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**DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER POLICY****Working Party on Consumer Product Safety****Roundtable on the role of online platforms in enhancing consumer product safety****Summary of discussion****JT03458222**

Foreword

This document summarises discussion at a Roundtable on The Role of Online Platforms in Enhancing Consumer Product Safety that was held by the Working Party on Consumer Product Safety (WPCPS) on 22 October 2019. The roundtable aimed to provide the WPCPS with an opportunity to discuss the challenges and benefits that online marketplaces bring to consumer product safety policy and the role that online platforms can have in enhancing consumer product safety. The document highlights some of the key themes and issues raised during the discussion, as well as proposed next steps for the WPCPS' work in this area.

The final agenda for the roundtable is attached at Annex A.

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Summary of roundtable on the role of online platforms in enhancing consumer product safety

Key findings

- Recent market surveillance activities found a significant number of unsafe consumer products available for purchase via online platforms. However, consumer product safety authorities currently face several challenges in undertaking effective market surveillance activities in relation to online platforms including:
 - sellers may be anonymous and/or located overseas making contact difficult and often requiring the relevant platform's assistance;
 - unsafe products frequently re-appear on online platforms after being de-listed from the same platforms; and
 - some authorities do not have the legal powers to undertake mystery shopping activities and so cannot engage in such activities at all.
- Online platforms may not be liable for supplying unsafe products when they act as an intermediary between a buyer and seller. They may however be liable if they become aware of an unsafe product being supplied via their platform but fail to promptly remove it. This limited liability may impact platforms' willingness to voluntarily engage with product safety authorities.
- Whilst online platforms have brought new product safety challenges, they are also well placed to solve them because they control who participates in their marketplace and on what terms. New technologies, such as artificial intelligence, may assist platforms in monitoring their marketplaces more effectively by identifying known unsafe products, rogue traders and emerging product safety issues.
- Consumer product safety authorities have found that regular and more formalised engagement with online platforms can improve co-operation and compliance with product safety frameworks. In particular, undertakings, such as the EU's Product Safety Pledge, provide an opportunity for platforms to commit to actions to enhance consumer product safety that go beyond their legal requirements. Such initiatives may also help to enhance consumer trust by sending a signal that certain platforms take product safety seriously and support the growth of e-commerce.

Background

1. On 22 October 2019, as part of its 19th meeting, the Working Party on Consumer Product Safety (WPCPS) organised a roundtable aimed to explore the role of online platforms in enhancing consumer product safety. The final agenda for the roundtable is attached at Annex A.
2. The discussion progresses the work of the WPCPS in identifying and understanding the product safety issues associated with the growing consumer engagement in e-commerce globally, including in particular through online platforms. It builds on a workshop on product recall effectiveness held by the WPCPS in November 2017¹ that considered co-operation programmes between consumer product safety authorities and online platforms.

3. The following provides a brief summary of the main themes discussed, including platforms' and authorities' successes and challenges in addressing the availability of unsafe products on online platforms. More specifically, it provides details about: difficulties with effective market surveillance; gaps in existing legal frameworks; opportunities for self-regulation with the use of new technologies and the benefits of establishing formalised relationships and regular exchanges between online platforms and consumer product safety authorities. It then provides a brief summary of the short presentations made by the delegates of Australia (Ms Joanne James), the European Commission (Ms Orsolya Csorba), Japan (Ms Yasuko Iwai), Korea (Ms Nanju Choi), Turkey (Ms Yağmur Bayraktar) and France (Mr Thomas Berbach). A number of potential next steps for further WPCPS work in this area were also discussed and are also summarised.

Main themes

4. Online platforms have been defined by the OECD as “digital services that facilitate interactions between two or more distinct but interdependent sets of users (whether firms or individuals) who interact through the service via the Internet”². Online platforms that facilitate the exchange of consumer products between third party sellers and consumers continue to grow in size and scope, both in terms of users and product offering. These new marketplaces have created new consumer product safety challenges, but also present new opportunities for mass engagement with consumers and third party sellers on consumer product safety-related matters.

Effective market surveillance is currently difficult

5. Market surveillance is an important tool for consumer product safety authorities to identify unsafe products and remove them from the marketplace. A number of recent market surveillance activities by consumer product safety authorities have identified a high number of unsafe consumer products available for purchase via online platforms. This demonstrates the importance of regular market surveillance in relation to online platforms.

