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**DIRECTORATE FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION
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**BUTTON BATTERY SAFETY: REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS WEEK
PROGRAMME**

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FOREWORD

On 16-20 June 2014, the OECD organised an international awareness week to highlight safety concerns with the small batteries that are used in many toys and electronic devices. This document provides a summary of the activities, which were organised by the OECD's Working Party on Consumer Product Safety. It was finalised and declassified by the parent Committee on Consumer Policy in December 2014. The document is published on the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD.

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BUTTON BATTERY SAFETY: REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS WEEK PROGRAMME

Synopsis

Running from 16 to 20 June 2014, the OECD-led International Awareness Week on Button Battery Safety aimed to raise awareness worldwide of the risks and dangers posed by a product that is present in nearly every home around the world: small batteries that are used in a variety of products, and are commonly referred to as “button batteries”.

Led by the OECD and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the aim of the programme was to ensure that relevant authorities and other stakeholders take the necessary precautions to reduce the risk of injury and death amongst consumers using button batteries. Consumers worldwide need to be aware of the serious injuries that such products can cause if children swallow them.

The co-ordinated approach also targeted business, encouraging good practices on button battery safety, in particular with respect to warnings, packaging and product design.

In addition to national and regional campaigns, the issues were addressed in Brussels on 17 June 2014, during [International Product Safety Week](#).

Participation and collaboration

At least 26 jurisdictions and authorities participated in the programme (Table 1). They co-ordinated media, social media, online and on-site initiatives throughout the awareness week:

Table 1. Jurisdictions and authorities participating in button battery awareness week

Australia	Finland	New Zealand
Austria	France	Organization of American States
Brazil	Greece	OECD
Canada	Hungary	Peru
Chile	Japan	Portugal
Colombia	Korea	Russia
Cyprus ^{1,2}	Latvia	Spain
Denmark	Mexico	United States
European Commission	Malta	

¹ Footnote by Turkey. The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”.

² Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union. The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

The participants collaborated on:

- information sharing;
- key message development; and
- co-ordination of online and media activities.

Global injury data

During the programme development phase, working group members shared information on injuries in their jurisdictions. Annex I provides button battery injury data from 12 countries.

Communication messages

Three key messages were developed to support the campaign:

- Consumers worldwide need to be aware of the serious injuries that button batteries can cause if children swallow them. The international campaign being led by the OECD to promote such awareness will boost our collective efforts in this regard.
- The co-ordinated approach being pursued through the OECD aims to boost pro-active actions by businesses to promote good practices on button battery safety, in particular with respect to warnings, packaging and product design.
- The OECD is taking the lead in co-ordinating International Awareness Week on Button Batteries. It is a good example of how regulators working together in an international organisation such as the OECD can have an important and positive impact on our daily lives.

In addition to these messages, the OECD released the following quote:

“The OECD is playing a leading role in bringing together regulators from across the globe to tackle the enormous product safety challenges we all face.

Information sharing is the key to making a difference. Sharing information on the serious injuries and deaths of children who have ingested button batteries – the small circular lithium batteries that are used to power a growing number of gadgets and toys – is a case in point.

The OECD Working Party on Consumer Product Safety has initiated a campaign to raise awareness of this product safety challenge among consumers and the medical profession. Global action days are planned during 16-20 June 2014. This shows how an international organisation such as the OECD can have an important and positive impact on our daily lives.”

Andrew Wyckoff, Director of the OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Innovation

Engagement and reach

The International Awareness Week attracted media, social media engagement and local events across the world. The button battery event at the international product safety conference in Brussels, Belgium was a highlight. A well-attended event (over 100 participants) organised by the European Commission, it included media interviews with EC Commissioner Neven Mimica and US CPSC

Chairman-designate Elliot Kaye, a demonstration (using ham) of the impacts of battery ingestion and presentations by the EC, OECD, a medical professional and a consumer campaign expert.³

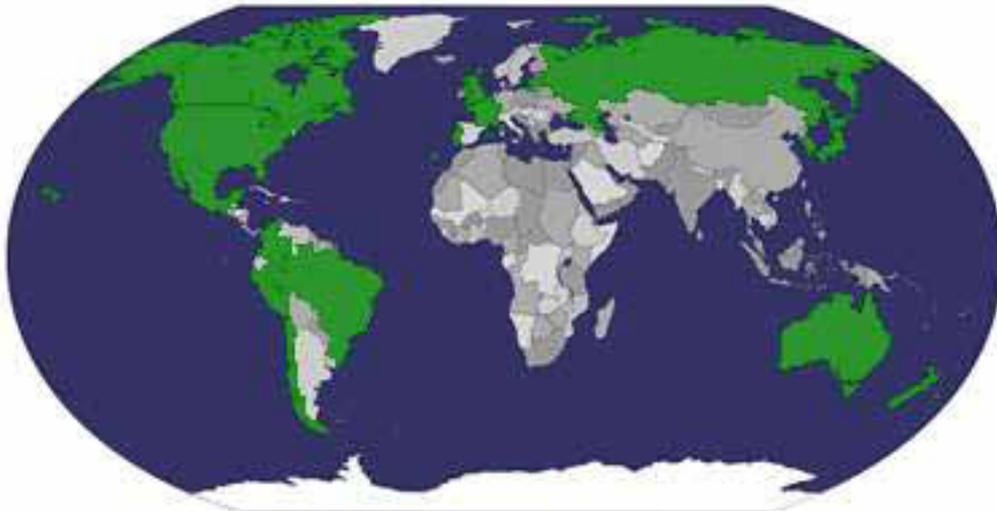
Annex II provides links to media releases and online content that was promoted during the week.

