dedication, BIC has become one of the most recognized brands in the world. BIC products are sold in more than 160 countries around the world. In 2010, BIC recorded net sales of 1,831.5 million euros. The Company is listed on “Euronext Paris” and is part of the SBF120 and CAC Mid 100 indexes. BIC is also part of the following SRI indexes: FTSE4Good Europe, ASPI Eurozone, Ethibel Excellence Europe and Carbon Disclosure French Leadership index 2010 (CDLI).

For more information, please consult the corporate web site: www.bicworld.com

About ANEC

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation. It represents the European consumer interest in the creation of technical standards, especially those developed to support the implementation of European laws and public policies. www.anec.org.



About the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA) in the Netherlands

The task of the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority is to protect human and animal health. It monitors food and consumer products to safeguard public health and animal health and welfare. The Authority controls the whole production chain, from raw materials and processing aids to end products and consumption.

The Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority is an independent agency in the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality (LNV) and a delivery agency for the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The three main tasks of the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority are: supervision, risk assessment and risk communication. Other important activities are incident and crisis management and policy advice for the Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. A significant part of its work involves liaising with other ministries. Maintaining international contacts is also of vital importance.

Taken from <http://www.vwa.nl/onderwerpen/english/dossier/about-the-food-and-consumer-product-safety-authority>

About PROSAFE

PROSAFE (the Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe) has been established by market surveillance officers from various countries throughout Europe. The first meeting of the group was held in 1990. Since then, most EU and EFTA countries have been represented at meetings together with various other accession, candidate and potential candidate countries from different parts of Europe. As from 2006, PROSAFE has taken the initiative to coordinate a number of Joint Actions between various market surveillance organizations within the EEA (European Economic Area), which are all financially supported by the EU Commission. A survey by PROSAFE found that nearly 75 per cent of tested lighter models don't meet the required safety standards.

About the Legislation and safety standards – European Commission and ISO 9994 (1) (2)

To address the need for consumer safety in lighters the ISO Safety Standard 9994 was established, setting safety requirements for lighters.

In addition, the European Commission Decision (2006/502/EC) of 11 May 2006 introduced three key requirements for lighter safety compliance:

- The European Decision of 11th May 2006 requires lighters to be child resistant. With reference to the standard EN/13869/2002, a child resistant lighter is a lighter which has been purposely modified in order to make it more difficult to operate. As stated by the European Commission, a child-resistant lighter is a lighter that at least 85% of children under 51 months of age (4 years and 3 months) cannot operate. This means that up to 15% of children may still be able to operate such lighters, even if they are child-resistant. So a child-resistant lighter is not a child-proof lighter. Therefore, adults should always ensure that young children cannot get hold of lighters, even if they are child-resistant.
- The Child resistant standard requires all lighters to comply with ISO 9994 Safety Standard. The ISO 9994 Safety standard establishes safety requirements for lighters such as flame height, resistance to spitting, sputtering and flaring, flame extinction, percentage of gas fill, resistance to a 1.5 metre drop, resistance to elevated temperature, resistance to a continuous burn of 2 min, etc.
- The European Decision of 11th May 2006 imposes the ban on novelty lighters, even if equipped with a child-resistant device. Novelty lighter are lighters with a shape that resembles cartoon characters, toys, guns, phones (...) or that play musical notes, or have flashing lights or moving objects or other entertaining features. This excludes lighters that are printed or decorated with logos, labels, decals, artwork or shrinkable sleeves.

(1) With the exception of Utility lighters, for which safety is governed by ISO 22702



(2) With the exception of lighters that are sold with a 2 year written guarantee, are refillable and can be repaired by a European-based after-sales service. Child resistant requirement does not apply to Utility lighters.

This legislation was enacted on March 11th 2008, as regards consumer sales.

About the North American Example – 60 per cent reduction in child injuries

In North America, effective implementation of safety standard meant a 60 per cent reduction in child injuries, according to a study by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), the US market surveillance authority:

- In the USA, fire deaths associated with children playing with lighters dropped dramatically after the mandatory standard for child-resistant lighters became effective in July 1994: deaths fell from 230 in 1994 to 130 in 1998 according to the CPSC (news from CPSC April 6th 2005).
- This confirms the results of another CPSC study “Fires Caused by children playing with lighters CPSC 2000 – post evaluation of Safety standards” showing a significant drop in accidents and damages after the implementation of safety standards:
 - Fires. Before: 7100 (1986). After: 2400 (1998).
 - Deaths. Before: 200 (1986). After: 70 (1998).
 - Injuries. Before: 1430 (1986). After: 480 (1998).
 - Property loss (\$). Before: 76 million (1986). After: 38 million (1998).
 - Societal cost (\$). Before: 1200 million (1986). After: 412 million (1998).

About BIC’s complaint

The complaint argues the Netherlands is in breach of enforcement of the emergency legislation of 11 May 2006, the General Product Safety Directive and new rules (EU Regulation 765/2008) requiring Members States to undertake necessary controls of consumer products such as lighters.

On 8 September 2010 BIC filed a complaint with the European Commission (through the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Policy (**DG SANCO**)) on the grounds of the non-implementation of the European safety rules by the Netherlands.

The European Commission has just entered a discussion process with the Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (VWA) in the Netherlands. The VWA is required to answer a questionnaire sent by the Commission aimed at assessing and exploring how to improve the surveillance of lighters imported through Rotterdam.

The Commission has decided to use the EU-Pilot, which is a fast track procedure designed to ensure the correct application of EU law at national level. Following that procedure, the Commission, if it considers there may have been a prima facie breach of EU law, gets in touch with the member state concerned so that the breach should be stopped. A response should be addressed to the Commission within 10 weeks. If the problem cannot be solved at this stage, the Commission may open the infringement procedure based on article 258 TFEU.

According to contact with authorities, less than one per cent of non-food goods are checked’

This comes from anecdotal evidence from several sources, and can be easily calculated. Taking the Port of Rotterdam, 900,000 containers of non-food products pass through the port per year, and there are no more than two personnel employed to check these containers. If personnel check four containers an hour, that would be less than one per cent of total volume.

