



Strasbourg, 25.09.2007

'Poacher turned gamekeeper' approach to toy safety must be ended

Toxic and dangerous toys

Following the debate in the European Parliament on toy safety (1), German Green MEPs **Heide Rühle** and **Hiltrud Breyer**, said:

"The EU must be able to guarantee that toys, of all products, are safe for its consumers: our children. While much of the current debate has focused on the need for stronger controls and meaningful labelling, the Greens believe that the fundamental approach to toy safety and standards, which dates back to 1988, needs to be completely revised. The toys directive introduced a 'poacher turned gamekeeper' approach to product standards and safety, making the manufacturers responsible for setting their own safety standards. It is clearly incoherent to put those with a vested interest in charge of safety and this approach should be ended when the directive is reviewed (2).

"Under current EU rules, even the most dangerous chemicals are tolerated in toys, as long as the exposure stays below a certain level. We should not play with our children's health: chemicals that cause cancer, damage to the genes or that are toxic to reproduction have no place in toys. We welcome today's announcement of Commissioner Verheugen that he finally wants to put an end to the use of such substances in toys, but call on him to also prohibit the use of similarly hazardous substances such as endocrine disruptors, sensitizers and fragrances."

Editors notes:

(1) The recall, as a result of toxic components, has been underway since the beginning of August. The toy manufacturer Mattel alone has recalled more than 20 million toys due to the presence of lead paint or choking hazards. Mattel has been followed by various other manufacturers, with further recalls occurring almost daily.

(2) Greens/EFA MEPs in the Environment Committee have submitted an oral question to the Commission to explain its plans for a revision of the toys safety directive, which will be discussed on 2 October.

Further information:

Christopher Coakley

Press Officer

The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament

Tel: Brussels +32 2 2841667 / Strasbourg +33 3 88174375

Press release

The Greens | EFA
in the European Parliament



Mobile: +32-485-241622

Fax: 0032 2 2844944

christopher.coakley@europarl.europa.eu (mailto:Christopher.coakley@europarl.europa.eu)