



CONSUMER SAFETY
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Technical Secretariat of the Consumer Safety and Health Network
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PRESIDENTS OF MERCOSUR COUNTRIES WELCOME THE INTER-AMERICAN RAPID ALERTS SYSTEM



In a Joint Communication, the Presidents of the States Parties of MERCOSUR welcomed "the rapid realization of the pilot tests of the Inter-American Rapid Alerts System (SIAR) of the Organization of American States, implementing, thereby, an alert procedure for the removal of products and services considered potentially harmful or dangerous to consumers (recalls)."

The Joint Communication may be downloaded through the following link (in Spanish and Portuguese):
http://www.mercosur.int/t_generic.jsp?contentid=6166&site=1&channel=secretaria

THE INTER-AMERICAN RAPID ALERTS SYSTEM WAS SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED



The Consumer Safety and Health Network's (CSHN) Management Committee, through its Chair, Dr. Juliana Pereira Da Silva, National Consumer Secretary of Brazil, formally presented the Inter-American Rapid Alert System (SIAR) on the CSHN security of consumer products and its information technology tool, during a session

of the OAS permanent council held on December 10th, 2014 at the OAS headquarters in Washington D.C.

During the session, the Vice-President of the Permanent Council and Permanent Representative of Suriname to the OAS, Niermala Badrising, who chaired the meeting, referred to the SIAR as the “first integrated information technology system for the generation, managing and rapid exchange of consumer safety alerts.”

Dr. Pereira Da Silva said that since its inception in 2010, the OAS Network has established itself as the only hemispheric mechanism of its kind, able to monitor the safety of products circulating in the markets of the region, stressing that it is “key in the commerce of products, and fundamental for economic and social development” in the Americas. Similarly, she added that the network has allowed countries to collaborate, as well as to generate communities of practice and learning and strengthen their institutional capacities in this matter.

During the presentation of the new System’s features, it was mentioned that it would enable countries in the Americas the rapid creation, management and exchange of information on unsafe products; in order to facilitate the measures necessary to prevent, restrict or impose specific conditions against the commercialization of such products. Additionally, a demonstration on security alerts with advanced tools for classification and search was performed, and all relevant elements of the portal were shown, including the pages for specific alerts and policy frameworks of each member state.

Following the presentation many delegations took the floor to express satisfaction with the new system, and to show their support and commitment to the CSHN.

The delegation of Brazil through its representative, Minister Breno Silva da Costa, said that consumer safety is a priority for Brazil, calling the SIAR “another chapter of success of the Network since 2010”. He also announced the recent contribution of his country with nearly \$ 150,000 to fund the first phase of SIAR, and invited other countries to contribute and participate. Canada, meanwhile, reaffirmed its support and commitment to the SIAR and the Network; which believes to complement its own national alert system. Paraguay stressed that such regional initiatives contribute to the institutional strengthening of its newly created National Consumer Secretariat, besides being a key to ensure consumer safety.

Chile recalled that it has consistently participated in the CSHN, which considers a “fundamental space for regional development,” and reported that the National Consumer Service of their country was recently appointed to the Management Committee of the CSHN, by virtue of their conviction that the Network’s objectives are consistent with the objectives that the country has in the framework of the OECD. Uruguay, in turn, conveyed its commitment to the SIAR.

The US delegation stressed that the SIAR is a “fine example of how the OAS can contribute positively to better the lives of millions of our citizens throughout the Hemisphere” and that their country has been a “proud and long-stand supporter of this process.” The delegation gave the floor to the Director of International Affairs of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), Richard O'Brien, who stated that “if this consumer safety and health network and its rapid alert system did not exist, they would need to be created”. Mr O'Brien explained “consumer development is essential to economic confidence and growth; and product safety is inseparably linked with progress in that regard.” He added that “for economic development of market economies to reach a sustainable level, consumers must have a real – not just theoretical – a real choice not to

be dependent on unregulated and risky markets.”

Meanwhile, Argentina expressed its commitment to the "fantastic opportunity that the SIAR constitutes", emphasizing the need for this type of monitoring mechanisms and policies to adapt to the globalization that product markets have already achieved.

Peru stressed that this is an important step, not only for what it means for hemispheric consumer rights movement, but also for the important role that the OAS assumes with an active role in such a sensitive issue, contributing to it with a "specific product." In the same sense, the delegation of Colombia celebrated these steps in the OAS and stated that "now we move from words to deeds"; it also highlighted the impact cooperation can achieve and referred to the SIAR as an example of "how you can do more with less" while highlighting the possibilities of the Organization in this matter. Finally, he warned that from now on it will be necessary to nourish the system in order for it to work effectively.

