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> [Committee for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media Thursday 27 March 2025, 2 p.m.](#)

NEXT REPORT



Date Thursday, March 27, 2025

Time 14 hours

Room Jan Van Eyck

Commission [Committee for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media](#)

Chair [Bart Van Opstal](#)

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● 9 present



[Gilles Bultinck \(cd&v\)](#) [Stijn De Roo \(CD&V\)](#) [Manu Diericx \(N-VA\)](#) [An Hermans \(N-VA\)](#) [Bram Jaques \(Green\)](#) [Freya Perdaens \(N-VA\)](#) [Gwendolyn Rutten \(Open Vld\)](#) [Katia Segers \(Forward\)](#) [Bart Van Opstal \(Flemish Interest\)](#)

● 2 absent with notice



[Gijs Degrande \(N-VA\)](#) [Katrien Partyka \(cd&v\)](#)

● 5 absent



[Filip Brusselmans \(Flemish Interest\)](#) [Mercina Claesen \(Flemish Interest\)](#) [Frederik Sioen \(Forward\)](#) [Klaas Slootmans \(Flemish Interest\)](#) [Ilona Vandenberghe \(PVDA\)](#)

Committee for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media

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Report of the meeting of the Committee for Culture, Youth, Sports and Media

📅 THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2025

Ask for explanation

2066 (2024-2025)

on the enforcement of the ban on 'loot boxes' and the responsibility of social media platforms in illegal advertising

from Katia Segers to Minister Cielkje Van Achter

→ [View document sheet](#)

Report

The Chairman

Mrs Segers has the floor.

Katia Segers (Forward)

Thank you to colleague Rutten for the flexibility.

Minister, recent research shows that, despite the Belgian ban on 'loot boxes' and social casino mechanisms, these products are still massively offered and promoted via online advertisements. An analysis of 1574 advertisements on social media platforms shows that these illegal gambling mechanisms have been viewed more than 4.5 million times by Flemish users, including 1.26 million times by young people under the age of 21. This points to a structural lack of enforcement and the failure of social media platforms and app stores to effectively ban this illegal content, which we are actually forcing them to do.

You will also refer to the federal level in any case, but since media policy and the regulation of digital platforms also partly fall within Flemish powers, I would like to ask you the following questions.

What steps can you take to oblige social media platforms and app stores in Flanders to actively block illegal advertisements for loot boxes and social casino mechanisms? Can we even do that?



Do you think it is possible to hold media platforms liable if they deliberately or negligently contribute to the distribution of illegal gambling advertisements? Are you prepared to introduce stricter rules and sanctions within the Flemish media policy against online platforms that do not take sufficient action against advertisements of illegal gambling? These questions are somewhat related.

Has the Flemish Government already consulted with the federal and European authorities about enforcing stricter content moderation by social media platforms and app stores?

And finally, how can Flanders contribute to improving the enforcement capacity of our regulator, so that the existing ban on loot boxes in Belgium is actually enforced?

The Chairman

Minister Van Achter has the floor.

Minister Cieltje Van Achter

As regards the issue of loot boxes, I would like to refer to my answers to the questions from you and Mr Brusselmans on gambling elements and more specifically 'loot boxes' in games, which we discussed in this committee at the beginning of January. We had a very extensive and interesting discussion on this at the time.

It's important that we continue to raise awareness of the issues surrounding loot boxes and gambling elements, so I'd also like to answer your questions today.

As I indicated to you in January, the use of paid loot boxes falls under the gambling legislation. The answer from the federal Minister of Justice in early 2023 shows that the Belgian Gaming Commission (KSC) qualifies loot boxes as a game of chance. Since the Gaming Act prohibits all games of chance without prior authorization, and does not provide a license for the operation of loot boxes, they therefore fall under a general prohibition. We have already discussed this. It is of course a prohibition that is not at all easy to enforce.

As regards advertisements on video-sharing platform services, I refer to Article 176/5 of the Media Decree. This provision states that providers of video-sharing platform services that market, sell or organise commercial communications must comply with the provisions on commercial communications set out in Article 52 et seq. of the Media Decree. This means, among other things, that – in application of Article 52 – social media platforms may not provide commercial communications that are in breach of the statutory provisions. This therefore also applies to commercial communications that are in breach of the gambling legislation, and therefore also of federal legislation. If this is not permitted by law, such commercial communications may not be sold or marketed.

