

# GAMBICA

## LOVELY JUBBLY! WANNA BUY A WATCH?

Counterfeit electrotechnical products can damage a company's reputation and business, and sometimes even lead to injuries or death. As Alan Birks, deputy director of Gambica\*, explains, a pan-European initiative has been launched to help to stamp out fake products. And you may be able to help.

Another period of summer holidays has come, and almost gone, and no doubt many of us have witnessed the annoying presence of "knock off" watch or handbag salesmen on the beaches. While they may be irritating, we probably give little thought to the impact that these individuals are having on the original brands. Indeed, under the influence of maybe too many drinks, you might even make a purchase, accepting that the product may not last long or operate correctly.

**COUNTERFEIT**

However, now that you are back at work, think what it would be like if you lost your job due to the increasing sales of fake products or the falling reputation of your company which could result from these inferior products carrying your brand name. Worse still, think of the potential human misery caused if a factory fire occurs as a result of a counterfeit electrical product.

It is imperative that we keep fraudulent counterfeits out of our market. It is equally vital that all products comply with the relevant standards and regulations. Non-compliant

products can be dangerous and potentially lethal if they do not meet the requirements of the appropriate standards and regulations.

Market surveillance is essential to ensure that products on sale in the EU comply with existing legislation and, in doing so, protect consumers from fraudulent products.

European manufacturers of electrical infrastructure and installation products and systems who are members of national associations such as AFME, ANIE, Beama, FIEEC, Gambica, Gimelec and ZVEI – and, in turn, members of European associations such as Orgalime, Capiel and Cecapi – have agreed to act proactively to support the national authorities in their market surveillance.

A collective European Market Surveillance Support Initiative (MSSI) has been set up with representatives of companies in this sector to support market surveillance across Europe.

This initiative is being led jointly by Cecapi and Capiel and is being serviced by Orgalime. Current participants include ABB, Benedict, Eaton, Hager, Legrand, Schneider Electric and

Siemens, who are inviting other parties to join the initiative.

The industry has set out a call-for-action to strengthen market surveillance by focusing on three areas:

- strengthening the pan-EU cooperation in market surveillance;
- intensifying cooperation among national market surveillance authorities; and
- increasingly involving industry in market surveillance activities.

Within the UK, several trade associations have collaborated to set up an Electrotechnical Market Surveillance (EMS) group. This group includes associations for the cable (ACI), lighting (LIA),

electrotechnical (Gambica and Beama) and electronics (Esco) sectors, all of whom have set up market surveillance initiatives.

Gambica and Beama are also representing the UK as part of the European MSSI initiative, which covers all of the products in our sectors.

Significantly, the Electronic Systems Community, Esco, is also part of this initiative because many Gambica members use electronic components in their products and it is vital that these components are fully compliant.

The initiative will involve the Gambica members identifying and suggesting products that they regard as being suspicious. Thereafter, these products will be acquired on the open market by some of the members and tested by one of them. If this testing confirms their suspicions, then third-party testing will take place, the results of which will be presented to the authorities for action.

Gambica is inviting *Drives and Controls* readers to get involved in the initiative. If you have any suspicions regarding counterfeit and/or non-compliant products, please contact Alan Birks who is representing Gambica on the MSSI group. ■



\* Gambica is the trade association for the automation, control, instrumentation and laboratory technology sectors in the UK. You can contact the deputy director, Alan Birks, via [alan.birks@gambica.org.uk](mailto:alan.birks@gambica.org.uk) or [www.gambica.org.uk](http://www.gambica.org.uk)