

Pirated Child Restraint Systems with false ECE approval marks

FIA, FIA Foundation and Consumers International/ANEC were made aware¹ of a case of a pirated Child Restraint System (CRS) fitted with falsified approval marks. This adds up to the Infanti case reported at the 46th session (GRSP-46-25).

The CRS concerned is an exact copy (including copying the trade name “Chicco”) of the “Chicco Neptune”, with the E4 approval label 04443608. The original Neptune is brought to the market by “Artsana” in Italy. Their Hungarian representative brought this copied seat to their attention. The CRS is already available on the market in Hungary and it can be expected that this seat will also be available in other countries of the European community in due time.

The approval number on the copied child restraint system is issued by RDW (NL) and belongs to “Zhenjiang Feng Baby Products”. It has been issued for a universal approval for a group 0+ child restraint system (0 – 13 kg).

However according to the information on the approval label this CRS has a universal approval for mass groups I/II/III (9 – 36 kg). The CRS is provided with a group 0+ buckle only, and not a group I buckle as it should be!!

In this case there is no guarantee that the CRS will provide the level of protection that consumers may expect. This CRS will definitely not meet the requirements as described in Regulation No. 44. Consumers are not only misled, but also put at risk in case of an accident.

Besides consumers also bona fide manufacturers are at risk when illegally copied products are brought to the market. Both “Artsana” and “Zhenjiang Feng Baby Products” are very concerned, as it may have very serious implications. Their trade name and/or approval number are abused which, in case of an accident, may lead to needlessly complicated liability cases.

In order to get a better understanding of the situation the manufacturer of the copied seat was asked for copies of the certificates. On this request copies of 5 certificates for different child restraint systems were received. Two of these potential ‘fake’ certificates have been issued by the German Federal Motor Transport Authority- KBA (E1) and three by the Dutch approval authority - RDW (E4). One of them concerns the case mentioned above and can be confirmed as a falsification.

Both KBA and RDW have been informed. A worrying element in their responses is that they are aware of an increasing number of falsified approval marks; however they see very limited possibilities to tackle this problem.

FIA, FIA Foundation and Consumers International/ANEC are very concerned that a good-working certification system is being abused and therefore ECE R44 approvals cannot be trusted anymore by consumers. UN-ECE, being the owner of the approval system and responsible for its credibility, is urgently called for stringent policing.

With respect to the European Directive 2001/95/EC this product is considered dangerous and therefore RAPEX (EU rapid alert system for all dangerous consumer products) will be informed on this.

¹ An extensive dossier was made available to FIA, FIA Foundation and Consumers International/ANEC