



Facing the unexpected together

Safety Gate – 2020 results

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
Directorate Consumers
Unit E.4 Product Safety and Rapid Alert System
E-mail: JUST-RAPEX@ec.europa.eu

PDF ISBN 978-92-76-30783-9 doi:10.2838/11491 DS-03-21-104-EN-N

Manuscript completed in March 2021

Neither the European Commission nor any person acting on behalf of the Commission is responsible for the use that might be made of the following information.

© European Union, 2021.

Reuse is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is regulated by Decision 2011/833/EU (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

Facing the unexpected together

Safety Gate - 2020 results

CONTENTS

1. What is Safety Gate?
2. 2020 Safety Gate results by month: fighting dangerous products during the COVID-19 pandemic
3. Cooperation across borders and roles: the key to Safety Gate success
4. Safety Gate focus and priorities in 2021
5. A more user-friendly Safety Gate
6. About this report



Commissioner's foreword

The year 2020 challenged Europe and the rest of the world with an unprecedented health crisis due to the outbreak of COVID-19. Also because of the sanitary crisis new products entered the EU market and consumers started buying online more often, which exposed them to new risks.

But nothing deters the work of those involved in keeping consumers safe. Standardisation bodies provided new guidance and public tools. European authorities, border inspectors, laboratory scientists did their utmost to check whether products were safe for consumers and engaged with online marketplaces, manufacturers, distributors and retailers to stop dangerous products from reaching consumers, particularly those more vulnerable.

The 2020 results of the Safety Gate prove the success of this activity. Thanks to the system, 2 253 alerts on dangerous non-food products were exchanged among national authorities in 31 EU/EEA countries. These alerts generated 5 377 follow-up actions across Europe to eliminate further unsafe items.

This is the result of the joint efforts of an entire network that has been functioning since 17 years to protect citizens.

Congratulations and thank you to all involved in this work for their dedication and professionalism.



*Didier Reynders,
EU Commissioner for
Justice and Consumers*

1. What is Safety Gate?

Safety Gate is the EU's rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products. It was created in 2003 under the [General Product Safety Directive](#). The information in the system is provided by the national authorities in the EU/EEA countries.

The system rapidly circulates alerts on dangerous non-food products among the network of product safety authorities. Some 40 alerts are notified by national authorities every week. The Commission publishes a daily summary of each of these alerts on its [Safety Gate](#) website, together with a weekly list of alerts in 25 languages.

Thanks to Safety Gate, once a dangerous product is stopped in a EU/EEA country, authorities in other member countries are quickly informed and take the necessary measures in their own countries. Besides the alerts, authorities also report around 90 follow-ups every week on average. This includes feedback from other authorities on how they have followed up on measures submitted by other member countries to stop a dangerous product being sold.

In 2020, national authorities submitted 2 253 alerts for dangerous products and 5 377 follow-up notices. Each of the measures taken can affect a wide range of individual items linked to the dangerous product.

Safety Gate consists of two parts:

