

Dear guests,

Dear colleagues,

Allow me first to welcome you to that lunch that will evoke a topic that is very close to my heart, a topic on which I have been working since I have come to the IMCO Committee in January 2017 - *product safety*.

Before coming on the details on how we can help each other to make the products circulating in the EU market safer, let me first thank EMOTA for bringing such knowledgeable and brilliant speakers together, and for the organization of the lunch, and especially Triin and Alien that have been working so hard.

A lot of you have noticed that the IMCO Committee voted on the Compliance & Enforcement file together. I have been working very hard with my shadows colleagues in order to improve an already well-drafted proposal from the Commission and I am confident that the vote of yesterday sent a strong signal to both businesses and consumers that the EU cares about

strengthening product safety. As said in the event invitation, the vast growth and unprecedented volume of physical goods entering Europe and other large markets each day, this presents new challenges for customs authorities. I really hope that this piece of legislation will help them cope with those challenges.

And why is product safety so important to us? A common market is built on the value of trust. Consumers and businesses must trust that the products that they buy hold the same standards all around the Union, that the same strict controls on the same products will be applied all around the Union, and that the product that are not of sufficient quality or are not respecting the EU safety standards will not be sold on the Single Market. Trust is fundamental in order to deepen the Single Market.

Nevertheless, due to insufficient enforcement of EU rules by market surveillance authorities, far too many products circulating in the EU market are even today not complying with the relevant EU rules. I cannot underline enough the seriousness of this lack of

enforcement: it is a **direct threat** to the health of our citizens, to our environment, to the safety of our houses, etc. It enables non-serious businesses to distort competition and gain illegal competitive advantage in the Single Market. And this threat is very real: according to the European Commission, *2126 notifications of dangerous products were submitted by Member States in 2016.*

In our discussions on the proposal, we therefore made sure to set explicit obligations on how market surveillance shall be organised at the national level.

We made sure that cooperation between market surveillance authorities will be enhanced, since many infringements against EU safety rules happen not only in one Member State, but in a large number of them.

We made sure to designate a minimum set of powers that market surveillance authorities should have, so that Member states will automatically know to which door to knock if they want to request information or ask for enforcement of a decision.

And we made sure to reinforce market surveillance in the online sector.

I really hope that we can an exchange of views on our vote of yesterday, and on how you see the future of market surveillance and product safety from your perspective,

Let me again welcome you to the lunch,

Thank you.