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ANEC General Assembly 2017

The 28th ANEC General Assembly meeting was held on [15-16](#) June at the Thon Hotel EU in Brussels. It saw the participation of members from 28 countries, including Serbia as our newest member country, as well as representatives from the European Commission, EFTA Secretariat and BEUC.

Speakers included Joaquim Nunes de Almeida, Director, Single Market Policy, Regulation & Implementation, DG GROW, Brit Helle, the Director, Goods Division, EFTA, and Ursula Pachi, Deputy Director-General of BEUC.

Members elected Arnold Pindar (UK) as President for the 2017 to 2019 term; Dermott Jewell (IE) as Vice-President and Benedicte Federspiel (DK) as Treasurer. Among those elected to the Steering Committee<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=1bb6c66af3&e=02d22eb31d>> (the board of the association) were new appointees, Loucas Aristodemou (CY), Francis E Farrugia (MT) and Marijana Lonchar-Velkova (MK).

Members also received the ANEC Annual Review 2016<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=14ab002500&e=02d22eb31d>> as a record of our achievements in the past calendar year.

[Panelists at the EP]

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Research shows smart meters can be inaccurate

A Dutch study<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=48ed645416&e=02d22eb31d>> has found electromagnetic interference can harm the accuracy of readings taken from smart meters. In controlled laboratory experiments, smart meters were tested using Compact Fluorescent Lamps (energy-saving lamps), LED lamps and other equipment that generates electromagnetic interference. The tests revealed some meters showed an increase in energy reading of up to plus 376%, while others showed a decrease in energy reading of up to minus 54%. The research concludes the principal cause of interference appears to be the current sensor design.

ANEC is worried<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=b6205ce77b&e=02d22eb31d>> about these results. The errors pose the risk that some consumers with smart meters could be overcharged. This may also have consequences for consumer confidence in smart meters. We therefore call for further independent research on electromagnetic interference in domestic environments and metering. We have also urged the CEN-CENELEC-ETSI Coordination Group on Smart Meters to check whether the existing immunity standards adequately cover smart metering systems.

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Standards for organic chemical compounds in toys need revision

Ahead of the upcoming systematic review of European standards for organic chemical compounds in toys, ANEC calls for revision<<http://anec.us11.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=3216faaa00&e=02d22eb31d>> of EN 71-9, EN 71-10 and EN 71-11, which address requirements (Part 9), sample preparation & extraction (Part 10) and methods of analysis (Part 11).

Although compliance with the standards does not give a presumption of conformity to the Toy Safety Directive, national authorities often use them to demonstrate the safety of toys. We believe the three standards need to be revised, not only to bring them into line with the state-of-the-art, but to broaden their scopes and to raise their ambition so that children will be protected more effectively from many potentially-hazardous organic chemicals in toys.

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ANEC opposes EN [14375](#) being adopted by ISO

ANEC opposes a CEN proposal to ISO to adopt EN [14375](#) 'Child-resistant non-reclosable packaging for pharmaceutical products - Requirements and testing' as an ISO standard. Several years ago, we lobbied against adoption of the standard as it entirely ignores the toxicity of the pharmaceutical products.

Indeed, we commissioned a study in 2001 which provided evidence that the ingestion of only a few pharmaceutical tablets can seriously harm children. Occasionally, a fraction of one tablet can kill a child.

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'eCoffee' on European Accessibility Act

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ANEC has long campaigned for a strong and ambitious European Accessibility Act (EAA) as we believe the EAA has the potential to improve people's everyday lives as well as to increase business competitiveness and innovation.

Following the EP Internal Market & Consumer Protection Committee's (IMCO) adoption of a disappointing report on the EAA in April, and the concerns voiced by some Member States about its potential financial impact, ANEC thought it important to invite decision makers and journalists for 'eCoffee' to discuss the Act and achieving a more accessible Europe.

Hence, on 6 June, ahead of the adoption of the IMCO report by the EP plenary and the Council, ANEC, AGE and EDF hosted a well-attended webinar to debate the EAA and its implications. See the presentation here <<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=90a95305d7&e=02d22eb31d>> and be kept informed on the #AccessibilityAct by following us on Twitter, @anectweet.

