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

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In adopting the report by Mr Philip WHITEHEAD (PSE, UK) on the Commission Green Paper on the protection of minors and human dignity in the audiovisual services, the European Parliament notes that all the Member States have legislation enabling them to make illegal certain types of information or programmes but that solutions at national level are not satisfactory. It therefore calls on the Member States as far as possible to make use of the European framework regarding justice and internal affairs so as to establish a joint set of basic values and rules in this area and develop the necessary cooperation between the legal and police authorities concerning the identification, prosecution and penalization of all illegal activity. The Commission should be given the necessary to drawn a minimum set of legislative provisions regarding illegal content. Member States are called on to draw up a legal framework by 31 December 1998 setting out minimum standards regarding illegal content in audiovisual and information services. They are also called upon to ratify international texts for the protection of children and the promotion of international coordination within the United Nations, the WTO, the G7 and the OECD. Member States are also urged to cooperate at administrative level with EUROPOL in order to combat more effectively the dissemination of illegal material. Parliament calls for content and access providers to be required to comply with legal standards and assume full liability as regards the content they themselves have provided, together with liability as regards outside illegal content made available by them if it is technically feasible and reasonable to prevent dissemination. As regards decisions on legal content which may possibly compromise the protection of minors and human dignity the content and access providers must lay down standards open to public scrutiny and bodies to provide voluntary self regulation. The codes of conduct drawn up must have a wide definition of harmful content to protect minors effectively. Finally Parliament stresses the crucial role of individual and the family in exercising their responsibilities and critical faculties ('home filtering') which can only be complemented by the public authorities. It also calls on the Commission to promote at European level measures to increase adults' media awareness and involve them in media education. A European campaign and programme of action financed by the EU budget must be implemented to inform parents about the impact of illegal content on minors.