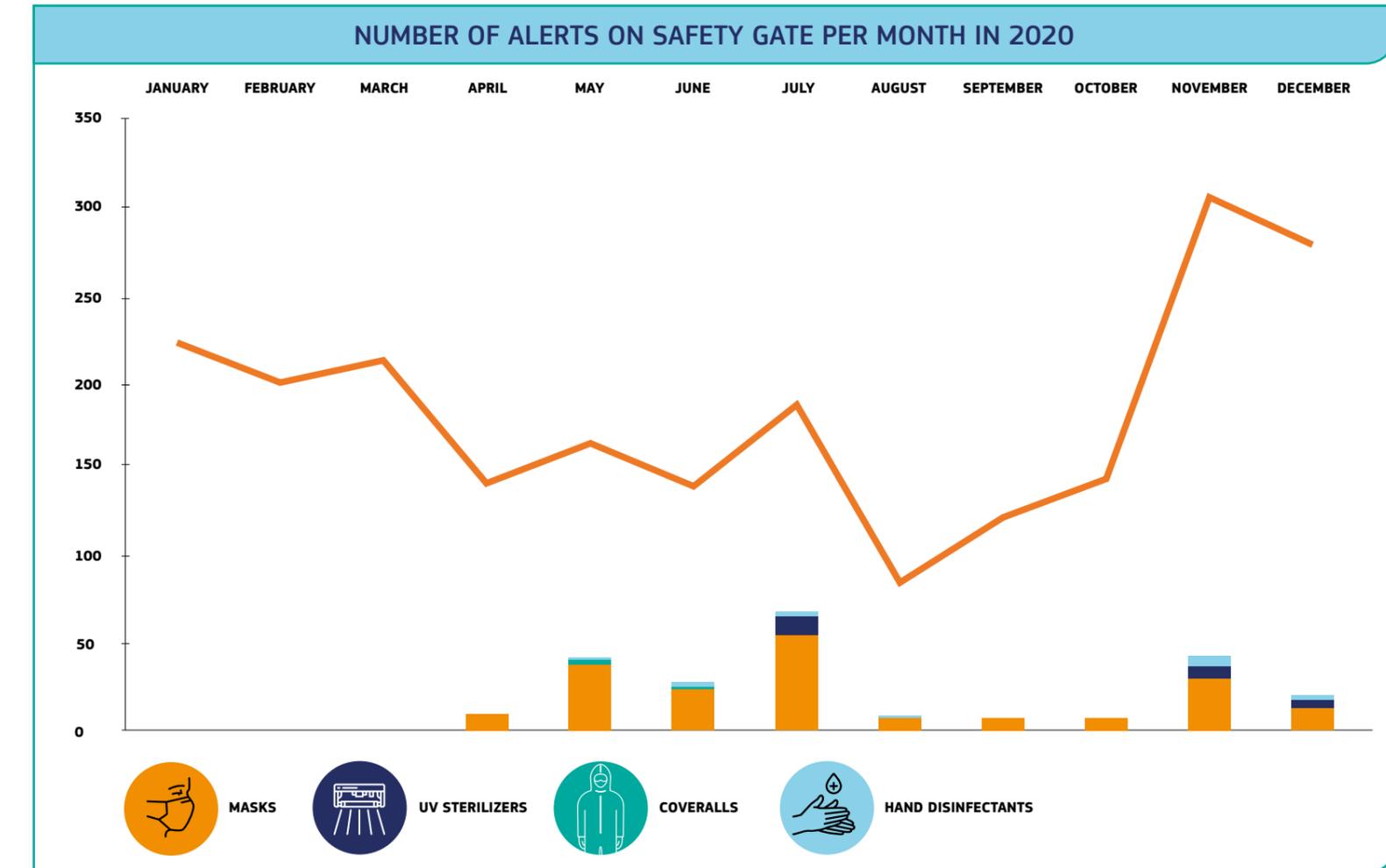
- a restricted application that allows the European Commission and national authorities responsible for product safety to exchange information on measures taken against dangerous products and to agree on individual alerts
- a public website that publishes a summary of each alert and indicates the countries that have followed up with further measures.



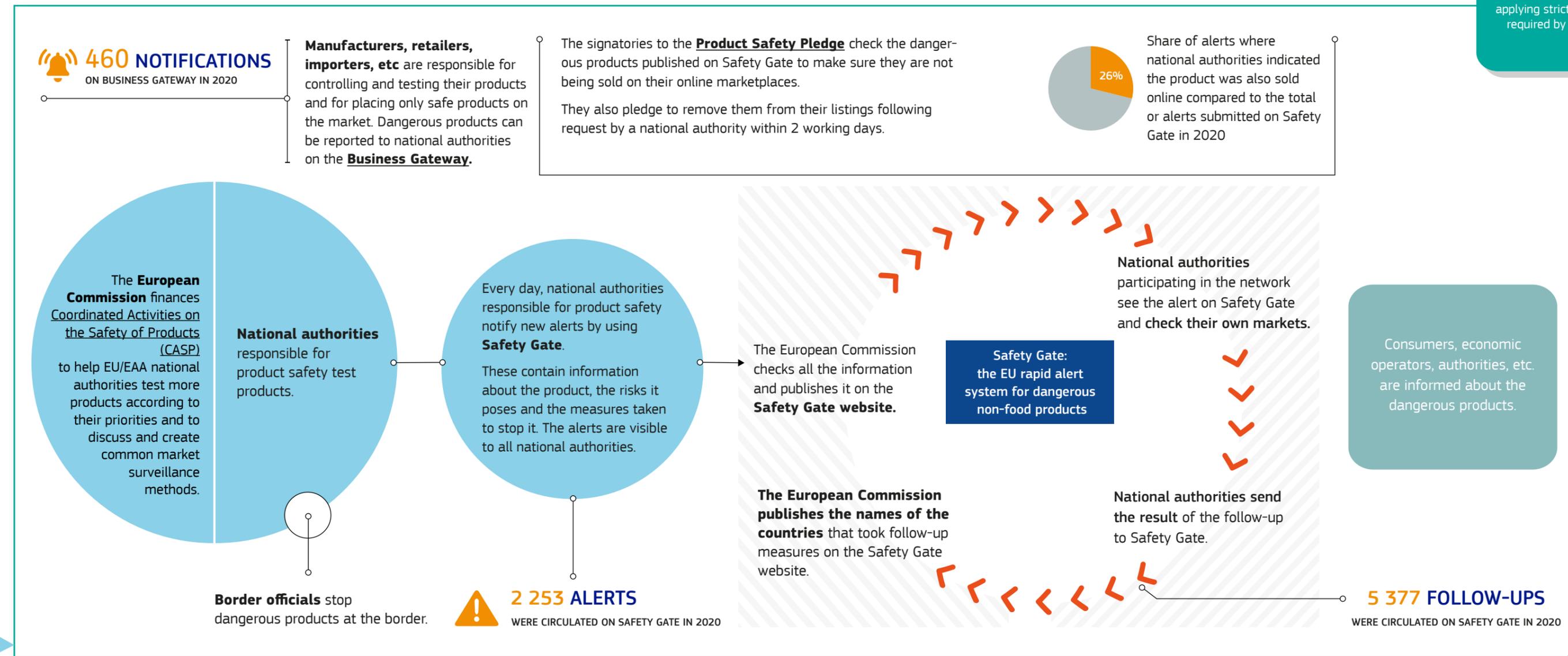
Safety Gate alerts include consumer products and products for professional use, but exclude medical equipment and food products. Measures cover a wide range of hazards, including choking, damage to hearing or damage to sight, or hazards caused by chemicals. The measures reported can also have been taken against products that pose a security risk or risks to the environment.

