

## Online meeting with PEGI 25<sup>th</sup> June 2026

1. Ana Budimir	Croatia
2. Ana Fabijan	Croatia
3. Ana Pandža	Croatia
4. Marianna Ioannou	Cyprus
5. Sofus Bynge	Denmark
6. Caroline Barré-Villeneuve	France
7. Marie Legouais	France
8. Camille Odillard	France
9. Frieda Groschup	Germany
10. Guðrún Kristín Kristinsdóttir	Iceland
11. Catriona Mulcahy	Ireland
12. Valentina Picco	Italy
13. Kelly Busuttil	Malta
14. Vineeca Kuo	The Netherlands
15. Lotte Wevelstad	Norway
16. Dirk Bosmans	PEGI
17. Karl Hopwood	Insafe/EUN
18. Anja Perić	

You can access a recording of the meeting here <https://youtu.be/CgTSpGoeuj8>

In March 2026, PEGI (the Pan-European system for the age classification of video games) announced that it would be adding new categories to its classification criteria to address online risks. From June 2026, newly submitted games will be classified with a broader set of criteria that will focus on content and functionality, such as purchases of in-game content, paid random items, communication features, and features that incentivise players to continue playing.

Games now have to answer four additional categories of questions and as a result they might get a higher age rating.

PEGI labels and content descriptors have not changed significantly over the last 23 years but the criteria are constantly updated. For example, the gambling criteria has just had a complete overhaul.

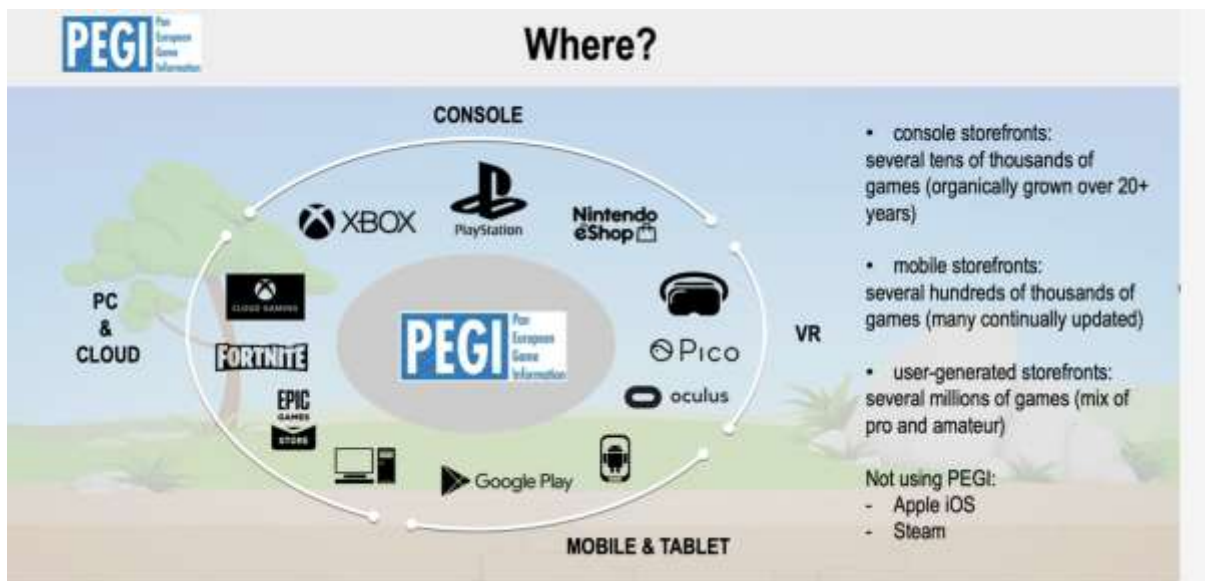
PEGI works closely with USK as the games rating body in Germany – USK was already implemented in Germany and so PEGI is not enforced there.

The landscape has changed significantly with around 1500 game licenses being issued each year – but this is now the number per day.

There is also an international age rating coalition which includes PEGI and USK as well as organisations in the US and Australia. IARC allows the pooling of resources and the sharing of best practices.

