European Council: Protection of Minors in the Light of the Digital Developments

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On 17 December 1999, the Council of the European Union made public its conclusions regarding the protection of minors in the framework of the developments in the digital audiovisual services. The Council recognises the need to adapt and complement current systems for protecting minors from harmful audiovisual content. The development of new technical means for parental control must not reduce the responsibilities of the various categories of operators, such as broadcasters and providers.

Member States are called on to:

- keep the effectiveness of current systems for protecting minors under review and to intensify their efforts with regard to educational and awareness measures;

- bring together the industries and parties concerned in order to examine ways to achieve more clarity in the way audiovisual content is evaluated and rated, both within and between the various sectors concerned;

- continue their work to further implement Council Recommendation 98/560/EC on the development of the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and information services industry by promoting national frameworks aimed at achieving a comparable and effective level of protection of minors and human dignity.

In addition, the Council asks the Commission to:

- bring together the industries and parties concerned at European level for the examination mentioned above and to support the exchange of information and best practice regarding the protection of minors;

- encourage the industry to develop user-friendly products for parents and educators that enable them to benefit from the technological means to protect minors;

- examine possible Community actions to support and supplement Member State activities aimed at protecting minors from harmful audiovisual content through improved levels of media literacy and through measures to raise awareness.

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Council Conclusions of 17 December 1999 on the protection of minors in the light of the development of digital audiovisual services, OJ C 8/9, 12 January 2000.

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