The Secretary General of the OAS, José Miguel Insulza, thanked Brazil for the role it has played on this issue and called the launching of the SIAR an important achievement that will contribute to protecting consumers in the region. Likewise, he highlighted the work of the officials of the Organization who have been focused on the area, and that of several member countries in addition to Brazil, among them Argentina, Colombia, Peru, the United States and Canada. The OAS leader described the efforts that have been made in the field of consumer safety, and reiterated his belief in the importance to work this issue in the framework of the Organization and its desire that the topic be further extended to its economic and legal aspects if possible.

The day before, on December 9, the members of the CSHN's Management Committee and the Working Group for the SIAR held a meeting working together with the Technical Secretariat of the CSHN in the OAS, the Department of Technology and Information Services of the OAS and the Pan American Health Organization. The countries participating in the meeting were Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, United States, Guatemala, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay.

The new portal RCSS is available at: www.oas.org/rcss

The video of the Permanent Council's meeting is available at:

<https://www.sites.oas.org/rcss/EN/Pages/about/siar.aspx>

ECUADOR'S INTER-SECTORAL RAPID ALERTS SYSTEM IS FULLY OPERATIONAL



Ecuador announced that the new inter-sectoral rapid alert system for dangerous products (SIAP) is fully operational. The System –which brings together several national authorities with competences in consumer product safety, will alert citizens and authorities on the circulation of unsafe consumer products in the country.

The SIAP is available through the following link (in Spanish): <http://www.alertaproductos.gob.ec>.

OAS COUNTRIES COLLABORATE ON HISTORICAL PRODUCT SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Several relevant state agencies from the OAS member states are collaborating on a historic hemispheric-wide consumer product safety alert, in the context of the ongoing collaboration being sustained in the framework of the Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN) and its Inter-American Rapid Alert System (SIAR). The SIAR was launched before the OAS Permanent Council on December 2014, and member states actively work on the coordination and generation of joint actions to prevent the marketing of unsafe consumer products in the Americas.

The starting point of the alert in question took place in late November 2014, when the Federal Consumer Agency of Mexico (PROFECO), the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and Health Canada; jointly announced a recall of approximately five million units of baby strollers from the “Graco” brand of Chinese origin.

National authorities reported on the observed risks, confirming that the hinge side of the folding stroller can pinch or bruise the finger of a child, posing a risk of laceration or amputation. It was also reported that the company has received 11 reports of injuries to fingers, including 6 reports of amputated fingertips.

While not all models of the recalled products are found in all countries’ markets, several agencies have detected the movement of some of these models in their corresponding jurisdictions, and taken action in coordination with product suppliers for effective recalls and rapid communication of safety warnings to consumers, as well as all corresponding repairs necessary -including the provision by the manufacturer of a free “repair kit” to cover the strollers’ hinge.

In Costa Rica, the department of Policy and Market Control under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, managed the recall of the aforementioned strollers. Similarly, the National Consumer Service of Chile reported that, following the recall alert, they contacted the brand representative to obtain important information regarding the recall campaign. In Colombia, the Superintendence of Industry and Commerce reported that, considering the received alert, they made several internal inspections in Bogota and started monitoring other cities, allowing them to identify the company marketing the product, as well as all other models circulating in Colombia, which led them to enforce all the necessary internal procedures. In turn, the agencies of Argentina and the Dominican Republic, reported the detection of the marketing of some models, and have started efforts to obtain all the necessary information.

In Ecuador, the Ombudsman’s Office on the publishing of an informative note on the “recall” in question, as well as starting ongoing communication with national institutions, customs, and normalization and accreditation agencies in order to be included in the national legislation regulating these products, and requiring suppliers of children’s goods to voluntarily recall unsafe products. Additionally, site visits were announced to marketers, in order to check the recall of these items.

The alert has been published in the CHSN’s Inter-American Rapid Alert System Portal: www.oas.org/rcss

CHILE SHARES WITH THE REGION NATIONAL STATISTICS OF INJURIES CAUSED BY CONSUMER PRODUCTS

The National Consumer Service of Chile (SERNAC) signed a cooperation agreement with the Luis Calvo Mackenna Hospital and the Chilean Burnt Children Support Corporation (COANIQUEM), under which worked on the collection of data and information on consumer product-associated injuries, to enable the development of preventive and/or corrective policies aimed at ensuring that companies comply with the standards of consumer product quality and safety in the Consumer Protection Act, and educating the public on the proper actions and safe use of products.

The SERNAC, member of the Management Committee of the CSHN, shared with the members of the Network the results of two statistical studies, after having offered them to the CSHN Countries during the open meeting of the Committee together the Working Group of the SIAR held in December 9th, 2014.

To access the documents of the report visit the section of Chile at the CSHN Portal (in Spanish):

<https://www.sites.oas.org/rcss/ES/Paginas/countries/documents.aspx?ISO=CHL>



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