[AT] Computer Games to be Labelled following Youth Protection Act Amendments

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The *Landtag* (State parliament) in Vienna has unanimously adopted an amendment to the *Wiener Jugendschutzgesetz* (Vienna Youth Protection Act) concerning computer and video games, which entered into force on 1 December 2008 and includes an obligation for computer games to be properly labelled. Packaging must now display the standard PEGI (Pan-European Game Information) symbols which have been developed at European level by the Interactive Software Federation of Europe (ISFE). As well as an age rating, the symbols provide information about problematic content such as violence, sex and racism.

Until now, the age group for which games are suitable under youth protection rules has not always been clearly marked. Providing information about game content has not been obligatory. Since computer games are distributed in the same way throughout Austria, games with the PEGI symbols are also sold in the other *Bundesländer* which, it is assumed, will soon follow Vienna's example.

During the transitional period to the end of 2009, computer games labelled using the *Unterhaltungssoftware Selbstkontrolle* (German entertainment software voluntary monitoring organisation - USK) rating system will still be available for sale. However, most games already carry the PEGI symbols. The *Bundesstelle für die Positivprädikatisierung von Computer- und Konsolenspielen* (Federal Office for the positive rating of computer and console games - BuPP) may also be asked for advice on whether a game is too complicated for children.

Gesetz zum Schutz der Jugend (Wiener Jugendschutzgesetz 2002 - WrJSchG 2002)

http://www.wien.gv.at/recht/landesrecht-wien/rechtsvorschriften/html/s2800000.htm?S0=jugendschutzgesetz

Vienna Youth Protection Act 2002 - WrJSchG 2002

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