

The CSA's action towards « baby channels »

EPRA – May 7th, 2009

- ▶ **Background and CSA's approach**
- ▶ **Arguments presented**
- ▶ **CSA's decision**

- ▶ **The launch of baby channels in France – Milestones**
 - **In 2005 : Baby TV**
 - **October 16th, 2007: Baby first**
 - **October 26th, 2007: Child development specialists appealed for a moratorium** (psychiatrists, child and youth psychologists, educators, doctors, youth development specialists).
 - **November 15th : A group of family associations complaints to CSA**

- ▶ **An inconsistent situation with the French framework**
 - **French channels are required not to target children under the age of 2**
 - **Baby channels : licenced by Ofcom and free reception in France**

- ▶ **At the European level**
 - **Refer to Ofcom**
 - **Hearing of its delegates**

- ▶ **At the national level**
- **Put together hearings**
 - . The Childhood Experts Committee of the CSA
 - . The initiators of the petition against baby channels
 - . The distributors of these channels in France
 - . French channels for toddlers
 - . Representatives of the channels « Baby tv » and « Baby First »
- **Opinion of the Health Ministry**

- ▶ **BABY CHANNELS' RATIONALE**
 - Children under the age of 3 watch inappropriate programs
 - Need to create adapted programs with the help of specialists
 - Favor parents/children interaction
 - Train the baby's brain
- ▶ **Broadcasting characteristics**
 - 24h broadcast
 - Morning and bedtime programs
 - Warnings

▶ **THE RATIONALE OF THE BABY CHANNELS' OPPONENTS**

Scientists, professionals and family associations' general agreement

- **Need for the baby to explore the world with an available grown-up**
- **No need for a television for babies**
- **No such thing as adapted programs**
- **Baby channels' arguments not based on scientific facts**
- **Few studies on this new phenomenon**
- **The few available studies are alarming**

- ▶ **THE ARGUMENTS OF THE BABY CHANNELS' OPPONENTS**
 - **Risks of television, whatever the program, on the baby's health**
 - **Passivity**
 - **Late language acquisition**
 - **Restlessness**
 - **Sleeping and concentration disorders**
 - **Addiction to screens**
 - **Distinction between watching a DVD and watching television**

- ▶ **THE HEALTH MINISTRY'S OPINION OF April 16th, 2008**
 - **Opposition to channels targeting children under the age of 3**
 - **Children under the age of 3 should not watch television**

▶ A FRAMEWORK FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF BABY CHANNELS

- **Warning message**

- **On the distributors' screens**

- **In their commercial documents**

« Watching television can impair the development of children under the age of 3, even when the channels specifically target them »

- **Marketing : it is illegal to claim health or educational benefits**

- ▶ **ASK FRENCH TELEVISION CHANNELS TO PROTECT CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 3**
- **Information duty**
- **Organisation of an annual information campaign (CSA / Health Ministry)**
- **Objectives for the protection of children under 3:**
 - . **Information on the fact that television programs are unadapted to them**
 - . **Information on the risks of development disorders**
- **Prohibition of the broadcasting and promotion of programs specifically targeting children under the age of 3**

▶ **REPORTING TO THE CSA**

Annual report to the CSA

- **By editors**
- **By distributors**

- ▶ **New approach to children protection**
 - **Standard approach : fight against harmful content**
 - **New approach : fight against early targeting of viewers**

- ▶ **Innovative regulatory duty on the European level**
 - **Discussion with the British regulator**
 - **Communication on the approach developing in France**
 - **Admitting free reception of services while developing scientific information to counteract strong marketing and commercial pressure**
 - **Allowing freedom of choice for viewers**

- ▶ **Milestones**
 - **October 2007** **Channel « Baby First » lauched in France**
Appeal for Moratorium
 - **November 2007** **Group of family associations' complaint to CSA**
 - **From December 2007 to June 2008** **Hearing of scientists, baby channels, distributors and editors of channels targeting very young children**
 - **April 2008** **Health Ministry's opinion**
 - **June 2008** **Letter to Ofcom**
 - **July 2008** **Hearing of baby channels**
Decision adopted (« délibération »)

- ▶ **Actions in 2009**
 - **Monitoring of the measures implemented by the distributors**
 - **Preparing an information campaign on the effects of television on children under the age of 3**