



Press release

Bonn, 24 November 2021

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Bundesnetzagentur warns about hazardous online shopping deals in the holiday season

Jochen Homann: "Take a closer look whenever you come across a bargain online. Certain products can endanger people's health and safety."

With Christmas approaching, the Bundesnetzagentur is again warning about purchasing products that could cause radio interference or endanger people's health.

"Online merchants are still finding ways to circumvent European rules," said Jochen Homann, Bundesnetzagentur President. "Many e-commerce products are missing a CE marking or information for a contact person located in the European Union."

A lot of cheap products and poor-quality Christmas lighting

Currently the Bundesnetzagentur is also frequently seeing non-compliant USB battery chargers and action cameras. Many electrical products seem at first glance to be very good deals, but in reality they are low-quality products that cause radio interference, fail to deliver the quality that was promised, or can endanger people's health, for example through electric shock.

In recent weeks the Bundesnetzagentur has identified an increasing number of LED products of all types, especially Christmas lights, that do not meet legal requirements. The products range from simple LED lights to LED recessed luminaires and ceiling lights or outdoor lighting (LED floodlights). Colour changing lights and other indoor and outdoor Christmas lights are popular purchase items in the days and weeks leading up to Christmas. Especially in e-commerce, prices of these products are often significantly lower than those of reputable brand-name products. This can be an indicator for inferior quality or non-compliance with legal requirements.

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New: EU contact persons must provide their address

The Market Surveillance Act, in conjunction with the new European Market Surveillance Regulation, has been in effect in Germany since 16 July 2021. Under the Act electrical and radio equipment, for example, must now not only bear a CE marking, but must also clearly show an economic operator that is located in the European Union. If there are any defects, the economic operator ensures that corrective action will be taken without delay. The economic operator's address must be provided on the product or its packaging, on the parcel or in an accompanying document. This also applies to shipments made directly to the consumer from retailers in third countries.

Market surveillance by the Bundesnetzagentur

The Bundesnetzagentur regularly tests electrical devices and radio-based products, sometimes also because of information received from consumers. The tests are conducted both online and in-store. Anonymous test purchases are also made. Furthermore, the Bundesnetzagentur works closely with the customs authorities to stop non-compliant products at the external border of the European Union market. Nevertheless, products that do not meet European standards and safety requirements continue to make their way to consumers. Any non-compliant products can no longer be offered for sale and are subject to market-restricting measures.

Online orders: tips for consumers

- Order online through reputable, well-known sources. Obtain information beforehand about the trader, for example from a consumer centre.
- Check if there is an EU address where you can contact the trader or the trader's partner. This address must be provided on the product or its packaging, on the parcel or in an accompanying document.
- Ensure that there are general terms and conditions as well as cancellation and return policies/instructions.



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- Check the product description thoroughly. Pay particular attention to whether German instructions are mentioned.
- The price should be reasonable in comparison with those of competitors.
- If you are unsure, ask the trader questions about the product. Reputable sellers are glad to respond to questions quickly.
- When purchasing technical products, make sure a proper plug for use in Germany is included.

Further information about the Bundesnetzagentur's market surveillance is available here (in German): www.bundesnetzagentur.de/marktueberwachung.

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The Bundesnetzagentur is an authority under the responsibility of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy. Its core tasks include supervising the energy, telecommunications, postal and railway markets.

As part of its mandate, the Bundesnetzagentur ensures that as many undertakings as possible can use the infrastructure in these sectors so that consumers benefit from competition and favourable prices.

The authority employs over 2,900 people at its headquarters in Bonn and Mainz and its 46 regional offices.

