



## OAS General Secretariat reports on progress of the Consumer Safety and Health Network

On January 10, 2014, the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS), through the Secretariat for Legal Affairs (SLA), raised for consideration by member states represented in the Permanent Council of the Organization, the annual progress report of the work of the Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN) and the establishment of an Inter-American Rapid Alerts System (SIAR). The SLA carried out this activity in its capacity as technical secretariat of the Network and in compliance with operative paragraph 9 of resolution AG/RES. 2769 (XLIII-O/13) adopted at the second plenary session of the General Assembly on June 5, 2013.

The 2013 resolution reiterated the request to the OAS, in partnership with the PAHO, to continue the work of implementing the CSHN. In addition, it established new mandates aimed at institutionalizing and providing stability and sustainability to the CSHN in order to address the urgent need for an inter-American rapid alerts system.

The report highlights, as the main result of the CSHN since its establishment, that this member states' unique initiative has become the main specialized inter-American forum for the cooperation and coordination of policies and actions aimed at promoting the protection of consumers' rights by monitoring consumer product safety and its impact on people's welfare, at the national and hemispheric level.

The report describes how the CSHN promotes the exchange of experiences, policy dialogue and specialized training and it is a source of product safety alerts in the hemisphere through its Web portal. Thus, it has accelerated and led to significant advances in national surveillance systems for consumer product safety with a multidisciplinary and multi-agency approach in several member states.

Along the same line, the Secretariat for Legal Affairs reported on the various activities undertaken to achieve the stated priorities and stated that it is working in dialogue with the respective technical areas and member states in the design of proposals for:

- Establishment of a framework to guide the work of the Network;
- Progress in implementing the Inter-American Rapid Alerts System and ensure its sustainability, and
- Development of a proposal for a medium and long term plan for the work of the CSHN.

[Read complete report](#)

## World Forum for Consumer Product Safety invites the CSHN to present progress in the region

Some authorities from member countries of the Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN) Interim Steering Committee will represent the region in Annual Meeting and Training Symposium of the International Consumer Product Health and Safety Organization (ICPHSO).

Founded in 1993, ICPHSO is a nonprofit organization dedicated to create spaces for exchanging ideas and experiences on health and safety issues related to consumer products that are manufactured and sold in the global market. Its forums and seminars are recognized as the most important in the world in this field, mostly attracting participation from the private sector, but involving more and more government agencies, trade associations, the academia, standards developers, consumer advocates, civil society organizations, among others.

Officials of consumer protection agencies from Brazil, Colombia, the United States and Suriname, along with the CSHN technical secretariat, impersonated by the Secretariat for Legal Affairs of the Organization of American States (OAS), will participate in a panel focused on the heterogeneous realities of the hemisphere on consumer product safety and the impact that this issue represents for the economic reality and the health systems of these countries

In this context, the panel will describe recent progress that has been achieved within the framework of the CSHN to harmonize national strategies and set compatible priorities. Similarly, it will discuss the significant progress achieved in national systems with a multidisciplinary and inter-institutional approach in the majority of member states.

[More information on the CSHN Website](#)

[More information on the ICPHSO Website](#)

## Colombia strengthens safety of fireworks and toys

The Consumer Safety and Health Network (CSHN) received official communications from the Superintendence for Industry and Commerce (SIC) of Colombia, through which the institution resolves to take proactive measures regarding the safety of consumer products. The communications particularly addressed fireworks and toys for children without proper safety measures. These decisions were made in Colombia to prevent risks to the life, health, safety and wellbeing of consumers and the general public, especially children.

In the document on children's toys, the SIC prohibited, as a definitive measure, the production, distribution and marketing of all toys –including the remote control with which is operated– that does not have a safety system that restricts the access to the battery compartment and of those others whose power transmission mechanism do not properly safeguard the compartment. In addition, the SIC started actions against six commercial companies for allegedly not complying with the order that the SIC issued in March 2013, prohibiting the production, distribution and marketing of these toys that did not have a safety system for handling batteries.

[More information](#) *(Spanish only)*

## Suriname promotes awareness on consumer protection



*Activities organized in Suriname by the Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce Industry*

The Consumer Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce Industry successfully organized several awareness activities for consumers during the past period. From December 7 to 17, 2013, numerous activities were organized with the objective of informing consumers about their rights and responsibilities. "We are satisfied; we have had more responses as a result of the campaign" said Daniella Sumter, head of the Consumer Affairs Department.

The highlight of the activities was on Friday, December 13, during which the First Lady of Suriname Ingrid Bouterse-Waldring, along with Minister Raymond Sapoen HI, Assembly members, district commissioners, youth representatives, representatives of consumer organizations and other interested parties, revealed a huge billboard with information for consumers.

### More information

## Consumer agencies and institutions confirm their leaders

On February 6, 2014, by instructions from the President of the Republic of Mexico, Enrique Peña Nieto, the Secretary of Economy, Ildefonso Guajardo Villarreal, gave possession to Lorena Martínez Rodríguez as Federal Consumer Attorney (PROFECO). Ms. Martínez, who obtained a bachelor of law from the Autonomous University of Aguascalientes and a Master in Political Science at the National Autonomous University of Mexico, replaces Alfredo Castillo Cervantes, who was appointed by President Enrique Peña Nieto as Commissioner for the security and integral development of the State of Michoacán.

On the other hand, Amanda Long has been confirmed as the new Director General of Consumers International (CI). Ms. Long will take up the post on January 13, 2014, following the retirement of Helen McCallum. Ms Long joins CI following a highly-successful career within the private and public sector. She was central to the conception, development and delivery of one of the first and most ambitious international consumer label and sustainable source certification programs - the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC).

Finally, the executive branch of the Dominican Republic confirmed for two more years Ms. Altagracia Paulino as the director of PRO CONSUMIDOR, appointing at the same time the members of the new Board of this organization. Through a decree issued on December 13, officials from the Ministry of Public Health and the

Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources, representatives of the private sector from merchandise-producing companies and service providers, as well as, organizations of consumer protection, were all appointed to the Board.



*Lorena Martínez Rodríguez takes over as Federal Consumer Attorney (PROFECO)*



*Amanda Long takes up the post of Director General of Consumers International*



*Altagracia Paulino is confirmed as Director of PRO CONSUMIDOR*

**More information about Profeco-México** *(Spanish only)*

**More information about Consumers Internationals**

**More information about PRO CONSUMIDOR** *(Spanish only)*

## Chile campaigns on the ground to inform consumers of their rights



*Sernac officials informing consumers during field campaign.*

In two days, officials of the Regional Direction of Sernac Magallanes, headed by their Director, Pamela Ramirez, performed dissemination efforts on the ground among the residents of the town of Punta Arenas in order to address consumer issues.

During this instance, they came all the way to the area of Plaza Esmeralda, where they delivered information on the available service channels and means to improve the management of their household budgets.

**More information** *(Spanish only)*



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The Consumer Safety and Health  
Network (CSHN)  
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