6. However, there are a number of challenges currently faced by authorities that may reduce the effectiveness of such activities. These include difficulties in identifying third party sellers who may be selling unsafe products anonymously or who may be located outside the jurisdiction of consumer product safety authorities. In recent years, such authorities have increasingly relied on the co-operation of relevant online platforms to swiftly remove listings of unsafe products upon notification and to provide contact details for the third party seller. Authorities may also rely on an online platforms' co-operation in directly contacting consumers who have purchased an unsafe product via the platform. While significant progress has been made in a number of jurisdictions to enhance a dialog on product safety issues with online platforms, consumer product safety authorities have however noted varying levels of co-operation between different online platforms.

7. Another significant difficulty is the re-appearance of an unsafe product on an online platform after the same product has been removed by the platform from its listing, following notification by an authority or other stakeholder. In such cases, the new product may have a slightly different title, description or photographs and authorities may have to conduct additional purchasing and testing to prove to the online platform that the new product is also unsafe.

8. In addition, some consumer product safety authorities may face particular difficulties in conducting market surveillance where their legal framework does not permit

them to undertake covert purchasing of products, commonly referred to as mystery shopping. A number of authorities are exploring potential changes to their legal frameworks that would enable them to engage in such activities.

Existing consumer product safety laws may not apply to online platforms

9. Consumer trust is an important element in ensuring the continued growth of the e-commerce sector. Previous studies have shown that consumers appear to trust major online platforms more than conventional businesses³. However, under existing product safety laws in many jurisdictions, where a platform is only acting as an intermediary between a buyer and seller, it will not be liable for the supply of an unsafe product via the platform. In some jurisdictions, such as the European Union, a platform may be liable where it becomes aware of the supply of an unsafe product via its website but does not act promptly to prevent further sales by removing the relevant product from its listing. Currently, it may not always be clear to consumers purchasing products via an online platform that the platform may not necessarily be legally responsible for the safety of those products. Some roundtable participants noted that it may be necessary to require platforms to ensure this information is made clear to consumers.

10. The fact that online platforms may not be legally responsible for the supply of unsafe products via their websites also creates difficulties for consumer product safety authorities when working with online platforms to address unsafe products as they must rely solely on the voluntary co-operation of online platforms without the threat of legal sanction. Authorities in some jurisdictions are currently looking to amend their consumer product safety laws to increase online platforms' legal responsibility in relation to the supply of unsafe products, including looking at ways in which online platforms may be required to share data on unsafe products with authorities and to notify consumers who have purchased unsafe products.

11. Given the availability of unsafe products on online platforms, when considering the question of online platforms' liability, it is important to remember that consumers who purchase products through online platforms should not have less consumer product safety protections than they would if purchasing i) via individual online retailers, and ii) in-store⁴. If this was the case, third party sellers trading through online platforms would have an unjustified competitive advantage over online retailers and brick & mortar retailers.

Online platforms present unique opportunities for self-regulation that may be assisted by new technologies

12. Online platforms have created unique product safety challenges, but they do have control of their ecosystem and so may also be in a good position to solve them. They can prevent the sale of unsafe products to consumers by blocking and removing products from the platforms' listings, and can assist in removing unsafe products from the market by directly contacting those consumers who have purchased an unsafe product. Online platforms are also in a position to undertake mass education campaigns about consumer product safety issues, including legal rights and responsibilities in different jurisdictions. They also have the ability to motivate third party sellers using their services to comply with their obligations under consumer product safety laws by imposing, for example, account sanctions.

13. New technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) may also assist with identifying the re-appearance of banned or sanctioned third party sellers under a new alias or de-listed unsafe products under a new listing. AI may also be employed to analyse online

platforms' product returns data and consumer product reviews to identify any emerging product safety issues. The introduction of cooling-off periods for new third party sellers on an online platform may also assist in deterring those attempting to open a new account after being sanctioned in relation to a product safety issue.

Regular and formalised engagement with online platforms may assist consumer product safety authorities

14. Regular and formalised engagement between product safety authorities and online platforms is one way of ensuring that product safety issues are brought to a platform's attention quickly and are dealt with promptly. Allowing online platforms to contribute to authorities' consideration of product safety issues may also increase the likelihood of finding an effective solution to a problem. Regular meetings to discuss product safety issues can also be useful in establishing and maintaining networks and designated contact points between authorities and online platforms. The market surveillance efforts of consumer product safety authorities may also be assisted where the online platform has a local or designated contact.

