

# Triple Play - Market Surveillance, Consumers and Manufacturers Working Together for Better Electrical Safety

三方同盟 - 市場監督、消費者和製造商攜手合作，為電氣安全共創更好

## Ir Jan DECONINCK

Chairman of Prosafe (Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe)

Head of Regional Unit "Quality and Safety – North", Belgian Ministry for Economic Affairs

## Abstract

The European Union considers electrical equipment to be any equipment designed for use with a voltage of between 50 and 1000 Volts for alternating current or between 75 and 1500 Volts for direct current.

Such products may only be put on the European market if they do not endanger the safety of persons, domestic animals or property when properly installed and maintained and used in applications to which it was made.

In 2009 the European rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products (RAPEX) identified almost 4000 dangerous products on the market. More than half of the products concerned originated from China and risk of electrical shock was one of the five most frequently noted reasons for notification.

As such it seems that better electrical safety should be a common goal for market surveillance, consumers and manufacturers.

However, one should be aware that these three parties have distinctly different points of view on what this should actually mean in practice...

First of all consumers want to buy only safe products. Manufacturers however are also interested in having a level playing field where the same obligations apply to everyone. Market surveillance authorities in addition need to assure the free circulation of products within the single European Market.

It is therefore necessary to have a look at what the different players expect and how these expectations interact with those of the others on such matters as markings, certification, traceability, proactive actions, publicity and enforcement...

Only in this way will we be able to identify those tools that can be used to assure a positive triple-play in which market surveillance, consumers and manufacturers can really work together to assure better electrical safety.

## 摘要

歐洲聯盟界定任何電氣產品是設計用於電壓50至1000伏交流電或75至1500伏直流電。

在正確安裝、適當維修及使用下，只有不危及人、家畜或財產安全的製成產品才可在歐盟市場供應。

在2009年的歐洲非食品快速預警系統中(RAPEX系統)，發現近4000款危險產品在市場上供應。當中超過一半的產品是來自中國，而觸電風險是五個最常提出通報的原因之一。

因此，電氣安全應該是市場監督、消費者和製造商的共同目標。

然而，人們應該知道，這三者之間在實踐中意味著不同的觀點...

首先，消費者只希望購買到安全的產品，製造商則着重於公平競爭環境，而市場監督機構，還需要保證安全產品能在歐洲單一市場上自由流通。

因此，有必要研究不同持份者的期望，這些期望如何互動，當中包含多方面，如標記，認證，監察，積極行動，宣傳和執法 ...

只有這樣，我們才能夠正確善用這些工具，確保發揮市場監督、消費者和製造商真正的攜手合作，以確保更好的電氣安全。

## Biography

Jan Deconinck is the current Chairman of the Product Safety Enforcement Forum of Europe "Prosafe". This is a non-profit organisation established by market surveillance officers from various countries throughout Europe. Its aim is to promote informal discussions between market surveillance officers in order to share and learn from each others' experiences and to develop best practice amongst market surveillance organisations.

He is also the immediate past President of the Advisory Board of the internet-supported information and communication system for the pan-European market surveillance of technical products (ICSMS), representing Belgium as one of the founding members of the system.

Jan has been active as a market surveillance officer since 1996 on a wide scope of subjects including general product safety, safety of toys, safety of services, safety of lifts and the safety of gas distribution and transportation (pipelines).

He became the senior advisor on consumer safety to the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister in 2003.

He is now Head of Unit of the Regional Unit "Quality and Safety - North" of the Belgian Ministry for Economic Affairs, responsible for consumer safety, public safety and metrology.

Jan holds a masters degree in mechanical and electrotechnical engineering from Brussels Free University (VUB-1988).

- National Data Base Administrator of the European Injury Database
- Coordinator of the Belgian Central Contact Point for Consumer Safety
- Member of the (Belgian) National Council for Accreditation and Certification