

Von: "DGSS (Sexualforschung/Sex Research) + DGSS-Institut (Beratung/Counseling)"
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An: <Romano.Prodi@cec.eu.int>
Betreff: Proposal for a Council framework decision on combating the sexual
exploitation of children and child pornography (2001/C 62 E/25, ABI. C 62 E/327-
330)
Datum: Mittwoch, 27. Juni 2001 16:22

Dear Mr. President,

As a German association of sexuality researchers and university educators of 30 years standing, the DGSS (German Society for Social Scientific Sexuality Research) is greatly concerned about the above proposal in view of the unintended consequences of the above-mentioned framework decision should it become law.

Much as we welcome any effort to save children from sexual and other exploitation, we, as sexologists, are convinced that the above proposal will not serve its intended purpose but instead must be called counter-productive. Therefore we join our colleagues from the ÖGS (Austrian Society for Sexuality Research) in their detailed and well-reasoned letter to you dated May 29, 2001.

In particular we are drawing your attention to the following aspects:

To extend the definition of "child" to the age of 18 (or 16 in some cases) for the purpose of protecting adolescents from sexual exploitation is to invite very grave and obviously unintended consequences on a massive scale. In short, such an ill-informed law would end up criminalizing countless "normal", healthy adolescents in Europe without providing them any of the intended benefits.

There is no doubt in our minds that, eventually, the law would have to be repealed once the enormous damage it would cause became evident. In the meantime, however, the lives of thousands of harmless adolescents would have been ruined. It is absurd, e. g., to punish a 19-year old for taking photos or looking at pictures of his 17-year old girlfriend - and so on down the line.

The framework decision betrays a woeful lack of awareness of today's sexual realities in Europe. It seems to have been designed without any knowledge or study of teenage sexual behavior, especially with regard to explicit sexual material. However, such studies should have preceded any decision and should still be demanded and financially supported by the EU before any other action is taken.

For example, as anyone familiar with the sexual dimensions of the internet knows, adolescents all over Europe are using it to exchange intimate photos of themselves, indeed, to watch each other during sexual activity via live cams. In addition, countless "chat rooms" are used by teenagers to stimulate each other to sexual activity. To our knowledge, no studies exist demonstrating the extent of this internet use, but, based on our professional experience, we suspect that tens of thousands of teenagers are involved in the EU alone. To close off this sexual outlet, which can neither lead to unwanted pregnancies nor to sexually transmitted infections, would mean an immediate increase in real juvenile delinquency, abortion, and disease. All this law would be able to accomplish, is to turn the "victims" into perpetrators. In a truly perverse dialectic, the "innocent" children in need of protection would turn into dangerous sex criminals from whom society must be protected.

This is "dogoodism" running amuck. We dare say that most European parents, if they knew about this framework decision, would be horrified and would vehemently protest against this attempt to criminalize their

