



Strålsäkerhetsmyndigheten

Swedish Radiation Safety Authority

European Commission
Health & Consumers Directorate-General
B - 1049 Brussels
Belgium

3 November 2010

Dear Sir/Madam

We would like to draw your attention to the serious concern of the radiation safety authorities in Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden regarding the widespread misuse of powerful laser pointers. The radiation safety authorities in these countries encourage the European Commission to begin preparing European legislation covering battery-powered lasers, including import restrictions on laser pointers for the general public. Battery-operated lasers are not subject to the Low Voltage Directive.

The beam power of these laser pointers may be several hundred mW. Such laser beams can in a split second cause permanent damage to the eye, resulting in partial blindness or distorted vision.

These powerful laser pointers have become both available and affordable to the general public. As a consequence, their misuse has increased tremendously. They are used for long-range abuse, e.g. harassing other persons, flash-blinding police officers and even disturbing air traffic by blinding pilots. This problem is basically the same for all countries within the European Economic Area (EEA).

The main sources of these powerful laser pointers currently appear to be countries outside the EEA. In order to reduce the availability of these laser pointers for the general public, several EU Member States, e.g. Austria, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, have already enacted national legislation. However, import restrictions in one country within the EEA are rendered less effective when the lasers can enter via another country without such import restrictions.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the radiation safety authorities in Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden strongly urge the European Commission to immediately begin preparing a European Directive for battery-powered la-

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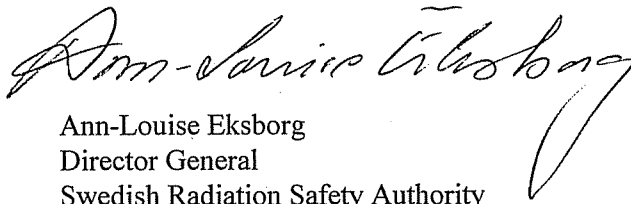
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sers and establish import restrictions on such items. The radiation safety authorities in these countries also propose a ban on overly powerful laser pointers for the general public. Only Class 1 and 2 laser pointers having a maximum power of 1 mW are recommended for the general public, and only if they comply with the European laser standard EN 60825-1.

Yours faithfully



Ann-Louise Eksborg
Director General
Swedish Radiation Safety Authority