Audiovisual and information services: protection of minors and human dignity. Follow-up of Green Paper

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OBJECTIVE: to propose a series of recommendations to protect minors in audiovisual and information services. SUBSTANCE: the Commission proposes a series of recommendations to the Member States and the various parties concerned (consumers, audiovisual industries, etc.) with a view to the protection of minors in the audiovisual and information services which are based on the work and the outcome of the Green Paper on the protection of minors in information services (COS0490). It also proposes common guidelines to be applied voluntarily by the parties concerned with a view to the implementation of self-regulation mechanisms for the protection of minors. These guidelines include inter alia a code of conduct setting out the rules for self-regulation to be implemented for on-line services. The recommendations are addressed to: 1) the Member States and seek to: - evaluate the national measures for the protection of minors and establish a common assessment methodology at European level, - encourage the establishment of a national framework for self-regulation for on-line services, - encourage experiments for new means of protecting minors and viewers, - take measures to fight against the circulation of illegal content in the audiovisual services, - encourage young people to make responsible use of the new audiovisual and information services (improving awareness among parents, better identification of contents, etc.); 2) the industries and parties concerned and seek to: - cooperate with the national authorities in setting up a structure representing all the parties concerned in order in particular to improve coordination of work at European level, - draw up codes of conduct applying to on-line services based on the principles contained in the code of conduct proposed in the annex to the recommendation (including respect for freedom of expression and free movement of services but establishment of techniques able to restrict access to certain services, the content of which would be detrimental to the physical, moral or mental development of minors; support for parental control and handling of complaints, etc.); - seek initiatives which facilitate access by young people to audiovisual and information services, - assesses periodically the initiatives carried out in application of this recommendation; 3) the Commission and seek to: - facilitate through appropriate financial instruments the networking of bodies responsible for self-regulation and the sharing of good practices in this field, - encourage cooperation between police and judicial authorities in the Member States in order to combat illegal content, - promote international cooperation in this area, - develop a methodology for evaluating the measures taken to protect minors in audiovisual services.