

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1755/09
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to the Council

Subject: Dangerous games and violent practices in the school environment

Harmless-sounding names such as space monkey conceal dangerous games and violent practices that increasingly are being found in school playgrounds, often from nursery-school age upwards, but also at home. The new information technologies are giving a fresh impetus to practices that have existed for several decades.

The choking game, also known as the pass-out game or the fainting game, involves practices inducing oxygen deprivation and fainting that can lead to comas, irreversible brain damage or the death of children and adolescents. In 2007 and 2008 18 fatal cases were recorded in France, 40 in the UK and several cases in Belgium, Ireland, Sweden and Greece.

These practices are all the more dangerous in that they are practically unknown to parents, health professionals, teachers and teaching staff.

Does the Council have statistics or studies on dangerous games and, if not, is it envisaging compiling such statistics to discover the scale of the phenomenon at European level?

Is the Council considering raising this subject at forthcoming meetings of the Councils of Ministers concerned?

What does the Council intend doing to inform the public of the risks of these dangerous games?

What means of communication and prevention for education and health professionals is the Council considering implementing?

What measures is the Council intending to promote to heighten the awareness of the Member States' education ministries so they develop a prevention policy on fainting games and dangerous games?