2. 2020 Safety Gate results by month: fighting dangerous products during the COVID-19 pandemic

Safety Gate in 2020 reflected the impact of the pandemic. Whilst overall system activity remained high, national authorities reported a number of new products that claimed to protect people from virus infections.



3. Cooperation across borders and roles: the key to Safety Gate success



The European Commission is also in regular contact with international partners to strengthen cooperation on improving product safety worldwide.

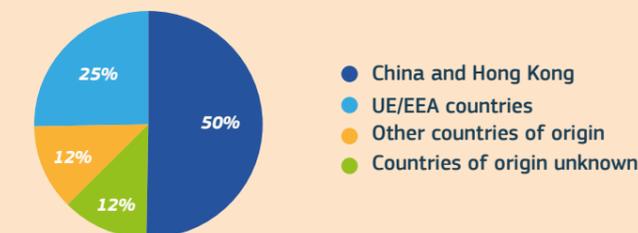
Every 2 years, the European Commission organises the **International Product Safety Week**, where stakeholders from all over the world discuss product safety issues and priorities.

The European Commission has been cooperating with the Chinese authorities on product safety since 2006. The Chinese authorities follow up on dangerous products from China that have been reported in the rapid alert system and regularly inform the European Commission of the actions they have taken.

Exchanging information on dangerous consumer products started with the Canadian authorities in 2019 under the **EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement**.

The European Commission holds regular meetings and cooperates with countries such as the USA and Japan, and with international organisations such as the UNCTAD and OECD.

Alerts reported on Safety Gate in 2020 by groups of countries of origin



4. Safety Gate focus and priorities in 2021

Since the General Product Safety Directive (GPSD) entered into force, in 2002, markets and products have changed: online shopping became widespread, connected products are used daily and new technologies power some of the consumer products. The revision of the GPSD, which will continue in 2021, aims at making sure it will guarantee product safety in the future.

The European Commission will also continue working with the national authorities to improve product safety, in particular focusing on three areas of concern: COVID-19, online and recalls.

Maintain support to national authorities to also monitor and combat efficiently the appearance of new types of unsafe products on the market

With the COVID-19 pandemic, new products started being available to consumers to help them being protected from the virus, such as masks and hand disinfectants. With time, these products became more and more common in our shopping lists.

Some of these products did not meet the EU health and safety requirements, giving a false sense of protection to consumers. The European Commission encouraged national authorities to cooperate and exchange good practices and also with the European standardisation organisations to build guidance enabling national authorities to distinguish the products that were effective and safe.

To support national authorities, the European Commission also launched a coordinated activity with national authorities to tackle dangerous COVID-19 related products. Its aim is to organise market surveillance activities on COVID-19 related dangerous products,

to find common evaluation practices for these products and also to find the right communication tools to inform consumers. The European Commission will communicate the results of this activity in 2021 and publish them on the Safety Gate website.

Making sure products are safe and consumers are safe, either buying online or offline

Online shopping is convenient for consumers but it also poses certain challenges for product safety. For this reason, on 1st August 2017 the European Commission issued a Notice on the market surveillance of products sold online to provide guidance on the application of product safety and market surveillance legislation to online sales. The European Commission also funds training and coordinated market surveillance activities (CASP) to help public authorities.

