Standing Committee on Transfrontier Television: Recommendation on the Protection of Minors from Pornographic Programmes

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At its 37th meeting, on 11 and 12 October 2004, the Standing Committee on Transfrontier Television issued a Recommendation on the protection of minors from pornographic programmes.

In its Recommendation the Standing Committee noted that, as a result of growing competition, an increase in pornographic programme services could be observed in some countries. The Standing Committee found this phenomenon particularly worrying with respect to free-to-air programme services which could be easily accessed by minors and could seriously impair their development.

Referring to the ban on pornographic content laid down in Article 7, paragraph 1, letter a) of the Convention [on Transfrontier Television], the Standing Committee invited the parties to the Convention to assess to what extent broadcasters under their jurisdiction complied with this ban and, if this were not the case, to take measures to do so, to ensure that minors were prevented from accessing programme services and broadcasts with pornographic content. The Standing Committee also invited the parties to the Convention to promote cooperation among their regulatory authorities in order to implement the measures envisaged. Lastly, the parties to the Convention were invited to report to the Standing Committee within one year on the measures they introduced.

This Recommendation came about because of a question put to the Standing Committee by the Bulgarian delegation in March 2003, concerning the unencrypted broadcasting of foreign pornographic channels by Bulgarian operators. The Bulgarian delegation asked for the Standing Committee's opinion in the light of the blanket ban on pornographic content contained in Article 7, paragraph 1, letter a) of the Convention on Transfrontier Television, Bulgaria's main concern being to protect minors from pornographic programmes.

The Standing Committee discussed the matter at five meetings, and realised that the problem also concerned other States that were parties to the Convention.

The Standing Committee therefore decided to adopt a Recommendation directed to all parties to the Convention so that specific measures could be adopted for the protection of minors.

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Recommendation on the protection of minors from pornographic programmes (adopted by the Standing Committee on Transfrontier Television at its 37th meeting on 11 and 12 October 2004), available at:

http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/media/2_T-TT/3_Texts_and_documents/Rec%20E%20Protection_minors.asp#TopOfPage

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