

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

Committee on Culture and Education

2008/2173(INI)

9.12.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

on the protection of consumers, in particular minors, in respect of the use of
video games
(2008/2173(INI))

Rapporteur: Ivo Belet

PA_NonLeg

SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to its resolution on media literacy in a digital world,
- A. whereas the protection of children's mental health requires zero tolerance and resolute action against violations of child protection provisions connected with videogames,
 1. Emphasises that video games are played by children of an increasingly wide range of ages and can have substantial educational advantages and be beneficial in developing linguistic, creative and strategic skills and intellectual capacities;
 2. Underlines the contribution of the gaming sector to the achievement of the Lisbon agenda and stresses the (multi-)cultural facets of many games;
 3. Draws attention, however, to the potential risks arising from inappropriate use of videogames, particularly for minors;
 4. Recognises the importance of a simple and clear age rating/content rating system which provides guidance and raises awareness, particularly for parents and for teachers, of the potentially harmful effect of some content on minors;
 5. Calls on the Commission to proceed with the promotion and expansion of a common, self-regulatory EU system of rating criteria, more specifically the Pan European Game Information (PEGI) labelling system which provides information about potentially harmful content for minors, and to ensure coordination among Member States to achieve a PEGI-only labelling system in the sale of games;
 6. Welcomes the PEGI Online system, which is a logical development of PEGI and which deals with video games made available over the internet, such as downloaded or online games; supports its continued co-financing by the Commission under the Safer Internet programme, the aim of which is to tackle issues relating to the safe use of the internet by children and to new online technologies;
 7. Calls for additional efforts in this respect, including the possibility of integrating an acoustic warning into the PEGI system, and counts on the professional game sector to systematically integrate access models for online games in order to ensure that minors are not exposed to harmful content online;
 8. Calls on the Commission, in connection with the Safer Internet programme, to promote a systematic study of the effects of video games on minors and to propose measures which contribute to a safer playing environment for online video games, including innovative methods of preventing minors from accessing online video games with content which is unsuitable for them;

9. Calls on software producers to continue to invest in filters and parental control systems which make it possible for parents to protect their children against inappropriate content;
10. Supports the Commission's proposal to introduce a pan-European code of conduct for retailers of video games in order to prevent the sale of harmful video games to minors; stresses that producers should also be involved in this process;
11. Considers that national information and awareness campaigns should be organised for consumers, particularly parents, to help them choose video games which are suitable for the age and knowledge requirements of their children and to avoid products which are not appropriately labelled; encourages the Member States to share best practices in this respect;
12. Stresses the importance of media literacy and the crucial role of parents and teachers in developing the attitudes of minors towards videogames, and calls on the Commission, in collaboration with the sector, to develop and disseminate to parents and teachers information concerning all aspects of videogames;
13. Calls for media literacy among young people to be strengthened through education in nursery schools, educational establishments, schools and youth care programmes in order to help young people in particular to become free, critical and reflective media consumers and to teach them constructive ways of making use of videogames;
14. Calls on the Commission to facilitate the exchange of best practice among competent national educational authorities in the short-term with a view to integrating gaming literacy within the educational objectives of primary and secondary schools;
15. Calls on the Commission to support, in the framework of the MEDIA programme and national tax exemption mechanisms, new developments in this fast-growing sector of the creative knowledge economy, in particular by promoting the educational, multimedia and cultural elements of videogames and by means of corresponding training opportunities and courses of study.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

Date adopted	2.12.2008
Result of final vote	+: 19 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Maria Badia i Cutchet, Katerina Batzeli, Ivo Belet, Guy Bono, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Věra Flasarová, Milan Gaľa, Vasco Graça Moura, Christopher Heaton-Harris, Luis Herrero-Tejedor, Ruth Hieronymi, Manolis Mavrommatis, Doris Pack, Zdzisław Zbigniew Podkański, Christa Prets, Helga Trüpel, Thomas Wise
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Nina Škottová, László Tókéš, Ewa Tomaszewska, Cornelis Visser