

# Internet: multiannual action plan on promoting safer use

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In adopting the report by Mr Gerhard SCHMID (PSE, D), the European Parliament expressed the view that, although the amount of harmful or illegal content circulating on the Internet was limited, it could damage the mental health, safety and economic interests of consumers and thus adversely affect the establishment of a favourable environment for promoting and respecting ethical standards. It advocated that the legal basis of the proposal be amended (to Article 129a of the Treaty rather than Article 130, as the former provides for the codecision procedure). Parliament called for the action plan to encourage: -the promotion of the application of systems to monitor and combat harmful and illegal content which may jeopardise national security, the protection of minors, protection of human dignity, financial security, data protection, protection of privacy, protection of public health and intellectual property (especially in relation to content such as child pornography, inciting trafficking in people and sexual abuse, homophobia, racism and anti-Semitism or their encouragement); -the adoption of guidelines regarding the responsibility of each body involved for the content of the Internet and combating harmful and illegal content; -supporting initiatives, including websites for information and assistance, by organisations active in the protection of human and citizens' rights, and in counteracting violence and the abuse of women and children. In conjunction with the development of codes of conduct, Parliament advocates the working out of a European quality labelling system for suppliers of Internet services that comply with these codes. Parliament calls for research, particularly to examine: - which legal instruments are required to be able to classify each provider of content in the Internet as a natural or a legal person; - which provisions of criminal law in the Member States and in the framework of international agreements ought to be approximated in qualitative terms; - how quickly formal requests for judicial assistance need to be processed for effective international enforcement of the criminal law. Police officers' experience of Internet crime should also be included in these examinations.