A €2 Handling Fee Will Not be Enough To Protect Consumers, Nor Protect EU Business from Unfair Competition

17 June 2025

We welcome the symbolic measure of a proposed €2 handling fee for goods purchased from non-EU online sellers and directly imported into the EU. However, by introducing this measure through the halted Union Customs Code negotiations, crucial time is lost as 12 million parcels are imported in the EU each day without proper controls. Additional action is immediately needed, as in itself this won't be sufficient to address the real issue: the daily flood of unsafe and non-compliant products reaching EU consumers through online platforms, without anyone being accountable for their safety.

Such a minimal fee – which stands in sharp contrast with the $100 fee recently imposed by the US - will not halt the flow of non-compliant products and risks becoming a tax to allow non-compliant products in the EU. €2 should not be the price to put consumers, including young children, at risk. It would not enable customs to test all incoming parcels. Actual testing usually means opening the package and often destroying the product, making it impossible to send it to the final consumer. Controls will mainly stay limited to documentation checks.

Crucially, this measure does nothing to tackle the broader consumer protection problem. It allows non-compliant sellers to retain an unfair advantage over EU-based companies that invest in product safety and meet stringent regulatory standards. Responsible businesses are being undercut by competitors who ignore EU rules and offer cheaper, riskier alternatives.

There is a serious risk that this tool will be used as a mean to postpone the much-needed measures to ensure that online marketplaces are held accountable when there is no EU-based responsible party and that they are recognised as economic operators. To ensure both consumer safety and foster competitiveness, the EU must go beyond superficial measures. The real solution lies in closing legal loopholes that currently allow online platforms to act as facilitators in the sale of unsafe goods—including toys for babies, apparel, footwear, child care articles, household appliances, lighting products, and other high-risk items—without accountability.

Online platforms must have more due diligence obligations before they allow products to be listed and be held liable when no responsible party exists within the EU. Such measures will make them more careful in the selection of their sellers.

While the proposed deemed importer responsibility is a positive step, it should go hand in hand with effective sanctions and apply beyond the point of entry to avoid the product not having anyone responsible for its safety once it passed the border. Urgent, immediate action is needed at Commission, Member States and Parliament level to protect EU consumers and businesses.

APPLiA – Home Appliance Europe

applia-europe.eu

CEC - European Footwear Confederation

cec-footwearindustry.eu

EFIC - European Furniture Industries Confederation

efic.eu

ENPC - European Nursery Products Confederation

enpc.eu

EURATEX - The European Apparel and Textile Confederation

euratex.eu

LightingEurope – The Voice of the Lighting Industry

lightingeurope.org

TIE – Toy Industries of Europe

toyindustries.eu