Online and social media engagement

There was extensive online and social media engagement throughout the week. The campaign reached an estimated 50 million people worldwide over Twitter and Facebook, and achieved close to 2.5 million impressions of the hashtag across Twitter and Facebook. With over 100 social media profiles participating in the campaign, an estimated 160 posts were shared across Twitter and Facebook about button battery safety featuring the hashtag *#worldbatterysafety* (in English, French and Spanish).

Below is an infographic of online and social media engagement around the world on button battery safety during the awareness week (Figure 1):

Figure 1. Button battery week: Infographic of online and social media



³ Video clips from the event are available at: <http://tinyurl.com/ox8zxl> and <http://tinyurl.com/ltebn2m>.

ANNEX I: GLOBAL INJURY AND DEATH DATA

Country	Data
Australia	An estimated five children per week are treated in an emergency department for a button battery related injury. One death has been reported.
Austria	Between 2005 and 2011, Austrian hospitals reported 14 cases of hospital admission due to button battery ingestion.
Brazil	There have been media reports of up to 4 incidents of button battery ingestion.
Canada	According to the Canadian Hospitals Injury Reporting and Prevention Program (CHIRPP), an average of 65 emergency room visits per year have been associated with button batteries at participating CHIRPP hospitals (11 paediatric, 6 general). Of these incidents, 70% were ingestion incidents and 16% were related to the ear or nose. About 70% of the patients were between the ages of 1 and 4 years.
Croatia	Hospitalisation due to button battery ingestion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2013 - 5 cases - 2 boys (2 years old) and 3 girls (1, 2 and 7 years old) • 2012 - 6 cases - 3 boys (3 years old) and 3 girls (1.5-3 years old) • 2011 - 14 cases - 5 boys (1-3 years old (mostly 3 years old boys) and 1 adult (25 years old); 8 girls (1.5 – 4 years old (average 2 years old)
France	In a study of 10 hospitals in France, the number of button-battery related accidents between 2005 and 2012 was 248. Extrapolating this number to 600 hospitals, would result in a global estimate of 1 240 accidents involving button batteries per year. Considering the size of the French population, these estimates lead to an accident ratio in metropolitan France of close to 15 / 100 000 (which compares to the NEISS estimate for the USA comprised between 10 and 20 / 100 000) Accidents are most likely for children who are between the ages of 1 and 4. In 60% of the reported cases, the accident happened while the children were playing. In 23% of the cases, the children had to be hospitalised (compared to an average of 6% for all domestic accidents involving children). The latest fatal accident occurred on 20 March 2014 and involved a baby girl aged 18 months.
Japan	From December 2010 to March 2014, Healthcare Facilities (24 hospitals in Japan) reported 93 battery-related injuries, including confirmed or possible battery ingestions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the total 93 cases, 42 cases were unconfirmed ingestions that could not be positively excluded. • This number includes 10 cases of hospital admission. • Age: ≤ 3 years : 91 cases (98%) One-year-old : 54 cases (58%)
Korea	In the past four years, a total of 254 cases of button battery ingestions have been reported to the CISS (Consumer Injury Surveillance System), which collects data from emergency departments. Of the 254, 164 cases involved children under 12 months of age.
Latvia	In April 2014 the Children's Clinical University Hospital of Latvia reported the death of a one year old child after swallowing a button battery.
New Zealand	The National Poisons Centre in New Zealand received 175 button battery related calls during 2011–2013.

United Kingdom	There have been reports of a 13-month old boy who died in December 2013 and one severe case reported in April this year due to button battery ingestion.
United States	<p>An estimated 50 000 emergency department visits related to battery ingestion occurred from 1990 to 2009. The majority of reported incidents involved 20 mm diameter, or larger, 3 volt batteries.</p> <p>Every year 3 500 injuries caused specifically by button batteries are registered in the centres of poison control in US. The numbers of severe injuries and deaths are increasing.</p> <p>The US National Poison Capital Centre has reports of up to 35 deaths relating to button battery ingestions.</p>

ANNEX II. MEDIA RELEASES AND ONLINE CONTENT LINKS

Jurisdiction	Links to content
Australia	Media release Website with poster and fact card Video (general safety) Video (Hunter's story)
Austria	Warning on the dangers of button batteries
Brazil	Safety video Button battery safety website
Canada	Media release
Chile	Media release Hidden danger of products that run on button batteries Hidden button battery danger – What are they? (PART 1) Hidden button battery danger (PART 2)
Cyprus ⁴	Announcement on button batteries
European Commission	Media release
Finland	Media release
France	Media release
Hungary	Announcement on button batteries
Japan	Media release
Korea	Media release Poster & Leaflet Consumer education materials page Consumer surveillance system
Latvia	Media release Safety tips
Mexico	Tweets
New Zealand	Media release Safety video & website
OECD	International Awareness Week website Message from OECD Director
Peru	Video 1 on dangers of button batteries Video 2 on dangers of button batteries
Federation of Russia	Media release
Spain	Announcement on button batteries
United States	Media release Button battery quiz Safety video

⁴ See footnotes 1 and 2.