

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001661/26
to the Commission
Mohammed Chahim (S&D), Kim Van Sparrentak (Verts/ALE)
(22 April 2026)**

Subject: Asbestos in children's toys and the functioning of Safety Gate

According to recent research, asbestos has been found in various types of toys containing so-called play sand. Asbestos is a carcinogenic substance and poses a serious risk to public health and the environment, particularly for children.

Despite the fact that the European Union has strict rules regarding toy safety ⁽¹⁾ and that the Safety Gate system is designed to identify and remove dangerous products from the market swiftly, journalistic research by the Dutch daily newspaper *Algemeen Dagblad* ⁽²⁾ has revealed that reports of dangerous products do not always appear in this system in a timely or complete manner.

1. Can the Commission explain to what extent it can guarantee that notifications from competent national authorities are published in Safety Gate in full and in a timely manner?
2. Is the Commission prepared, in cases involving a potentially serious risk to vulnerable groups such as children, to also include preventive or provisional warnings in Safety Gate?
3. What steps is the Commission taking, in cooperation with authorities in third countries, to strengthen controls on high-risk products such as play sand prior to export to the EU, so that such products do not reach the European market?

Submitted: 22.4.2026

**Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(15 June 2026)**

In accordance with Articles 26(3) and (4) of the regulation on General Product Safety ⁽¹⁾ Member States are obliged to notify any corrective measures taken by their authorities or by economic operators against producers presenting a serious risk to the health and safety of consumers to the Safety Gate Rapid Alert System within four days after the corrective measures are taken, and the Commission has also 4 days for validation.

In November 2025, Australian authorities alerted the Commission about toy sands containing asbestos. This was immediately shared with Member States, urging vigilance and mandatory reporting via Safety Gate if such items were found. Early 2026, the Commission followed up, seeking feedback on voluntary business measures, safety incidents, and accidents via the Safety Business Gateway ⁽²⁾.

The Commission also organised in parallel a discussion on a methodology for asbestos detection in toy sands with Member States. Initial tests revealed that only a limited number of samples contained asbestos posing serious risk. These cases were reported in a timely manner in Safety Gate, alongside voluntary recalls by businesses.

Safety Gate itself provides information about corrective measures taken against unsafe products but its portal ⁽³⁾ also hosts broader product safety information.

This case shows the importance for the Commission to collaborate with a wide range of international partners, both the ones with a similar market and manufacturing countries. For example, an administrative arrangement sets up a mechanism through which Chinese authorities follow up on EU alerts of dangerous products originating from China.

¹ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/toys/toy-safety_en.

² <https://www.ad.nl/economie/in-zeker-zeventig-soorten-speelgoed-is-asbest-gevonden-maar-nergens-is-makkelijk-te-vinden-in-welke-precies~a89b42f6/>.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2023/988 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 on general product safety, amending Regulation (EU) No 1025/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Directive (EU) 2020/1828 of the European Parliament and the Council, and repealing Directive 2001/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Directive 87/357/EEC (Text with EEA relevance).

⁽²⁾ <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/safety-business-gateway>.

⁽³⁾ <https://ec.europa.eu/safety-gate-alerts/>.