Council of the European Union: Safer Internet Action Plan Extended

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The Safer Internet Action Plan will continue for another two years. Both the European Parliament and the Council have recently approved the extension of the original plan, which covered the period 1999-2002. The European Commission proposed the two-year extension, for 2003-2004, in March 2002 (see IRIS 2002-4: 4). On 26 May 2003, the Council of the European Union adopted the extended Action Plan with a few amendments made by the Parliament in the first reading on 11 March 2003.

The Safer Internet Action Plan plays a key role in the European Union's efforts to deal with illegal and harmful content on the Internet. One of the aims of the Plan is to create awareness amongst users, especially parents and children, of the need to be well-equipped for the Information Society. In order to combat illegal and harmful content and create a safer on-line environment, the Plan supports a network of hotlines in Europe where illegal content can be reported. The Plan also encourages self-regulation and plays a part in the development of content filtering and rating systems.

The extended Safer Internet Action Plan has a wider scope than the original plan, since it also takes account of new on-line technologies such as mobile and broadband content, on-line games, peer-to-peer file transfer and all forms of real-time communications such as chat rooms and instant messaging. The extension of the Plan to these new technologies is in line with one of the major goals of the Safer Internet Action Plan: the protection of children and minors, since they often make extensive use of these new technologies.

The Plan covers various forms of illegal and harmful content, including child pornography and content which is likely to result in physical or mental harm, as well as content which incites hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion, nationality or ethnic origin.

The sum of EUR 13.3 million has been reserved for the extension of the Safer Internet Action Plan. First calls for proposals under the Plan will be launched in July 2003.

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision 276/1999/EC adopting a multiannual Community action plan on

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promoting safer use of the Internet by combating illegal and harmful content on global networks, adopted on 26 May 2003

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32003D1151:EN:HTML

"EU moves against illegal and harmful content on-line", Press Release of the European Commission IP/03/774 of 28 May 2003

http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/03/774&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr

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