The actual age classification work is done by NICAM (NL) and the Games Rating Authority in the UK. PEGI has to demonstrate that it is very serious about this. Input is needed from the game companies but colleagues at NICAM and GRA will actually play the games in order to issue a final rating decision that companies can use. It is impossible to release a game on a range of consoles without a PEGI

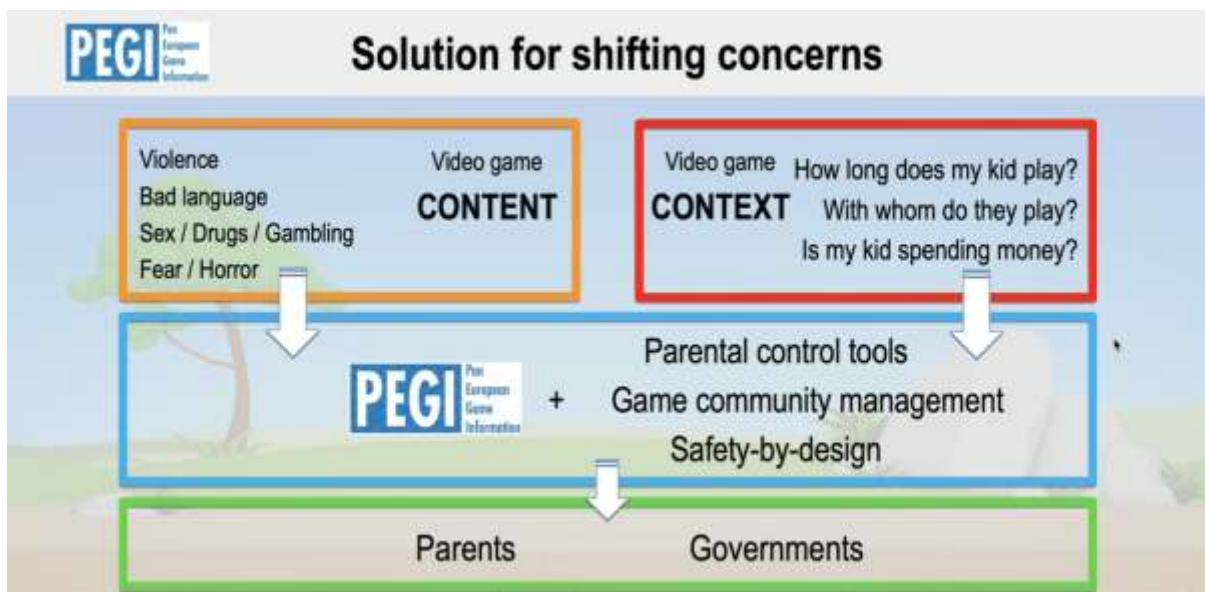
rating. It is important to note that alongside XBOX, PlayStation and others, Fortnite is also classed as a gaming platform – there are tens of thousands of games there. Roblox will shortly adopt the IARC system and so PEGI ratings will start to appear on individual games.



Apple and Steam are outside of the PEGI system. Apple has its own rating system and Steam only allows a publisher to display a PEGI rating if they want to. This is a problem for PEGI.

Stakeholders are losing developers to Steam because there are less rules but they can't afford this to happen. Self-regulation is dependent on some national laws and there needs to be some pressure from government as well as adoption by industry in order to prevent regulation which would be worse for the platforms.

It is possible that the DSA and the DFA could create possibilities for PEGI to be able to get Steam to adopt the PEGI ratings.



Parents want to be informed about the content in video games but are more concerned about screentime and whether their child is able to spend money in a videogame. Teens want spaces where they can socialise safely.

PEGI has traditionally said that there are tools to manage all of these concerns. Tools to disable spending, monitor interactions, restrict time etc. but this requires an active attitude from a parent and of course not all parents are engaged. The approach from PEGI is that it is impossible to remove parents from the equation entirely- education needs to be ongoing.



### In-game purchases

If a game has a paid subscription or a countdown timer it will be rated as 12 from now on. Pressure to pay is not seen as acceptable for younger children.

