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AVIS DU COMITÉ DES ÉVALUATIONS D'IMPACT

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

**establishing a multiannual Community programme on protecting children using the
Internet and other communication technologies**

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Brussels, 3 December 2007
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Opinion

Title **Impact Assessment on the Multiannual Community Programme: Protecting Children Using the Internet and Other Communication Technologies (2009-2013)**

(draft version of 06 November 2007)

Lead DG **DG Information Society**

1) Impact Assessment Board Opinion

(A) Context

The EU (and the Council of Europe) has set certain Europe-wide standards in the field of the exposure of children to illegal content and conduct or to legal but harmful content and conduct, clarifying legal issues through various recommendations and directives on the protection of minors and human dignity, electronic commerce, privacy and electronic communications, and child sexual abuse images.

At the policy level, the Commission has put the challenge of developing a safer Internet on the Community agenda. The new Safer Internet Action Plan under consideration is intended to complement and not duplicate the already adopted legislative instruments. It will also take into account the actions launched under other programmes and initiatives, such as "Prevention of and Fight against Crime", "Daphne III", "Cyber crime", "Media Literacy".

(B) Positive aspects

The objectives are clearly linked to the problems identified. The monitoring and evaluation arrangements for the chosen option are well described.

(C) Main recommendations for improvements

The recommendations below are listed in order of descending importance.

General recommendation:

The rationale for choosing the options should be better explained or, alternatively, the set of options reconsidered. This is because the definition of policy options seems to be oriented in favour of the preferred option. For the elements of the preferred

option it should be clarified how they respond (individually or as a package) to the problems and objectives, particularly with a view to new emerging risks for children. In this context, the IA report should elaborate more specifically and explicitly on how the lessons learnt from the evaluations of current and previous programmes are reflected in the policy options.

(1) **The rationale of the options should be better explained or the set of options reconsidered.** Option 2 seems to be the only one able to cover the full range of problems and objectives and respond to emerging new risk scenarios. The rationale of the options should then be better explained or the set of options reconsidered including the possibility of dropping option 3. Furthermore, the report should explain the financial difference between the option "no policy change" and option(s) responding to new challenges, considering the relatively modest difference in annual budget.

(2) **The lessons learnt from current and previous programmes should be explicitly reflected in the policy options.** The "lessons learnt" (point 1.3.) should be discussed more extensively with a view to the proposed action under the preferred option, since current and past programmes have been thoroughly evaluated and should provide substantial guidance for the new programme. Similarly, the IA report should develop more fully the baseline scenario, including a description of the action lines "tackling harmful content" and "promoting safer environment" under previous programmes.

(3) **Links with other Community initiatives in the field of internet security.** The IA report should also explain if there are other Community level initiatives (e.g. stemming from the COM(2003)63 "Establishing the European Network and Information Security Agency") in this and other fields, and how they are (or could be) coordinated.

(4) **Impacts on third countries.** The IA report should explicitly discuss the possible social and economic impacts on third countries (e.g. the cost increases for third country content providers, increase in the illegal activity in third countries).

(D) Procedure and presentation

The IA report should include a summary of the views of the respondents, and explicitly state whether the Commission's minimum standards for stakeholder consultation have been respected. It should also specify which services participated in the inter-service steering group.

The main report is longer than the 30 pages recommended by the Guidelines and would benefit from a more focussed presentation. Information should be presented strictly in line with the respective sections of the IA. Problem definition and objective setting should be clearly separated. The distinction between the part describing a given option and the part analysing its impacts should be more rigorously observed.

2) IAB scrutiny process

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External expertise used	No
Date of Board Meeting	Written procedure
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