



Project: Accident data in relation to playground equipment

Background

Standards are there to guarantee the free market on the one hand and to guarantee basic quality / safety on the other.

For playground equipment, the EN1176 series of standards is intended to describe that basic safety level. This basic safety is necessary as children do not yet have all the basic competences to make 100% independent decisions regarding their personal safety. Playground equipment is designed and manufactured by adults. And adults literally have a different view of play. A possible consequence is that children do not see certain dangers where they are obvious to adults.

History of the EN1176 series of standards

The EN1176 series of standards was created because of a harmonisation of national standards. The content of these national standards was strongly based on knowledge available within the manufacturers of playground equipment. Many of these data were taken over during harmonization. But now it has been established that the why of the requirements can often no longer be determined. The morphological data that are still used have actually been (partially) retrieved. The combination of both makes it virtually impossible to make well-founded decisions about the standard content. And that is also reflected in the wet finger work when drawing up risk assessments.

After more than 20 years, the demand is getting louder and louder to review the existing standard content. A first step has recently been taken within CEN TC136 SC1 by a working group that has to "embellish" the EN1176-1 standard. If we want to move towards "evidence-based" decision-making, it is necessary to have a clear detailed view of the accidents that are currently occurring on playground equipment or playgrounds. And that's where the problem lies.

The currently available data are either outdated, insufficiently detailed or both. And in the majority of cases, they also come from other continents.

Methodology

With a few exceptions, there is no structured recording of accident data related to the use of playground equipment. The research will start from the existing datasets that are available. At the same time, an online notification form is started to ensure more recent data. This option will be actively promoted by all actors in the playground equipment world. In addition to operators and users, we also focus the investigation on manufacturers and suppliers of playground equipment as they are the first point of contact for the authorities investigating accidents in the event of incidents or accidents. They will also receive direct notifications from users or their distributors. The various European market supervisors are also involved in the data collection process. The ultimate scenario is ultimately that treatment in first aid routinely collects a basic set of data that has the minimum mass necessary for making decisions regarding basic safety in playground equipment.



Objective

By both analyzing existing data and collecting new data at a central point, this should result in more concrete detailed data that becomes available. What happens in what circumstances and what are the consequences for the users of the playground equipment? To what extent is the use of the playground equipment the real cause of the accident? Are there any trends noticeable with certain types of devices? What severity are the injuries sustained in relation to the accident?

Advantages

Normalization

The newly acquired insights can include. used to adjust the existing standards. Which standard requirements can be made milder or perhaps even simply removed? What is missing from the existing standard versions? Ultimately, more concrete and targeted requirements will ensure a more manageable and applicable set of standards.

Market surveillance

With this data, market supervisors can plan their actions evidence-based, allowing them to switch from reacting to acting in an ever faster evolving market. Supervision will therefore be able to be carried out with a greater focus on the real priorities. And that within their available time budget.

Consumer associations

Consumer associations can better fulfil their role on the basis of correct concrete data . They can check whether the data corresponds to the reports they record themselves and thus set up actions that have a major impact on their main stakeholder, the consumer.

Producers

From the idea phase about production to the after-sales service, accident data is an excellent tool to test whether you as a producer are making the right decisions. Especially the prevention of accidents on devices is important.

Inspection and certification bodies

Inspection and maintenance are an integral part of the process to prevent accidents. But since devices regularly deviate from the existing EN standard, having the right accident data is crucial to be able to make a well-substantiated risk assessment. This data will facilitate organisations to better arm their staff in the execution of their important task in addition to the implementation of their checks.