Basic information

1996/2209(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Illegal and harmful content on the Internet: child protection and human dignity **Subject** 3.30.16 Ethical information policy 4.10.03 Child protection, children's rights	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
LIBE Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs	PRADIER Pierre (ARE)	27/06/1996

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
FEMM Women's Rights	VAN DIJK Nel B.M. (V)	23/01/1996

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Agriculture and Fisheries	1988	1997-02-17
Telecommunications	1972	1996-11-28

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
16/10/1996	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1996)0487	Summary
15/11/1996	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
28/11/1996	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
17/02/1997	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		
19/03/1997	Vote in committee		Summary
19/03/1997	Committee report tabled for plenary	A4-0098/1997	
23/04/1997	Debate in Parliament		
24/04/1997	End of procedure in Parliament		
19/05/1997	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information	
Procedure reference	1996/2209(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	LIBE/4/08342

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B4-0224/1994	10/11/1994	
Motion for a resolution		B4-1233/1996	18/12/1996	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A4-0098/1997 OJ C 132 28.04.1997, p. 0005	19/03/1997	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T4-0207/1997 OJ C 150 19.05.1997, p. 0016-0038	24/04/1997	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1996)0487	16/10/1996	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofR	Committee of the Regions: opinion	CDR0440/1996 OJ C 215 16.07.1997, p. 0037	12/03/1997	

Illegal and harmful content on the Internet: child protection and human dignity

1996/2209(COS) - 24/04/1997 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

After pointing out that the freedom of expression remained absolutely essential in our democratic societies, Parliament acknowledged the need to address certain worrying phenomena observed on the Internet, which must not, however, be allowed to overshadow the cultural revolution made possible by the Internet, the opportunities of which for interactive communications may be of use to a large section of the population. In adopting the report by Mr PRADIER (ARE, FR) by 338 votes to 4, with 10 abstentions, Parliament called on the Commission to draw up a European quality rating system for providers of Internet services and to propose a common framework for self-regulation at EU level. It called on the Council to create a centralized register of missing children on the lines of the US 'Center for Missing and Exploited Children'. Drawing a distinction between the illicit content and the harmful content of information carried by the Internet, the rapporteur notes that the problem of harmful content is by nature identical to that found in traditional modes of communication. Parliament stresses that the main problem concerning illegal content concerns not so much Web

pages themselves as newsgroups and electronic mail. It calls in particular: - on the Member States to define a minimum number of common rules in their criminal law and to strengthen administrative cooperation; - on the Commission to propose a common framework for self-regulation; - for police officials to be trained in the location and repression of forms of crime connected with telematic media. As regards harmful content, Parliament stresses the primacy of individual responsibility, especially within the family, but that public action can play a complementary role. Specifically, it calls for: - the Commission and the Member States to develop a common international rating system compatible with the PICS protocol, and sufficiently flexible to accommodate cultural differences; - providers of data over the Internet to be required to identify senders and to accept responsibility, including criminal-law responsibility for the content supplied to their subscribers. Parliament welcomes the initiatives by the industry to develop mechanisms of self-control, stresses the need for international cooperation between the EU and its main external partners and calls for the use of parental control systems using the newly-developed filtering techniques to be encouraged. Parliament calls on the Council to review and inform it, by October 1997, of the progress in particular in relation to the effectiveness of filtering and rating systems and the protection of children, given the rapid rate of technology change. It also calls on the Council to keep it informed of developments relating to the agreement reached at the Dublin meeting of justice and home affairs ministers, who agreed to step up police cooperation within Europol in order to combat paedophilia and trafficking in children and women.

Illegal and harmful content on the Internet: child protection and human dignity

1996/2209(COS) - 16/10/1996 - Non-legislative basic document

OBJECTIVE: the Commission communication seeks to describe briefly the various types of illegal and harmful content on the Internet and to propose a certain number of practical initiatives to be implemented forthwith. SUBSTANCE: the Commission considers it necessary to have a first set of measures for immediate action with a view to reducing the illegal and harmful content on the Internet. These measures should be adopted - according to their respective nature - under the provisions of the EC Treaty (free movement of services) or within the framework of Justice and Home Affairs. 1) As regards illegal content, the Commission proposes: - the stepping up of cooperation between the Member States in order to combat the sources from where criminal content comes and to restrict distribution of copies (exchange of information, definition of minimum European standards on criminal content); - the assessment of the need for a common European framework to clarify the responsibility of access providers and host service providers; - the encouragement of cooperation between associations of Internet access providers to help the process of self-regulation. 2) As regards harmful content, the Commission proposes: - the adoption of a Council recommendation setting out a clear political message encouraging the use of filtering software such as PICS and one or more European rating systems; - the encouragement of European content providers to cooperate in this system by adopting their own code of conduct for content published on the Internet; - a Commission imitative to support national awareness actions for parents and teachers. 3) As regards international issues, the proposal by Germany to host an international conference was accepted by the Council. This meeting should open up the possibility of an international convention on illegal and harmful content. The dialogue must include the largest number of countries possible and could be extended to organizations such as the OECD, WTO or the United Nations. 4) Lastly as regards support actions, the decision was made to set up an Information Web site (hosted by a Commission server) containing: information and guidance for parents, teachers and children; parental control software; information on activities of official bodies.