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Collaborative platforms and online reviews

On 12 June, the EC issued a new Exploratory Study of consumer issues in peer-to-peer platform markets<<http://anec.us11.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=65e6a22348&e=02d22eb31d>>. It also issued a factsheet with key findings<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=3978c8f4ab&e=02d22eb31d>>.

The study identifies five key consumer issues emerging from the collaborative economy, ranging from lack of transparency regarding transactions and applicable consumer rights and obligations, to reliability of peer review and rating systems. Also, discrepancy was found between exclusion of platform responsibility and liability for the performance of online P2P transactions and platform practices. Other problems relate to access to redress for peer consumers and peer providers, and data use and protection.

Anita Fokkema (DG JUST) presented the study results at the ANEC Services WG meeting on 14 June, especially noting the problems with user reviews and ratings identified in the final report<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=94710208d5&e=02d22eb31d>>. Given the lack of reliability of user reviews and ratings, it is hoped that the Commission will consider legislative steps to improve transparency and responsible P2P practices in the framework of the REFIT of consumer law<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=5a34395d19&e=02d22eb31d>>.

ANEC will provide further contributions to the study in the next weeks, also building on the recent ANEC/CI position paper on the sharing economy<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=91c95f7e0a&e=02d22eb31d>> and our work in relevant international standardisation.

Regarding online reviews, ANEC is developing additional comments on ISO/DIS 20488 'Online consumer reviews - Principles and requirements for their collection, moderation and publication'. ANEC trusts the resulting standard will offer a code of conduct that can contribute to increased transparency.

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Controversial nano-observatory launched

ECHA launched the EU Observatory for Nanomaterials (EUON) via a dedicated website <<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=84d90fb2ab&e=02d22eb31d>> on 14 June. The website aims at describing what nanomaterials are and where they are used today. It is also intended to provide information about safety and health issues, research, regulation, and international activities.

Organisations for the protection of consumers, environment and health will not attend a stakeholder dialogue meeting on EUON planned for the end of June, as EUON does not meet their long-standing wish for European nano-register.

ANEC supported an agreement last December to step back from EUON. The demands of civil society are detailed in the paper, 'Reset Governance: Nanomaterials as a case study on negligence NGO demands for adequate EU governance of nanomaterials' <<http://anec.us11.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=83048152dc&e=02d22eb31d>>.

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European Council on cross-border parcel delivery

At the beginning of May, we published a position paper on consumer expectations <<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=d4fde3e2a6&e=02d22eb31d>> from the proposal for a EU Regulation for cross-border parcel delivery services <<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=ea1eba8bb5&e=02d22eb31d>> as an input to the European Parliament's reflection on the draft legislation. As we reported in an earlier newsletter, the ANEC President had presented the consumer views in an EP event on the topic in March.

The ANEC concerns were well-considered in the draft report by MEP Anderson, and the amendments proposed meanwhile in the TRAN committee will be voted on in July.

On 31 May, the Council agreed its 'general approach' <<http://anec.us11.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=f45cabcaf1&e=02d22eb31d>>.

[eb31d](#)> on the draft regulation. Council believes improved price transparency and better oversight should make the market more efficient and help bring down tariffs that are not justified by objective factors, such as wages or geographical distance. Under the Council general approach, the EC must set up a website to display the cross-border delivery rates offered by firms. This dedicated website should make it easier for consumers and users to compare rates and choose the most appropriate.

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Review of passenger ship safety

On 15 June, the Council came to informal agreement with the EP on a revised directive on passenger ship safety rules and standards. The directive aims to clarify and simplify the current technical rules in pursuit of easier enforcement and monitoring.

It sets out detailed technical requirements for ships in areas such as construction, stability and fire protection. It applies to ships made of steel or equivalent material, and thus covers most modern passenger ships. The new rules leave small ships (under 24 metres) to be regulated at national level, reflecting the fact that these ships are more sensitive to local operating conditions and in general present a lower risk.

Informal agreement has also been reached with the EP on new rules to digitalise the registration of ship passengers. The purpose is to make the exact number of passengers and other information immediately available for search and rescue services in the event of an accident.

