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**DIRECTORATE FOR FINANCIAL, FISCAL AND ENTERPRISE AFFAIRS
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER POLICY**

DAFFE/CP/S/M(97)2
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Working Party on Consumer Safety

**NOTES ON THE 50TH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY ON CONSUMER
SAFETY**

**which was held on 10th September 1997
at the Château de la Muette, Paris**

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**NOTES ON THE 50TH SESSION OF THE WORKING PARTY
ON CONSUMER SAFETY**

I. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

THE WORKING PARTY

ADOPTED the Agenda of its 50th meeting -- DAFPE/CP/S/A(97)2.

II. APPROVAL OF THE NOTES ON THE 49TH MEETING

THE WORKING PARTY

APPROVED the notes on its 49th meeting -- DAFPE/CP/S/M(97)1.

III. SAFETY LABELLING IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE

THE WORKING PARTY

DISCUSSED a note on the above subject -- DAFPE/CP/S(97)1 -- prepared by the Delegate for Sweden, Mr. Hakansson, and NOTED that in spite of the relatively small number of replies to the questionnaire, this constituted an interesting follow-up to the Committee's work on consumer safety standards, certification and conformity assessment undertaken in 1995 and 1996;

AGREED that it would be desirable to supplement the note with additional country contributions and invited Member countries which had not yet done so to send replies to the questionnaire directly to the Delegate for Sweden,

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by **1st December 1997** at the latest. A revised version of the note, including an annex with pictures of the main certification marks used on the consumer products in question (microwave ovens, bicycle helmets, lawn mowers and toys) would be prepared by the Delegate for Sweden for submission to the Committee on Consumer Policy at its next session.

IV. OECD NOTIFICATION SYSTEM ON CONSUMER SAFETY MEASURES THROUGH ELECTRONIC MAIL

THE WORKING PARTY

THANKED the Delegate for New Zealand for setting up an Electronic Mail system for the operation of the Notification System on Consumer Safety Measures;

DISCUSSED a note by the Secretariat -- DAFPE/CP(97)11 -- and a room document prepared by the Delegate for New Zealand setting out a number of issues regarding participation in the system, including the scope of measures to be covered, the countries to participate, and the role of contact points;

AGREED that since the system was now operating without any paper support and without direct Secretariat involvement, there was no need to limit the coverage of the system to notifications on new regulations, product bans and recalls, and research. Notifications should, if this was considered useful, include any other important information on product safety matters. Moreover, the system could be extended beyond the official contact points to other government or regional agencies dealing with product safety issues. Countries outside OECD should, for the time being not be included;

TOOK note of a report by the Delegate of the European Commission and UNDERLINED the desirability of a mutual exchange of information between the OECD notification system and the Rapid Exchange of Information System functioning between Member states of the European Union;

STRESSED the need to set up an accurate list of E-mail addresses and INSTRUCTED the Secretariat to up-date and circulate the list of participants with E-mail addresses as soon as possible after the meeting;

INVITED the Chairman of the Working Party to report to the Committee that the notification system was now one of the key elements in the Committee's work on product safety and should be intensively and widely used by Delegates; moreover, "lead countries" (e.g., New Zealand) could, in regular intervals, report to the plenary Committee on the functioning of the system;

CIRCULATED the contact E-mail address for notification system registration :

Colin.Hooker@MOC.GOV.NZ

V. PRODUCT RECALLS

THE WORKING PARTY

NOTED that due to a reorganisation in the relevant unit of the French administration, the Delegate for France had not been in a position to draft the announced proposal for a study on regulation and current practice concerning product recalls in Member countries. The Delegate would examine this question again with his administration and contact the Secretariat prior to the next session of the Committee.

VI. PRODUCT SAFETY POLICY IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE -- POSSIBLE FUTURE WORK

THE WORKING PARTY

HEARD a statement by the Chairman of the Working Party indicating that he had prepared the above note -- DAFPE/CP(97)12 -- as both an inventory of main achievements during the Working Party's 25 years of existence, and as an outline of possible work which could be undertaken by the Committee or by lead countries;

AGREED that this was a comprehensive overview of the excellent work the Working Party had done since its inception in 1972, and STRESSED the need to keep product safety on the Agenda of the plenary Committee, and deal with safety projects with the help of ad-hoc groups whenever this was considered necessary.

VII. NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PRODUCT SAFETY FIELD IN MEMBER COUNTRIES

THE WORKING PARTY

HELD a 'tour de table' on important recent developments in the field of product safety and URGED Delegates to continue these exchanges of information in the future through both the E-mail notification system as well as through other bilateral contacts whenever necessary. Important new developments should be reported to the plenary Committee.

VIII. OTHER BUSINESS

THE WORKING PARTY

TOOK NOTE of a statement by the Chairman, Mr. Nils RINGSTEDT, indicating that due to the organisation's resource constraints, the new mandate proposed by the Committee for the years 1998 -- 2000 foresaw disbanding the Committee's Working Parties. The 50th meeting of the Working Party would therefore, most probably, also be the last. While this was regrettable, there was no doubt that consumer safety would be an important and permanent item on the Committee's future agenda. It would be up to Member countries and their Delegates on the Committee to give safety issues the priority they deserved;

THANKED Mr. RINGSTEDT for his 17 years of efficient chairmanship, which had substantially contributed to the development of consumer safety policy in all Member countries and wished him all the best for his private and professional future.

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