Council of the European Union: Further Attention to Protection of Minors and Human Dignity

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At a recent meeting on culture, the Council of the European Union turned its attention once again to the protection of minors and human dignity. The Council's Conclusions trace - at length - the instruments and initiatives adopted in these areas in recent times. The Council offered, in particular, its reaction to the Commission's Evaluation Report of 27 February 2001 on the application of the Council Recommendation 98/560/EC of 24 September 1998 concerning the protection of minors and human dignity (see IRIS 2001-5: 4 and IRIS 1998-10: 5).

While broadly welcoming the Report, the Council took note of the observation contained therein about the lack of involvement of users in its preparation. It also noted the reservations expressed in the Report about the shortness of the time-scale chosen for fully applying the Recommendation. These considerations prompted the Council to invite the Commission to continue its work on the basis of the encouraging results achieved so far and to contribute to the continued application of the Recommendation by advancing, at the European level, the exchange of information relating to the protection of minors in respect of all audiovisual media. The Council also requested a report from the Commission by 31 December 2002 on the impact of the Recommendation. Finally, the Council advocated the continued promotion of dialogue between the Commission and interested parties with a view to examining "possibilities for implementing technical systems for parental control in the digital environment."

In a similar vein, the Council requested Member States to continue to ensure the application of the Recommendation, through interaction with interested parties. It also asked Member States to make available in all relevant quarters any information of relevance to the development of skills, best practices and new initiatives for the protection of minors.

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