ANEC - a participant in the European Commission Passenger Ship Safety Experts group <<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=7c30e49d19&e=02d22eb31d>> - welcomes these steps to increase the safety of passengers using maritime transport.

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Is the cleaner half full or (half) empty?

ANEC follows the work of CENELEC TC 59X WG 6 on vacuum cleaners. One topic is the performance tests for cleaners with partly-loaded (dust and waste) receptacles, notably the definition of 'partly loaded', the reliability of the test method, and its fairness when applied to the various types and sizes of vacuum cleaners. The consumer concern is that testing with an empty receptacle is not representative of real-life use. At the meeting of WG 6 in May, we stressed the need for an acceptable test procedure with partly-loaded receptacles. We also called for consumer organisations to be involved in the creation of a study on consumer behaviour that will inform the discussion on legislative measures for vacuum cleaners.

Meanwhile, a TC 59X ad-hoc group has prepared a paper that considers ways to assess how standards can reflect real-life use while offering the repeatability and reproducibility necessary to support eco-design and energy labelling legislation.

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ANEC replies on FinTech

In June, ANEC replied to an EC public consultation on FinTech: a more competitive and innovative European financial sector <<http://anec.us11.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=e9bc0d11fd&e=02d22eb31d>>.

Our position <<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=b468b8635f&e=02d22eb31d>> expresses our views on how to protect consumers in the development of European Standards on FinTech. Regrettably the consultation links standards exclusively to the role of industry, even though there is European legislation which recognises that standardisation concerns a spectrum of stakeholders, including consumers.

We think some consumer issues cannot be addressed only by legislation, and standards should play a role as they can define the way in which a product or service is designed or provided, before it is placed on the market.

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Market Surveillance Action for Tyres 2015

The first Newsletter<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=81330f9475&e=02d22eb31d>> of the Market Surveillance Action for Tyres 2015 (MSTyr15) was published by PROSAFE in May 2017. Prosafe intends to make it a regular publication to provide news about the MSTyr15<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=9effc66c32&e=02d22eb31d>> project which involves checks on 15.000 tyres, 1.500 inspections of technical documents and the testing of 150 models of tyres. These actions will be translated into other languages to have greater reach.

ANEC is a member of the advisory board of MSTyr15 which runs from 2016 to 2018.

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International Ergonomics Association Congress, August 2018

The 20th International Ergonomics Association Congress<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=7ce7f55a18&e=02d22eb31d>> will take place on 26-30 August 2018 in Florence. The event will be hosted by the Italian Society of Ergonomics and its theme is “Creativity in Practice”. It will be an occasion not only to share research and case studies, but to network with professionals from other countries.

The IEA wants to develop new scientific proposals for symposia and workshops on:

- 1) Evolution of international standards (Built environment, Product design, Safety, Social inclusion, Accessible technologies - for All);
- 2) Usability of the built environment (Accessibility, Safety, Communication systems, Inclusive activities and workshops, Way-finding and way-showing for - All);
- 3) Cultural and leisure tourism (welcoming, networking, facilities - for All).

A call for papers opens on 30 June 2017. For more information, contact Isabella Steffan (info@studiosteffan.it<<mailto:info@studiosteffan.it>>).

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SEED and the Silver Economy

SEED<<http://anec.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=f9b2ab120d&e=02d22eb31d>> is a EU-funded project under the Horizon 2020 programme. It aims to celebrate innovative ICT-related products or services that help to improve the quality of life of our senior citizens, and so strengthen the European silver economy.

The project started on 1 October 2016 and will end in September 2018. SEED, with its nine partners across Europe, is designed to ensure the successful launching of a visible and sustainable European-level award scheme that rewards innovative solutions which demonstrate a significant impact on the quality of life of the ageing population. The new scheme will rely upon a conceptual and operational approach. It is envisaged that the award scheme will be maintained under the auspices of the recently-launched European Covenant on Demographic Change, of which ANEC is a member.

The first award call was launched in June with deadline of 15 November 2017. For more information, please visit the website<<http://anec.us11.list-manage2.com/track/click?u=1ec6bfd908eb461aefcb8c558&id=358a72ebff&e=02d22eb31d>>.

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Raising standards for consumers

European Association for the Coordination of Consumer Representation in Standardisation aisbl

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