The Flemish Media Regulator (VRM) has, for example, already established infringements of Article 52 of the Media Decree in the past, for example, for sponsorship mentions that



were in conflict with the Royal Decree on games of chance. Social media platforms that can be qualified as video platform services must comply with the Media Decree, and therefore also that article. We have an important nuance here: only video platform services that are established in Flanders fall within the scope of the Media Decree and the supervisory authority of the VRM. Today, however, the majority of providers of video platform services are established in another EU Member State and therefore we have no authority over them. The Flemish Media Regulator can, however, submit complaints or comments about those video platforms to the national regulatory authority of the competent Member State.

The options to take action against online platforms that advertise illegal gambling from the perspective of Flemish media policy are therefore limited, also given the division of powers in Belgium. There is now a new Federal Government, but I have not yet had the opportunity to discuss this with my federal colleagues. We will certainly do so when the opportunity arises, but it was still too short notice.

From the media policy, the focus is therefore mainly on informing about the risks associated with gambling-related elements in games. Our media literacy policy then naturally comes to the fore, in which we really pay attention to advertising and gaming as part of the Flemish media literacy policy.

Mediawijs has quite a few programs about that. I have a complete list of them. I can provide you with that. We also have the Gam(e)(a)ble project, which has now ended. Mediawijs will also collaborate with the Flemish expertise center for Alcohol and other Drugs (VAD). I have seen those researchers, by the way. I went to teach at KU Leuven. One of those researchers was also present. They will sit together to see what the results of the research are and get to work on translating that to the general public. There will certainly also be a focus on information for parents. In this case, it is crucial that that happens.

As I indicated at the beginning of January, the European Commission has taken an initiative to also develop a regulatory instrument that should curb unethical techniques and commercial practices of certain services, and that to protect consumers. That is the Digital Fairness Act. However, it is still too early to go into that in more detail today. There is still a lot of uncertainty about it. My administration, my cabinet and I are of course following that closely and we will certainly be able to exchange ideas about it at a later time.

It is an important issue, the gambling elements in gaming and what that can do to addiction problems. We have to take that into account and on the other hand also support our video game industry, because I think we have a very nice economic market there.

The Chairman

Mrs Segers has the floor.



Katia Segers (Forward)

Thank you for your answer, Minister. The study that prompted the discussion in January also stated, for example, that 172 games all showed illegal forms of gambling and that they were also advertised very widely, such as 'Genshin Impact' and 'Brawl Stars'. The most popular and most widely distributed advertisement in Belgium, for example, was for 'Harry Potter: Puzzles & Spells'. It reached four hundred thousand views in Belgium. That is 3.4 percent of the entire country. We also discussed it in January. The loot boxes, those gambling elements in games, are a very easy and efficient way to encourage young people to engage in other forms of gambling. That points to incredible potential, but it also points to the fact that we are failing in some way, because we continue to be confronted with a huge number of illegal games and illegal advertisements for them.

Minister, I am hopeful after your answer. You say that ... *(unintelligible)* ... Flemish regulations. We need to look at that, but certainly also at the federal and European level. I also think ... *(unintelligible)* ...

The Chairman

Mrs Hermans has the floor.

An Hermans (N-VA)

Gambling addiction is a serious social problem. We must actively combat it. Loot boxes in video games do indeed show characteristics of gambling. Our young people in particular come into contact with this risky behaviour. My colleague Diericx already said in the committee meeting at the beginning of January that this regulation falls under federal authority. I was not here at the time, but the minister's answer now is very clear in my opinion.

Unfortunately, we must once again conclude that we are running up against a division of powers in the search for an answer from Flanders. Our group certainly supports the minister in her initiatives to make this arrangement of powers more rational. And of course we also look forward to her consultation with the federal colleagues.

The Chairman

Minister Van Achter has the floor.

Minister Cieltje Van Achter

I don't think I heard any additional questions. We're recording it, and that was the call, I think.



The Chairman

Mrs Segers has the floor.

Katia Segers (Forward)

I am glad to hear that we all agree across the board that this is a very important issue. I also have a lot of contacts with experts on gambling addiction. It is a global problem that is increasing, so we need to find a way to stop it. I am glad to hear that we are working on it.

The Chairman

The request for explanation has been dealt with.

Next topic

Ask for explanation

2063 (2024-2025)

about the whistleblower reports at VRT

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