

APPEAL TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS OF EASTERN EUROPE, CAUCASUS AND CENTRAL ASIA REGION WITH THE REQUEST TO ENSURE TOXIC FREE TOYS

We, representatives of non-governmental organisations, express our concerns in connection with the contemporary situation in the sphere of ensuring safety of children's toys in countries of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region.

Lead, mercury, cadmium, phenols, brominated flame retardants, PVC, phthalates, formaldehyde - this is just a short list of toxic chemicals found in toys of different manufacturers in different countries. These toxic chemicals adversely affect children's health, inducing disruptions of nervous and reproductive systems, causing endocrine disorders and cancer.

Examination of children's toys sold in different outlets in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Ukraine revealed that in the majority of cases such goods lack national quality and safety certificates (conformity certificates), as required by inter-state standard GOST 25779-90 "Toys. General Safety Requirements and Control Methods". Requirements of the latter standard are harmonised with the due international legislation (Directive 88/378/EEC on Toys Safety of May 3, 1988) and stipulate control of children's toys for compliance with 80 safety indicators. Some cases of non-compliance with labelling requirements were also registered. Toys do not meet chemical and hygiene-toxicological requirements.

Large-scale application of synthetic materials in industries that *inter alia* produce products for children, resulted in grave consequences. Growing numbers of children suffer different chronic diseases (allergies, asthma, bronchitis), development problems, and endocrine disorders (diabetes). Incidence of malignant tumours is also on the rise, including cases among young children.

We request heads of states of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia region:

- to ensure that national legislations meet the needs, associated with guaranteeing safety of toys in terms of their chemical and hygiene-toxicological parameters;
- to ensure provision of sufficient laboratory capacity allowing to check all batches of children's toys for compliance with relevant regulations;
- to ensure labelling of toys, that provides clear information on their chemical composition and recommendations on their safe use and recycle;
- to establish firm control over chemical composition of toys, to control safety of toys regularly and comprehensively, the control should cover all marketed toys of both national and foreign producers;
- to prevent entry of children's toys with hazardous chemicals to national markets;
- to eliminate practice of selling children's toys at unauthorised marketplaces, to provide preconditions for their sale in specialised sales outlets only;
- to establish a regional working group for development of a system for notification on presence of hazardous chemicals at all stages of their production and use: from producers and users of toys to eventual disposal (recycle) of waste;
- to launch a broad information campaign for residents of the countries on matters of safety of children's toys, to ensure involvement of all stakeholders to the campaign.

Please send your support to the Appeal to:

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