Marketing and advertising to children: the issues at stake

☐ In today's commercial world, children are behaving as an independent consumer group and therefore are a target audience for marketing and advertisements. Children are more vulnerable to manipulation through advertising messages. Children today have access to countless media outlets that are more difficult to monitor than radio or television. Children see advertisements at children's clubs, sporting events, concerts, websites, social networking sites and even in schools. Marketing tactics can result in negative impacts on children's physical and mental health.[(…)]

One such negative consequence of child-targeted marketing is obesity. Obesity has been linked to the consumption of products that are high in fat, sugar, salt and which are marketed directly to children. Advertisements may also introduce children to inappropriate content like violence, sexualization and unrealistic body images. [(…)]

Action must be taken by both businesses and governments to respect and support children's rights by regulating advertisements. These guides and regulations should promote positive self-esteem, healthy lifestyles and non-violent values. A number of companies such as Lego, Disney, Unilever and H&M have already taken steps to integrate children's rights considerations into their marketing and advertising strategies. [(…)]

Governments also can play a role in regulating advertisements to children. In 2011, the United Kingdom issued a report called **Letting Children Be Children**, to counter the commercialization and sexualization of children via the internet, television, advertising and garment industry. It is only by working together and combining the efforts of governments, business and consumers that we can start shaping advertising practices into a positive contribution for children today and future generations.

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