



# press release

## **COFACE's reaction on the revision of the Toy Safety Directive**

**5 December 2008**

December is a time when parents, grandparents and other relatives will be buying toys for young children. But do they know that many of these toys may contain toxic chemicals?

The problem is that people who buy toys are not always aware of the hazards.

On 25 January this year, the European Commission's DG Enterprise put up a proposal for a revision of Toy Safety Directive 88/378/EEC of 3 May 1988. On 6 June 2008, Marianne Thyssen MEP, a member of the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee (IMCO), presented a report amending the Commission proposal. The IMCO Committee adopted the revised Directive on 6 November.

The new draft Directive (which will be voted on by the EP on 16 December) aims to strengthen and update toy safety standards to address new hazards, not least those of toys imported into the EU from China.

But there are many gaps in the proposal: the precautionary principle is absent, no mechanisms for updating the Directive to accommodate new toxic substances, the derogation for the use of some carcinogens, etc.

As a European family consumer organization, COFACE has always had toy safety issues high on its agenda, reacting repeatedly to specific problems like phthalates and CE-marking.

**COFACE demands better information on the composition of toys and stricter rules that impose effective safety checks. It is disappointed that this proposal for a Directive does not give top priority to protecting the health of families' most vulnerable members - children and babies.**

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COFACE is a pluralistic organisation, at the heart of civil society, which aims at promoting family policy, solidarity between generations and the interests of children within the European Union. It defines family policy in Europe as being the family dimension of policies, programmes and initiatives developed at European Union level («family mainstreaming»).