15. Voluntary commitments, such as the European Union's (EU) Product Safety Pledge,⁵ which is an overarching voluntary commitment to improve product safety that is open to all online marketplaces offering goods from third party sellers, can be useful in generally increasing online platforms' engagement on product safety issues. They can also help in creating certainty around take-down times of unsafe products following a notification. If made public, such commitments may also be used by online platforms as a signal to consumers that the platform takes product safety seriously and has agreed to comply with requirements that go beyond its legal obligations. Public voluntary commitments of this nature may increase consumer trust and become a competitive advantage for the online platforms that subscribe to them.

Presentations

Australia

16. The delegate of Australia (Ms Joanne James) opened the roundtable by giving an overview of Australia's recent engagement with online platforms in relation to product safety and identifying some of the benefits and challenges. In particular, she highlighted the establishment in 2017 of a dedicated online compliance team within the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). This team has engaged in regular and active discussions with dedicated contacts at a number of online platforms operating in the Australian market. This proactive engagement has generally strengthened platforms' engagement on product safety issues and in particular has resulted in: i) informal commitments from platforms to remove non-compliant products from their listings within a certain timeframe; ii) mass dissemination of product safety-related information to consumers and third party sellers; and iii) processes to deal with unresponsive third party sellers.

17. In terms of challenges, Ms James noted that online platforms' lack of liability where they act only as an intermediary between a third party seller and a consumer may lessen authorities' bargaining power when negotiating voluntary commitments. However, she noted that in most cases, platforms are willing to voluntarily engage with the ACCC on safety issues due to the adverse reputational consequences they could suffer if linked to unsafe products. She also noted differences in the level of engagement on product safety

issues between platforms due to different business and operational models and that, on several occasions, staff turnover at a platform had led to significant delays and unresponsiveness. She also stressed the need to ensure a consistent approach to engagement with online platforms on consumer product safety where regulatory responsibility is shared between different authorities.

European Commission

18. The delegate of the European Commission (EC) (Ms Orsolya Csorba) presented on the EC's recent activities in relation to online platforms, in particular the creation of its Product Safety Pledge. Ms Csorba first gave an overview of the EU's product safety laws relating to online platforms. She noted that under EU law, producers remain primarily liable for unsafe products, but online platforms may become liable if they are notified about an unsafe product on their site and do not expeditiously remove such product from their listing.

19. Ms Csorba explained that engagement between online platforms and the EC has increased in recent years with the joint recognition that product safety is a shared interest between online platforms and authorities. This engagement has culminated in the creation of the Product Safety Pledge, which involves twelve specific actions to improve consumer product safety that go beyond online platforms' legal obligations in the EU. Some of the specific actions required by the Pledge include establishing dedicated contact points for EU authorities to report unsafe products, reacting to authorities' notifications about unsafe products within two working days, proactively consulting the EU's Rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products, taking prompt action where unsafe products are identified, and cooperating with sellers and EU Member States' authorities to notify consumers and traders about product recalls. To date, the Pledge has been signed by a number of large online marketplaces, including Ali Express, Amazon, eBay, Rakuten France and C-Discount. Ms Csorba noted that EU Member States have reported improvements in their cooperation with online platforms regarding product safety issues following the Pledge.

Japan

20. The delegate of Japan (Ms Yasuko Iwai) reported on Japan's recent experiences in addressing the availability of unsafe products on online platforms. She noted that consumer product safety legislation in Japan has not been designed to directly target online platforms and so increased engagement between authorities and online platforms has been important in addressing consumer product safety issues. In this regard, she highlighted the recent establishment of regular meetings between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and major online platforms to discuss product safety issues. Online platforms involved in these meetings have also been cooperating proactively in disseminating to consumers and traders that use their platforms information on METI's website regarding Japanese product safety regulations and policies. She noted that METI and online platforms have been cooperating closely in monitoring unsafe products and addressing non-compliant sellers.

21. Ms Iwai also gave a recent example of cooperation where, at the request of METI, online platforms provided information on their websites for consumers and businesses regarding a change to labelling requirements for mobile batteries. She also highlighted the agreement between Amazon and the National Consumer Affairs Centre of Japan (NCAC) to cooperate on consumer product safety alert information. All warning statements published by the NCAC are now published on the relevant product pages of Amazon's website and are also sent by email to consumers who have purchased the relevant product.

