

European Parliament: Adoption of Resolution on Protecting Children in the Digital World

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On 20 November 2012 the European Parliament adopted, by a large majority, a resolution inviting the member states of the European Union to step up their protection of children on the Internet. The Council of the European Union presented its conclusions on the subject in December 2011, and the European Commission presented a report on protecting children in the digital world (see IRIS 2011-9/8). The European Parliament Resolution was adopted on the date of the 53rd anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

The main areas for consideration presented in the Parliament's Resolution are access to and education in both the traditional and new media, children's entitlement to protection (from illegal and harmful content, but also from invasion of their privacy), and the right to digital citizenship.

Regarding access to and education in the media, the Parliament notes that the Internet occupies an increasingly large part of children's lives. Internet offers young people tools for communication, expression and learning, but it also exposes them to numerous risks (violence, fraud, scams, child pornography and harassment) which, in many cases, their parents are unaware of. The Parliament invites the member states and the Commission to take specific measures to create a safe on-line space. It urges the Commission to include in its main priorities the protection of children from aggressive or misleading TV and online advertising, and calls on member states to intensify their communication campaigns in order to make both children and adults aware of the potential dangers of the Internet.

The protection of children must be approached not only in terms of legislation, but also through education, by educating not only children but also parents and teachers as to how to combat illegal content. The Parliament invites the Commission and the member states to increase their cooperation (particularly with regard to the withdrawal of Internet pages showing illegal and harmful content) and pool their expertise and good practices.

The Resolution also emphasises the importance of the Internet in learning about citizenship, particularly because of the tools for communication and expression that the new media offer.

*Resolution of the European Parliament on protecting children in the digital world,
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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A7-2012-0353+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

