Internet: 2005-2008 action programme on promoting a safer use, Safer Internet plus.

2004/0023(COD) - 16/11/2004

The committee adopted the report by Edith MASTENBROEK (PES, NL) broadly approving the proposal, subject to a number of amendments under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure:

- the Commission should forward the results of its evaluations to Parliament and the Council before presentation of the EU's draft general budget for 2007 to 2009;

- the programme's budget should be cut by EUR 5 million (EUR 45 million rather than EUR 50 million as originally proposed). While agreeing that EUR 20.050 million should be allocated for the period up to 31.12.2006, MEPs said that, for the following period (i.e. 2007 to the end of 2008), the amount should only be deemed to be confirmed if it is consistent with the financial perspective for 2007-2008;

- Action line 1: Community funds should be used to raise public awareness of hotlines enabling members of the public to report illegal content. The effectiveness of such hotlines should be evaluated, e.g. by publishing data on the number and kind of web pages withdrawn by service providers as a result of information provided by hotlines. One amendment called for support for telephone help lines where children could raise concerns about illegal or harmful content on the Internet. The share of the budget allocated to Action line 1 should be 25-30% rather than 23-28% as originally proposed;

- Action line 2: the programme's limited financial resources should be used to finance those activities that the private sector is reluctant to invest in, and further development of filter software should not be a priority. However, funds could be used to help make filter technology more accessible, e.g. in languages not adequately covered by the market. Action line 2 should receive 10-17% of the budget rather than 16-23% as the Commission was proposing;

- Action line 3: the Safer Internet Forum should include a wide range of stakeholders, such as representatives of parent and teacher organisations, child protection groups, consumer protection bodies and "civil and digital rights organisations". Its remit should include encouraging service providers to draw up codes of conduct on issues such as Notice and Take Down procedures, information to users about safer use of Internet and the existence of hotlines. The share of the budget for Action line 3 should be increased from 5-9% to 8-12%;

- Action line 4: the Commission should use television and radio campaigns as a way of raising awareness among parents of the dangers and risks involved in Internet use by children. MEPs also suggested that information material should be distributed to schools and internet cafés. The budget for Action line 4 should be increased from 43-50% to 47-51%.