Korea

22. The delegate of Korea (Ms Nanju Choi) shared Korea's recent experiences in engaging with online platforms, including the use of both mandatory and voluntary approaches. Ms Choi observed that consumers tend to trust online platforms more than individual sellers, but that platforms' obligations are limited when a problem arises. She noted that the Korean Government recently proposed amendments to Korea's consumer protection laws with the aim of enhancing online platforms' liability in relation to product safety. This new legislation requires online platforms to provide authorities with information regarding sales of unsafe products even if they are not party to the actual sales, to provide clear information to consumers about the responsible economic operators if not the platform, and to comply with any directions from the Korean authorities to remedy a product safety issue. Ms Choi also highlighted a legal obligation for online platforms to ensure product listings include Korean product safety certification information and to remove non-compliant products from their listings. She observed that this obligation plays a critical role in helping authorities identify unsafe products and helps consumers make informed purchasing decisions.

23. In regard to voluntary measures, Ms Choi noted that the Korean Government is undertaking a market surveillance project with a number of businesses, including online platforms, to identify unsafe products and convey information to retailers' point of sale technology to block the sale of unsafe products. She also noted Korea Consumer Agency's establishment of a consultative group with major online platforms. The group meets regularly to share information about unsafe products and take collective action to remove them from sale.

Turkey

24. The delegate of Turkey (Ms Yağmur Bayraktar) noted that Turkey was facing similar challenges to those described by the other presenters. She highlighted limitations in the application of Turkey's consumer product safety laws to online platforms, noting that such laws do not require products sold online to meet product safety requirements and do not allow for mystery shopping by product safety authorities. She also noted that authorities often have difficulties in identifying the responsible economic operators for products sold via online platforms.

25. Ms Bayraktar outlined some of the Turkish Government's plans to address some of these challenges. She noted that amendments to Turkey's product safety laws are proposed to directly address online platforms and authorise product safety authorities to undertake mystery shopping. She also noted that the Turkish Ministry of Trade plans to create a new e-market surveillance unit to undertake mystery shopping from online platforms and send purchased products to the relevant market surveillance authority for testing. She outlined plans for increased cooperation between product safety authorities and online platforms in relation to notifications about unsafe products and referred in that regard to a recent meeting between major online platforms and authorities in Istanbul. She noted that at this meeting the Turkish authorities requested that online platforms include in their terms and conditions that sellers must provide product safety certification/test results in their product listings. She also mentioned that the new legislation being drafted will make it compulsory for sellers to provide this information in their online listings.

France

26. The delegate of France (Mr Thomas Berbach) presented the findings of a recent market surveillance activity undertaken by France's Direction Générale de la Concurrence, de la Consommation et de la Répression des Fraudes (DGCCRF) in relation to the safety of consumer products sold via online platforms. The activity sampled 152 products from the 8 most popular online platforms in France, including Amazon, eBay, Cdiscount, Ali Express, Rue du commerce, Rakuten, Wish, and Fnac.com. Products were selected from the following categories: low-cost jewellery, cosmetics, toys, lighting chains and novelty cigarette lighters (the latter for visual inspection on screen only). Mr Berbach reported that following testing, 77% of the products were classified as non-compliant and 44% as dangerous according to the European regulatory system. The study showed the availability to French consumers of banned novelty cigarette lighters appealing to children, and product testing revealed a range of less obvious safety issues, including the presence of heavy metals in jewellery, illegal substances in cosmetics, small detachable items in toys and toxic chemicals in rubber toys. Mr Berbach also outlined DGCCRF's follow-up actions to the activity, including requests made to online platforms to remove the identified unsafe products from their listings and to voluntarily recall products, Rapex notifications, and press releases.

27. Mr Berbach noted that the results of this activity were significantly above the usual levels when compared with products sampled from other distribution channels. He observed that this may be because some vendors see online marketplaces as an easy way to sell unsafe products as the ability to remain anonymous and reach consumers in different jurisdictions may lessen the probability of being discovered and sanctioned. He also highlighted the problem of unsafe products reappearing online following a de-listing with slightly different descriptions or photographs and authorities having to prove that the new listing is the same unsafe product.

Next steps

28. To further develop the WPCPS' work in relation to online platforms, the Secretariat will commence planning an expert workshop with key online platforms to be held in November 2020.

