

Brussels, 6 February 2007

Mobile operators agree on how to safeguard children using mobile phones

Leading European mobile operators today signed in Brussels an agreement on how to protect minors using mobile phones. This agreement, brokered by the European Commission, responds to the findings of the Commission's public consultation on child safety and mobile phones published today. In the agreement, mobile operators undertake to develop self-regulatory codes by February 2008.

"This agreement is an important step forward for child safety," said Viviane Reding, EU Commissioner responsible for Telecommunications and Media. "I congratulate the mobile phone industry for moving towards protecting minors. It shows that responsible self-regulation can work at European level. The Commission will monitor very closely the effective implementation of today's agreement, for which the deadline is February 2008."

Following Mrs Reding's initiative, leading mobile operators will safeguard children by joining a **European Framework on Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children**. In this new text, operators agree to support:

- access control for adult content;
- awareness-raising campaigns for parents and children;
- the classification of commercial content according to national standards of decency and appropriateness;
- the fight against illegal content on mobiles.

The signatories of the European Framework on Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children are Bouygues Telecom, Cosmote, Debitel AG, Deutsche Telekom Group, Go Mobile, Hutchison 3G Europe, Jamba! GmbH, Mobile Entertainment Forum, Orange Group, Royal KPN N.V., SFR, Telecom Italia S.p.A, Telefonica Moviles, S.A., Telenor, TeliaSonera and Vodafone Limited.

To implement the European Framework, signatory operators and content providers will develop national self-regulatory codes by February 2008. The Commission will monitor and assess its efficiency after 12 months.

The industry agreement of today is a result of discussions held in a High-Level Group set up by Commissioner Reding in September 2006. This group, representing mobile operators, content providers, child protection and consumer organisations, and regulators, is a good example of industry self-regulation, an approach favoured by the Commission if it is efficiently implemented.

The industry agreement of today responds to many of the concerns expressed in replies to the **Commission's public consultation on safer mobile use** which took place from 25 July to 16 October 2006 (see [IP/06/1059](#)). In this consultation, along with the benefits of mobile phones, particular risks for young people were identified such as: bullying, sexual grooming for abuse, access to illegal/harmful pornographic and violent content privacy risks, in particular due to the inappropriate use of camera phones and location services. The consultation also made clear that responsibility for safe use of mobile phones should be shared between parents and carers, mobile operators and service providers, as well as public authorities.

Self-regulation is seen at present as a potentially appropriate way to ensure child protection on mobile phones. However, it still needs to be launched or implemented across all EU Member States. Public authorities at national and at EU level will have to monitor developments carefully and assess at regular occasions the efficiency of self-regulation to judge whether public intervention may become required.

Today's signing of the European Framework on Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children in Brussels is a key event, amongst the many others taking place worldwide today, to mark the fourth "Safer Internet Day".

Further information

Safer Internet and the framework agreement on "Safer Mobile Use by Younger Teenagers and Children": <http://europa.eu.int/saferinternet>

Findings from the public consultation on safer mobile use:

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/sip/public_consultation/

Press pack

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=3153

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