

Product safety in online retail: Federal Council opens consultation on partial revision of the PrSG

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At a glance

- The Federal Council opened the consultation on the partial revision of the Federal Act on Product Safety last week.
- The central question is how the safety of products can be effectively enforced in the rapidly growing online trade.
- Distortions in quality and standards in cross-border online trade are serious issues that absolutely must be addressed in the revision.

The Product Safety Act (PrSG) has been in force since 2010. Since then, the trade in goods has changed significantly: More and more products are being ordered online and delivered directly from abroad to users in Switzerland - often from suppliers that are difficult for the authorities to access. This is precisely where the bill comes in. It aims to bring product safety up to current standards, strengthen market surveillance in online trade and prevent products from circulating in Switzerland that would not be marketable elsewhere. The point of reference here is recent developments in the European environment; however, a solution that fits the Swiss market and is internationally compatible remains crucial.</p></div>
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<p>In concrete terms, the bill makes economic operators more accountable: fulfillment service providers and providers of online marketplaces are now also included. The Federal Council should also be able to demand that a responsible person based in Switzerland be appointed for a product - a point of contact for authorities and consumers.</p></div>
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<h2>A targeted approach</h2></div>
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<p>From an economic policy perspective, it is generally to be welcomed that the challenges of global digital forms of trade are being addressed in a targeted manner. The proposal identifies a specific problem - distortions in quality and standards in cross-border online trade. It proposes an answer where the problems actually arise, in product safety and thus in the introduction and application in Switzerland. This avoids fundamental interventions in the law, while at the same time clarifying responsibilities. The idea of a level playing field is central to this: Competition should be decided on performance and not on who can most easily evade scrutiny. However, this requires careful structuring. In particular, it must be ensured that international connectivity is maintained and that there are no unnecessary regulatory hurdles that hinder innovation and market access.</p></div>
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<h2>Assessment still open</h2></div>
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<p>However, a final assessment would be premature. economiesuisse is examining the proposal and will be involved in the consultation process until September 28, 2026.</p></div>
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