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Press release

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Window blind cords: time for action

ANEC - the European Consumer Voice in Standardisation - and the European Child Safety Alliance welcome today's action from the European Commission on making parents aware of the dangers posed by window blind cords.

Roller blinds and window blinds can be found in many homes. Sadly, children are at risk of injury - or even strangulation - from cords used to operate the blinds. Indeed, several children have died following such accidents. The European Child Safety Alliance and ANEC advise parents to keep these cords out of reach of children and to ensure a cot, bed or playpen is not placed close to a window with corded blinds. Parents should also seek guidance from retailers about the use of existing safety devices to reduce the risks from blind cords.

Stephen Russell, ANEC Secretary-General, said "Some years ago, the safety standard EN 13120 was improved after a child in the UK died from strangulation. Despite this revision, ANEC remained concerned as certain blinds (e.g. roman shades) are not covered by the standard. Hence, we welcome the initiative from the European Commission to issue a standardisation mandate to CEN. We call CEN and its members to fulfill their obligations to the public interest and to involve child safety experts in the work, in order to ensure that all types of window blind are covered by more stringent safety requirements related to child safety. In terms of solutions, we need blinds without cords or cords only where they are essential. Those cords should not pose a strangulation hazard."

Joanne Vincenten, Director of the European Child Safety Alliance, said "In some ways, the greater problem is the vast number of blinds already in use. Those blinds will fall outside any new or revised standard, and raising public awareness to take preventive action is the only answer. We therefore fully support the Commission in making parents aware of the risk that window blind cords can pose to children."

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ANEC - Raising standards for consumers

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and conformity assessment as well as related legislation and public policies. ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and represents consumer organisations from 31 European countries. ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

The European Child Safety Alliance

The European Child Safety Alliance is a programme of EuroSafe – The European Association for Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion. The Alliance forms a platform for cooperation and partnership for European level child injury prevention. Direction is provided by the Alliance Steering Group, composed of representatives of more than 30 participating Member States and affiliated international child injury prevention organisations.

For more blind cord information, see www.chilsafetyeurope.org

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