

## “European Regulators at risk of bursting the European balloon industry”

On the 13th of March, the European Parliament casted a decisive vote adopting, with 603 members in favour, five against, and 15 abstentions its report on the proposed Toy Safety Regulation. The Members of the European Parliament showed their support to introducing a general ban on N-nitrosamines and N-nitrosatable substances in all toys. The lower limits to the proposed first draft of the Toy Safety Regulation made by the Commission and Parliament present a significant risk to the industry by setting limits that are virtually impossible to meet.

Amendment 256, tabled by the Members of the Parliament’s Environment and Safety Committee, sets a migration limit of 0,01 mg/kg for N-nitrosamines and 0,1 mg/kg for N-nitrosatable substances in all toys. Such an approach fails to recognise the differences set within the harmonised Toy Safety Standard EN 71-12 for different product groups and significantly lowers the already safe limits contained therein.

Marion Walsmann, the leading rapporteur on this file and EPP Member from Germany, emphasised shortly after the adoption of the Parliament’s opinion that the paramount goal of the revision of the rules about toys was safety, stating that children deserve the ‘safest toys possible’. The European Balloon & Party Council (EBPC) fully supports this goal and highlights the commitment of European balloon industry to ensuring children’s safety.

However, it also feels the need to point out that the safety of the current limit values of 0,05 mg/kg N-nitrosamines and 1,00 mg/kg N-nitrosatable substances for balloons, as set within the EN 71-12 standard, were re-iterated via the [Commission Decision 2012/160/EU](#). The safety and validity of the proposed lower limits has not been questioned on a scientific basis. The proposed changes put at risk around 9,000 direct jobs withing the EU balloon industry, which includes larger businesses as well as family-owned SMEs, who together contribute with an estimate of €2.3 billion annually to the European economy.

In December 2023, the EU-wide enforcement [project](#) carried out by ECHA’s Forum found out that the non-compliance rates for consumer goods were higher for products originating from outside the European Economic Area (EEA) (21%) or of unknown origin (22%). Given the majority of non-compliant toys originate from beyond EU borders who do not respect the existing safe limits that are carefully adhered to by reputable EU businesses, EBPC suggests better protection for children through stricter enforcement of current safety standards rather than lowering those that are already considered safe.

The EBPC calls upon Member States to align the Toy Safety Regulation limits with the harmonised standard EN 71-12. This alignment is crucial to prevent the new regulation from inadvertently favouring non-compliant products from outside the EU, recognising the vital need to maintain children's safety while also enabling European businesses to continue supplying safe balloons to the market.

A blue ink signature of Suteesh Chumber, consisting of a stylized 'S' followed by a wavy line.

**Suteesh Chumber**  
Director General

A blue ink signature of Sebastian Kutzner, consisting of the letters 'S.K.' in a stylized font.

**Sebastian Kutzner**  
Chairman