The Product Safety Pledge is an important initiative signed by major online marketplaces to improve the safety of non-food consumer products sold online. By signing the Pledge, online marketplaces make a voluntary commitment which goes beyond EU product safety legal obligations. The Pledge contributes to the faster removal of dangerous non-food consumer products offered for sale online. It also sets out actions by online marketplaces to strengthen product safety, such as providing a clear way for customers to notify dangerous product listings.

Improving the success rate of recalls

In order to mitigate the risks posed by dangerous products various measures can be taken by businesses directly or at the order of national authorities. These include warnings to consumers, withdraw the product from the market, stop of sales, destruction and - as a last resort - recalling dangerous products already supplied to consumers.

Product recalls represent around half of all the alerts in the Safety Gate.

A recall can only prevent harm if consumers return or at least stop using the dangerous product. However, evidence suggests that many recalled products remain in consumers' hands, either because consumers are not aware that a product they own is being

recalled or because they fail to react, when seeing a recall notice. In order to improve recall effectiveness, it is therefore crucial to understand what drives consumers' behaviour in the recall process.

In March 2020, the Commission launched a large-scale behavioural study to identify strategies to enhance *recall effectiveness*. The results show that a lot more can be done to make recalls more visible, more transparent and less burdensome for consumers. In particular, direct communication – whenever feasible – is key to reach affected consumers and encourage response. Recall effectiveness can also be improved by a clearer description of risk and better layout of recall announcements.

There are already a number of excellent initiatives out there to increase recall effectiveness. The *2020 International Product Safety Week* brought together regulators, businesses and consumer representatives from all around the world to share their best practices.

The European Commission and a number of national market surveillance authorities are also developing comprehensive guidance on the recall process both for authorities and for economic operators in the context of the 2020 *Coordinated Activities on the Safety of Products (CASP)*.

In addition, the upcoming proposal for the revision of the General Product Safety Directive will include strengthened provisions on recalls.



5. A more user-friendly Safety Gate

Safety Gate has been revamped, and now offers a more attractive and user friendly website available in all EU languages. The aim is to make information easier to find and understand for both consumers and businesses.

Safety Gate: the EU rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products

Home Alerts Contacts Legislation and Enforcement Product safety online International cooperation Awareness raising and events

Home > Consumers > Safety Gate: the EU rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products

PAGE CONTENTS

- Most recent alerts
- Weekly reports
- Search for alerts

Most recent alerts

Alert number	Brand	Name	Risks
A12/00231/21	Ty Nordic	Olof	Choking
A12/00232/21	Widmann	Lång Vit Peruk till Barn med Lugg	Burns
INFO/00048/21	oobest		Electric shock

< Previous 1 ... 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 ... 58 Next >

6. About this report

The data in this report relates to information received from national authorities on measures taken against dangerous non-food products. This information includes several risks that they have identified, including mainly risks to the health and safety of consumers and risks to the environment. The report also takes into account information exchanged among member countries but not published on the Safety Gate website. This report presents statistics on the rapid alert system and in no way represents a comprehensive picture of all dangerous products on the single market. It also does not give an overview of all market surveillance efforts undertaken by the EU/EEA national authorities.

Due to the dynamic nature of the system, data may change depending on when it was extracted from the system.

Glossary

Alert: An alert submitted by a country participating in the Rapid Alert System concerning a measure taken against a product, be it a consumer or a professional product, which has been considered by the national authorities as posing a risk.

Follow-up: Feedback received from countries participating in the Rapid Alert System on actions they have taken concerning the products that are the subject of alerts.

Market surveillance authorities: Authorities designated by each Member State as competent to monitor the compliance of products with the general safety requirements and to take the appropriate measures according to the *General Product Safety Directive (GPSD)*. They also have the obligation to keep the European Commission informed about dangerous products found. The European Commission passes on such information to the other Member States through the Rapid Alert System. dedicated.

Economic operators: Any business or organisation to producing, distributing or selling products.

Contacts

Contacts in the member countries:

https://ec.europa.eu/safety/consumers/consumers_safety_gate/menu/documents/Safety_Gate_contacts.pdf

Contacts in the member countries for businesses:

https://ec.europa.eu/safety/consumers/consumers_safety_gate/menu/documents/Business_Gateway_contacts.pdf

Key documents:

Directive 2001/95/EC on general product safety (GPSD):

https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/product-safety-and-requirements/product-safety/product-safety-rules_en

Guidelines for the management of the rapid alert system on general product safety and its notification system:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2019/417/oj>

Product Safety Pledge:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/product-safety-and-requirements/product-safety/product-safety-pledge_en



