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From:
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PEGI Advisory Board Chairman
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To: Video Games Classification
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
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1. I'm writing this letter in my capacity of Chairman of the PEGI Advisory Board, that embodies the never questioned independence of PEGI, and also as President of the Portuguese Board of Classification, wishing to give a contribution, with my experience, to the public video games consultation.

2. When the industry created PEGI in 2003, it's first step was the approval of a Code of Conduct that reflects the interactive software industry's commitment and concern to provide information to the public on the content of interactive software products in a responsible manner. This industry's contribution complements existing national laws, regulations and enforcement mechanisms.

Nowadays, PEGI is applied in 29 countries all over Europe and Israel. In some of these countries, there are legal systems for protection of minors towards video games and the relation of those legal systems with PEGI is different. In Portugal, the classification Board uses the rates without loosing it's capacity of deciding in a different way and to enforce the law; in Finland, another of the countries that had a mandatory legal system when PEGI was born, the law established PEGI as "the system"; in the United Kingdom, since the beginning, there was a co-habitation between PEGI and BBFC, and after a great discussion about the Byron Review, the polemic still exists on how to implement it's conclusions; in France was recently approved a law about labeling products that may be dangerous for minors; on the other countries, things go rather well, PEGI being the only information system for parents and consumers.

So, PEGI has not the monopoly of rating games. As was said above the industry's contribution complements existing national laws, regulations and enforcement mechanisms and PEGI forms the minimum, yet appropriate common denominator. What is important is to ensure a good and efficient information to all those who use games, the most important being the protection of minors.

3. The PEGI Advisory Board, met in Paris last 9 October and approved the following statement:

"The PEGI Advisory Board, having been informed about the development of the situation in the UK, France, Italy and other countries regarding the protection of minors, namely in what concerns the games' rating process and the role of PEGI, insists that the ISFE Board continues the efforts to strengthen PEGI as a real pan European information system with respect

to national authorities and with improvement of dialog.

Therefore national authorities should be admitted in the PAB. Moreover, the PAB will start reflection on the necessary articulation between a pan European information system and national enforcement process. The PAB also wants to underline the big importance of a systematic information campaign about PEGI towards the public in general, but also towards the national authorities."


4. This being said, we think that, whatever is the decision of the British Government, the consumer has the guarantee of a system that protects minors on a very effective way, either is PEGI or BBFC or both.

In concrete, obviously, we would prefer that PEGI was adopted in the UK as the only rating and information system. This option puts the problem of who supervises PEGI in the name of British Authorities and this role could be very well done by BBFC.

But, if the option would be the BBFC/PEGI shared system the only problem of this solution being the eventual discrepancy between BBFC's and PEGI's rates that, existing, will create a bigger confusion on consumers. This solution creates the essential need of permanent dialog between PEGI and BBFC even if, at first sight, it looks not practicable.

Best regards

PAB, Lisbon, 18th November 2008



António Xavier

PAB Chairman