

Magnette says no to mobile phones for children

The minister responsible for consumer protection, Paul Magnette, will not authorise the marketing in Belgium of mobile phones intended for children.

The minister responsible for consumer protection, Paul Magnette, will not authorise the marketing in Belgium of mobile phones intended for children.

In the Tuesday meeting of the Commission de la Chambre, the MP Valérie Déom (Socialist) stated that according to certain articles in the press, Disney and Belgacom are planning to introduce in Belgium a cell phone intended exclusively for children.

The phone, apparently designed specifically for the very young, is very colourful and has 3 or 4 keys connected to numbers that the parents can pre-select. The main selling point of a phone of this type is security: wherever the child may be, their parents can call them, and vice versa .



Paul Magnette - Minister Bega

In 2004, as the MP recalled, a controversy arose over a similar product - baptised Mymo - but the phone was never put into production, for lack of a reliable manufacturer.

"Isn't this kind of gadget the living proof that children are above all targets of marketing? Shouldn't we be protecting them against this kind of commercialism?" she asked.

The minister responsible for consumer protection, Paul Magnette (Socialist), concurred with this view.

In addition to the ethical problem, he also highlighted the health risk. As he explained, "With this type of phone children can actually be exposed to mechanical dangers or the risks of radiation. In fact scientists all recognise that it is necessary to limit children's exposure to cumulative amounts of radiation, even if not much is yet known about how sensitive they are to radio waves."

Unless the manufacturers of these phones can produce enough evidence to prove that they are safe, M. Magnette will not authorise their sale, in respect for the principle of precaution.

(Belga)



Child and mobile phone (Photo illustration add Next-up org.)

Next-up organisation

Vidéo Dr George Carlo (click)

- Téléphone Mobile
 12 Conseils élémentaires de prévention afin de limiter l'exposition de l'utilisateur aux rayonnements du Téléphone Mobile

- Mobile Phone
 12 Proposals and 12 Basic caution advices in a way to limit the user's exposition to Mobile Phone radiations.