

Broadcasting

19. All private radio and television stations in Cyprus have established a system of self-regulation relating to the protection of minors. During their application and before being granted the licence of a radio/television station by the Cyprus Radio-Television Authority, they had to provide to the Authority their policy and their commitment towards the protection of minors as well as establish a self-regulation committee, the so-called Committee of Conduct.

The main responsibility of this committee is to ensure that all programming of the station closely follows the Radio and Television Stations Law 7(I) of 1998 and its Regulations made there under, as well as to safeguard that all programmes are appropriate and maintain an appropriate level. The committee is also responsible for reporting regularly to the Authority as well as organizing training sessions for the personnel of the stations in matters of conduct.

20. This system of self-regulation also encompasses a code of conduct that includes a set of guidelines and restrictions regarding the protection of minors from harmful content apart from the advertising code concerning advertising, sponsorship and teleshopping specifically aimed at minors. Both codes are embodied in the Radio and Television Stations Regulations of 2000 (K.A.II. 10/2000).

21. According to the above-mentioned Regulations and particularly regulations 22 and 23, all radio/television stations are obliged to classify and use on screen warning icons and/or acoustic warnings for potentially harmful programmes.

More specifically:

"Reg 22. -(1) Based on the criteria mentioned in these Regulations, warnings are to be given in regard to the nature of the programme, and whether its broadcast lies within the Family Zone, i.e. between 05.30 – 21.00/22.00 hrs or not. This warning comes in three forms:

- (a) Written warning in the daily press as well as in radio and television magazines;*
- (b) Acoustic (verbal) before the start of every programme;*
- (c) Visual, with a visual indication every 10 minutes in the lower left part of the screen during the broadcast of the programme, as follows:*

- (i) (K) in brackets of green colour, for programmes suitable for all ages;
- (ii) (12) in brackets of yellow colour, for programmes unsuitable for children under the age of 12;
- (iii) (15) in brackets of blue colour, for programmes unsuitable for children under the age of 15;
- (iv) (18) in brackets of red colour, for programmes unsuitable for children under the age of 18;
- (v) (A) in brackets for programmes of intense sexual content.

(2) Programmes that fall under the categories of (15) and (18) cannot be broadcast within the Family Zone.

(3) It is forbidden for television stations of non-encoded programmes to broadcast programmes which fall under category (A).

It is noted that stations of encoded programmes may broadcast these programmes between 24.00hrs and 05.30hrs.

(4) The visual indication for categories (15), (18) and (a) must appear in every kind or type of programme, which due to its nature, falls under these three categories;

(5) The same warnings are valid in the cases of trailers for upcoming television programmes as well as for advertisements of movies, which are shown at the cinema theatres;

(6) Programmes that are shown for the second or third time, etc, should carry the indication (E) in the upper right part of the screen during the broadcast of the programme.

Warning signs for radio programmes

23. (1) Based on the criteria mentioned in these Regulations, warnings are to be given in regard to the nature of the programme and whether its broadcast lies within the Family Zone, i.e. between 05.30 hrs - 21.00/22.00, or not. This warning comes in two forms:

- (a) Written warning in the daily press as well as in radio and television magazines;
- (b) Acoustic (verbal) warnings before the start of every programme.

(2) Special programmes targeted for adults are not broadcast within the Family Zone and require an acoustic (verbal) warning".

22. Only pay-television channels of encoded programmes in Cyprus have established the use of technical filtering devices to ensure that minors may not view harmful programmes. The parents and guardians that wish to subscribe to these channels are provided with a decoder device (as well as an instructions manual) that can stop showing the signal on the television channel by simply locking the decoder (i.e. inserting a secret pin number) according to the classification that they consider harmful for their children or minors.

23. For the time being no measures have been taken in order to improve media literacy but the Cyprus Radio Television Authority is currently working on the subject.

(Source: Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority)

Video Game Software

24. There are no specific legal provisions in Cyprus concerning the sale of video games.

25. There is no self-regulatory system in place which covers questions regarding age rating for video games at the moment.

26. Yes to an extent. What happens now is that whenever there is a complaint by the public about the content of video games the case is examined by the Cyprus Board of Film Censors and if the complaint is upheld the relevant video game is withdrawn.

27. Non applicable in view to answer to Qs 24 and 25.

(Source: Press and Information Office)

Other Content Delivery System

28. A new Law relating to these matters has been passed in December 2002 by the House of Representatives and constitutes a great improvement on the previous, outdated Law. The new Law provides that a Committee of Film Classification will replace the Cyprus Board of Film Censors. The Law will be put in force in the near future as soon as the House of Representatives approves the relevant regulations.

(Source: Press and Information Office)

General

29. Consumer associations, voluntary organizations and non-governmental organization participate in the decision-making process as a number of them are represented on both the Consultative Committee for Radio and Television and the recently-established Committee for Film Classification. These organizations are also active in reporting complaints for law violations concerning media laws and they are especially sensitive on issues connected with the protection of minors.

30. After the passing of the Regulations, which will accompany the Law on Film Classification approved by the House of Representatives in December 2002, Cinema and Television will be harmonized as regards the rating system. The same rating system will also apply to videocassettes. As mentioned in previous questions there is no rating system at the moment concerning video games. There has been close cooperation with the British Board of Film Classification in the process of adoption of the current rating system for films.

31. No government-sponsored studies have been authorized up to now even though this subject receives special attention by the Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority. A number of studies have been undertaken by private tertiary education colleges on the impact of violence or other harmful content on children. The government is not aware of any voluntary agreements by broadcasters or content providers on the Internet regarding this matter.

32. We are not aware of any study or scientific report, which has been prepared on this issue during the last two years.

33. Any further complimentary information will be supplied to the Commission as it becomes available.
