



How safe are everyday plastic, textile and metal consumer goods sold in the EU?



National market surveillance authorities from 12 Member States worked together on a European Commission-funded product safety initiative to check commonly used low-cost items for hazardous chemicals.



What was tested?

A total of 128 samples of products from five categories (cheap consumer products made of plastic, children's products made of plastic, children's clothing and footwear, children's products with textile parts and fashion jewellery), bought online and in physical stores in 12 countries, were analysed by an accredited laboratory.

They were tested for harmful chemicals such as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and heavy metals like cadmium, nickel and lead. Items tested included toys, costume props, bibs, sunglasses for children, T-shirts, tableware, and inflatable pools.



What should you do?

- **check** the [Safety Gate](#) to see if any problems have been reported for the product you want to buy;

- **buy** from online stores that clearly identify the product's manufacturer and distributor;
- **do not** sleep with jewellery on – if you get an allergic reaction, stop wearing it and seek medical advice;
- **avoid** hazardous chemicals such as PFAS, which are in some plastics and waterproof materials (including shower curtains), by choosing textiles treated with natural waxes or non-fluorinated finishes;
- **report safety issues** or accidents with products to your consumer protection authority on [Consumer Safety Gateway](#).



Test results

25 out of 128 samples (20 %) failed at least one of the testing requirements.

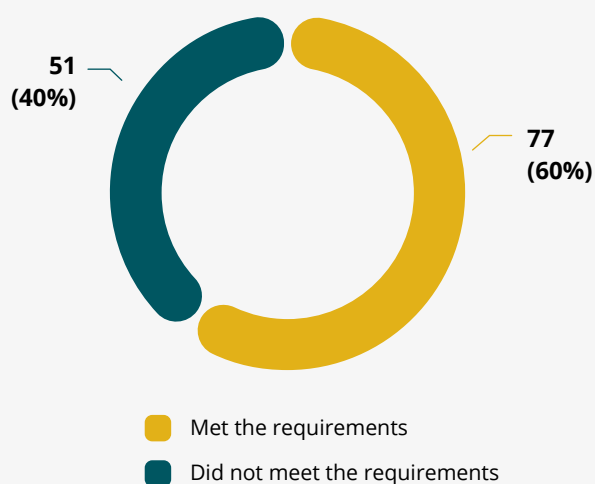
A total of 17 of 53 (32 %) items of children's clothing and footwear tested contained levels of restricted chemicals such as PFAS and short-chain chlorinated paraffins (SCCPs) above the permissible limits.

Of the 12 samples of cheap jewellery tested, 4 (33%) had excessive levels of cadmium, nickel, or lead.



Three of 33 (9%) of the cheap consumer products made of plastic, such as phone cases, toys and shower curtains, failed. Two contained perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and the third had excessive levels of cadmium. PFOS are part of the family of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), so-called forever chemicals that are widely used to repel oil and water in products. They don't easily break down in nature or the human body.

Exposure to PFAS and heavy metals increases the risks of immune disruption, hormone imbalance, cancer, neurological harm and skin allergies. Children are particularly vulnerable to these health risks.



What are the risks?

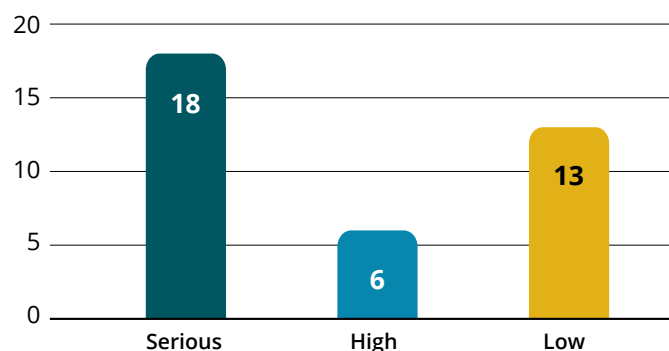
Due to their long-lasting harm to health and the environment, certain PFAS are already restricted in the EU. Broader, group-wide bans are under consideration.

Some “bohemian-looking” fashion jewellery can release harmful metals such as cadmium, lead or nickel, which may damage kidneys and bones, trigger allergies and even cause cancer.



What did national authorities do?

18 (35 %) of the 51 failures were assessed as posing a **serious risk**, 6 (12 %) a high risk and 13 (25 %) a low risk.



Notifications for **6 products** considered harmful were posted on [Safety Gate](#), the EU's rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products.

The national authorities participating in this collaborative effort took the following actions:

- sales of 10 (20 %) of the 51 products were banned;
- 10 were withdrawn from the market;
- 6 (12 %) products were destroyed;
- 6 were recalled from consumers.