USK implemented these changes 2 years ago when the German youth protection legislation changed. The youth protection law talks about mitigating measures so if a game had in-game controls which meant that spending was off by default then it can have a lower rating because the parent did not need to go in and turn something on – it was on by default.

However, in-game controls are very rare. USK had one game which did this in two years. This is safety by design and industry could do this and be rewarded with a lower age rating but it is not happening.

Blockchain and cryptocurrency needs to be PEGI 18 – the publishers of these games have not objected because they are not targeting under 18s.



### Paid random items

This refers to loot boxes essentially. If users are able to pay for random items or card packs then there needs to be a PEGI 16 rating. Academics noted that there was no hard evidence of harm or that loot boxes would lead to gambling but it was still agreed that they should be 16. If a player can pay for something and there is a chance-based outcome then the rating is 16.

Social casinos are usually mobile games and are clearly gambling related. Some people are likely to be unhappy with this approach as 16 will be applied to all games with paid random items.



### Play by appointment

This is entirely new. It is difficult to define addictive elements. Games can be addictive but does this mean problematic game play or just that a player is passionate about the game. It was decided that if a player could lose an already acquired status or content because they didn't return to the game on a daily basis then this would have a PEGI rating of 12 as this is like a punishment and is something that

younger children do not understand. Daily quests are not something that they can already process. Incentives to visit every day are not necessarily problematic and it can make the game fun – this is similar to an episode ending on a cliff edge in Netflix and would be given a PEGI 7 rating, but the main purpose is for parents to be informed about this.



Online safety should not simply be associated with minor protection and should not just apply to children and young people under 16. If a game is released with no restrictions at all, no muting, blocking or moderation or the opportunity to report then this will be rated 18. It is unlikely that we will see many of these games in the EU. Most companies will have minimum safeguards in place. This is information for publishers as well as parents.

- 1. PEGI traditional**  
1<sup>st</sup> of June: criteria implemented for all newly submitted games.
- 2. PEGI ratings via IARC**  
Gradual roll-out in v11 questionnaire of IARC via the participating storefronts. Before completion, PEGI Admins may review and manually update ratings for games submitted through IARC where relevant.
- 3. Existing games with PEGI ratings**  
From the 1st of October 2026, PEGI will proactively reclassify categories of existing games under specific conditions.

Digital games can get a rating from the IARC system very quickly. This will be adopted throughout the entire industry. Every game will fall into the new criteria.

Existing games are regularly updated – they're not always the same as when they were started. There are some parameters to take into account. For example, if a game is released on a disc, we can assume that there is a natural lifecycle. There is little point in re-rating Fifa23 if Fifa 27 is about to be

published. However, with online only live services these should be re-visited. From 1<sup>st</sup> October PEGI will look at existing games and re-classify some of them.

It is not possible to determine whether pressure to play exists within a game – there is no information stored in a database about this. There is much more clarity around lootboxes and games with lootboxes will move to PEGI 16 whether they are new or old.



**PEGI** The European Game Information Board

## What's next?

- **Impact of the changes**
  - Is everybody happy?
- **Efficacy of age ratings**
  - Adoption of advice for parents vs. foolproof promise of age verification
- **Efficacy of parental tools**
  - Opt-out vs opt-in
- **Enforcement of self-regulation**
  - Making the process more visible
- **Level playing field**
  - Legal grounding for PEGI?

PEGI is keen to learn about the impact of the changes.

Often a 16 or 18 rating is seen as being done primarily to punish companies, but this is not the purpose, it is not a punishment but is about informing parents. It is important for PEGI to explain why a game is moving to a 16 rating. There will be questions about the efficacy of age ratings and although some critics say that parents do not use them, there is data showing that parents are aware and that this helps them to make more informed decisions.

It is important to reach those parents that do not know about PEGI, this group is harder to reach. Age verification is part of the solution but thinking that this is a silver bullet to keep everyone safe is an illusion. PEGI looked at parental attitudes to this and found that 75% of parents wanted to have the final say regardless of bans.