29. The workshop will provide online platforms with the opportunity to share with consumer product safety authorities their experiences in dealing with product safety issues and the particular challenges they face. Potential further topics for discussion at the workshop may include how collaboration between consumer product safety authorities and online platforms can be strengthened, and how platforms may be able to share intelligence regarding consumer product safety issues.⁶

<p>Note from Secretariat: Next steps to be confirmed following receipt of feedback from WPCPS members regarding possible contributions to CCP's 100th Session anniversary and a potential project on platforms (possibly coordinated with the CCP) as part of the CCP's 2021-22 PWB..</p>

Annex A

Roundtable on the Role of Online Platforms in Enhancing Consumer Product Safety

Introduction

E-commerce is a rapidly evolving market offering consumers increased choice, competitive pricing and convenience. In 2018, 1.8 billion consumers worldwide purchased goods online; this figure is projected to increase by nearly 19% to 2.14 billion by 2021 (Statista, 2019^[1]). According to some reports, over 70% of online shoppers prefer to purchase via online platforms (Goddard, 2017^[2]), and of the sales occurring via e-commerce in 2016, approximately 50% took place via online marketplaces (Forrester Research, 2017^[3]). As such, online platforms⁷ have transformed the e-commerce landscape by matching sellers and buyers to facilitate online transactions (OECD, 2019^[4]), enabling businesses to grow their customer base, often across multiple economies, and providing consumers with more choice than ever before (OECD, 2019^[5]).

As e-commerce sales continue to rise, however, so do the product safety risks to consumers. In 2015, an OECD international online product safety sweep conducted across 25 jurisdictions revealed that of the 685 banned and recalled products inspected during the sweep, 68% were available via e-commerce (OECD, 2016^[6]). In 2018, 16% of the 2 257 notifications reported on the European Union's (EU) rapid alert system for dangerous non-food products (EU Safety Gate) concerned products sold online (European Commission, 2019^[7]). Online platforms seem to be particularly affected by such risks. According to a report from the European Commission, "*many of the dangerous products notified in the Rapid Alert System are also sold on online platforms or marketplaces*" (European Commission, 2017^[8]). In August 2019, results of an investigation led by the Wall Street Journal revealed that more than 4 100 products on Amazon's United States website were unsafe, recalled, mislabelled or banned (Wall Street Journal, 2019^[9]).

This background note outlines some of the challenges faced by governments and online platforms in curbing the presence of unsafe products available online, and provides a summary of some of the initiatives that have taken place across various jurisdictions to address this concern. The aim of the Roundtable will be to dive deeper into the efficacy of the various initiatives, on the basis of which the Working Party on Consumer Product Safety (WPCPS) will then be invited to discuss possible further work in this area.

Challenges in mitigating the presence of unsafe products on online platforms

Market surveillance teams within consumer product safety authorities continue to face growing difficulties in tracing products online, identifying responsible economic operators and conducting risk assessment or safety tests, due to a lack of access to the physical products or the inability to purchase products anonymously in some jurisdictions (OECD, 2018^[10]). In addition, the variety of online platforms, which have different business and operational models can lead to varying levels of engagement (OECD, 2019^[5]). Online platforms are likely to be more incentivised and invested in prioritising product safety when it fits within their business and operational models. For example, online platforms indicate that when they are not involved in the fulfilment process and thus not handling (i.e. storing, receiving or distributing) the product at any stage of the transaction, they are limited in the actions they may take due to (OECD, 2018^[10]):

- a lack of integration between the platform and the warehousing and delivery of products;
- no control over the terms and conditions of third-party sellers;

- little to no knowledge of individual items sold by third-party sellers.

Another challenge is the disproportion between the number of products sold via online platforms and the limited resources authorities have to assess the safety of those products. More than three billion products, for example, are listed on Amazon alone (ScrapeHero, 2017^[11]), while eBay has 1.3 billion product listings on its platform (eBay, 2019^[12]). The sheer volume of products available on such platforms makes it challenging and inefficient to implement product safety surveillance activities, which are traditionally tailored for assessing the safety of products available via bricks and mortar retailers. Furthermore, when action is taken on specific products sold online, it does not necessarily resolve the issue in a long-term manner. For example, the Wall Street Journal reported that of the 4 100 products that were identified in its investigation, 83% were removed by Amazon soon after being notified. Within two weeks, however, of those removed, 130 of the products were relisted on Amazon; some relisted by the same third-party supplier (Wall Street Journal, 2019^[9]).

