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## Press release

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### Baby walkers: new joint position statement illuminates continued risks

The European Child Safety Alliance and ANEC, the European Consumer Voice in Standardization, have released a joint position statement and background paper about the risk of injuries to young children caused by baby walkers. The position statement is endorsed and supported by ECSA and ANEC country partners, representing expert organizations from over 30 EU countries coming together to state concern about the risk of severe injuries caused by this unnecessary product.

In many European countries, baby walkers are linked to more injuries than any other type of nursery equipment, causing an unacceptably high number of severe falls, burns and scalds and poisonings. European data shows that 90% of baby walker injuries are to the head, with over 30% causing brain injury.

Unfortunately most parents believe that the baby walker is a safe place to leave a child or they believe that this product will help a child learn to walk. Sadly, neither is true. Baby walkers may interfere with a child's ability to learn to walk while increasing the risk of injuries. The majority of these injuries are caused by falls, especially down stairs. The second largest risk is burns and scalds caused by the baby reaching dangerous items that were previously beyond reach (such as kettles or heaters). It is most often the face and chest area where children suffer burns and scalds while in baby walkers, leaving the scars for a lifetime.

Due to the fact that baby walkers are neither a walking aid nor an essential nursery product, and as their use can lead to hazardous situations, the European country partners of ECSA and ANEC do not promote their use.

Joanne Vincenten, Director of the European Child Safety Alliance, said "it is tragic that this unnecessary product has been related to so many devastating injuries to children in countries all over Europe and the world. We urge health care providers to educate parents about the risks, and to promote the many safer alternatives, such as stationary baby activity centres."

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Stephen Russell, ANEC Secretary-General, said “we would agree if the European Commission were to propose a total ban of the product, however, as long as baby walkers are still for sale on the European market, parents should make sure that safety barriers are installed in the house to prevent falls down stairs and access to dangerous places like e.g. the kitchen. In addition to that, awareness campaigns about the risks are necessary, as well as enforcement activities to make sure that baby walkers available on the European market are complying with the European standard EN 1273:2005. We welcome the ongoing joint market surveillance action being conducted by ProSafe, and hope that the results will be acted upon.”

For a detailed look at patterns of baby walker injuries and recommended prevention measures, read the position statement and the background paper at: [www.childsafetyeurope.org](http://www.childsafetyeurope.org) and [www.anec.eu](http://www.anec.eu).

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## 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. The programme, founded in 2000, is hosted by the Consumer Safety Institute in the Netherlands. Core funding is provided in partnership with the European Commission, the Consumer Safety Institute in the Netherlands and Johnson & Johnson Europe.

## 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.

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