Initiatives to protect online consumers from unsafe products

Recognising these challenges, the 2016 *OECD Recommendation of the Council on Consumer Protection in E-commerce* (OECD, 2016^[13]) outlines some key provisions that relate to businesses:

- ensuring that unsafe products are not offered, advertised or marketed to consumers;
- co-operating with relevant authorities when product safety issues arise;
- providing consumers with adequate safety information about a product so they can make an informed decision prior to purchasing the product.

In this light, various consumer product safety authorities and online platforms across several jurisdictions are now working together to reduce the availability of unsafe or recalled products via online platforms. Consumer product safety authorities, such as those from Australia, the European Union, Japan, Korea and the United States, have established processes or formal agreements with major international online platforms, which include commitments such as removing listings of unsafe and recalled products, providing product safety training to third-party suppliers and strengthening internal product safety processes (OECD, 2018^[14]). For example, in June 2018, the European Commission (EC) released a *Product Safety Pledge* (European Commission, 2018^[15]) voluntarily signed by Alibaba, Amazon, eBay and Rakuten France noting their commitment to remove unsafe products, deliver supplier training and enhance their consumer compliant systems and internal product safety processes. (OECD, 2018^[10]). In addition to these initiatives, some online platforms trading across multiple jurisdictions, such as eBay, have also ensured that information on the OECD *GlobalRecalls* portal is communicated to their third-party sellers.

Consumer product safety authorities have also proactively collaborated on raising awareness of the importance of safe products being sold online. In November 2018, the OECD, in partnership with the ACCC and the EC, led an international campaign on the safety of products online. The campaign included key messages for businesses, online platforms and consumers, and was implemented across 26 jurisdictions, reaching 25 million people through social media. In addition to consumer product safety authorities, online platforms, such as eBay, also joined the campaign or engaged with those product safety authorities participating in the event to help spread the campaign messages. Such initiatives have assisted in increasing the international dialogue on the safety of products sold online.

Roundtable agenda

This Roundtable will provide an opportunity for interventions by WPCPS delegates to discuss experiences in addressing the concerns raised by the availability of unsafe products on online platforms, including both successes and challenges. Several delegations have volunteered to provide lead interventions (see below) but all participants are encouraged to contribute to the roundtable discussion.

Discussion questions

1. What key challenges do product safety authorities encounter when engaging with online platforms?
2. What challenges have product safety authorities encountered when establishing and maintaining regular contact and working on specific issues with online platforms?
3. What benefits can be realised through collaboration between product safety authorities and online platforms? What product safety challenges should they address?
4. When comparing voluntary commitments and development of legislation, which is more effective? What are the challenges of introducing legislation relating to online platforms and product safety?
5. In addition to global awareness campaigns, what other initiatives could help to ensure that unsafe products are not sold via online platforms?

Lead interventions

- **Australia** [5 minutes]
- **Costa Rica** [5 minutes] [TBC]
- **European Commission** [5 minutes]
- **Japan** [5 minutes]
- **Korea** [5 minutes]
- **Turkey** [5 minutes]

Conclusions and possible next steps

At the conclusion of the Roundtable, delegates will be invited to discuss possible next steps for the project. One such next step would be to enable a dialogue between online platforms and consumer product safety authorities at a WPCPS expert workshop, which could be organised in 2020.

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Notes

¹ OECD (2018), *Measuring and maximising the impact of product recalls globally: OECD workshop report*, [DSTI/CP/CPS(2018)6/FINAL]

² OECD (2019), *An Introduction to Online Platforms and Their Role in the Digital Transformation*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/53e5f593-en>, p 11.

³ OECD (2019), *An Introduction to Online Platforms and Their Role in the Digital Transformation*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/53e5f593-en>, p 33.

⁴ OECD (2016), *OECD Recommendation on Consumer Protection in E-Commerce*, <https://www.oecd.org/sti/consumer/ECommerce-Recommendation-2016.pdf>, para. 1.

⁵ European Commission (2018), *Product Safety Pledge*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/voluntary_commitment_document_4signatures3-web.pdf.

⁶ At its 98th Session, the CCP expressed interest in organising a joint workshop on the role of online platforms in enhancing consumer protection as part of the CCP's 100th Session celebration. Such joint discussion could focus on product safety issues as well as other consumer protection issues such as counterfeit products and online scams [DSTI/CP/M(2019)2].

⁷ Online platforms have been defined by the OECD as “*digital services that facilitate interactions between two or more distinct but interdependent sets of users (whether firms or individuals) who interact through the service via the Internet*” (OECD, 2019^[5]).