

France Bans Children's Beauty Contest to Curb Sexualization

France has banned child beauty pageants in a bid to curb the hypersexualization of children.

The new law decrees it illegal for anyone to organize a beauty pageant for under-16-year-olds, with a penalty of up to two years in prison and a fine equivalent to €30,000 (about \$40,640).

French Sen. Chantal Jouanno, who authored the report "Against Hyper-Sexualisation: A New Fight For Equality," proposed an amendment to an equality bill introduced by Women's Minister Najat Vallaud-Belkacem.

Jouanno said, "Let's not let our daughters think from such a young age that they will be judged according to their appearance. Let's not let commercial interest impact on social interest."

The amendment received 196 votes for and 146 against. But an amendment pushing for better regulation of child models was rejected.

Jouanno was said to be particularly concerned about a *Vogue* magazine shoot in 2010 that featured provocative pictures of a 10-year-old girl.

The new law follows widespread concern about the sexualization of children in a number of countries, including the U.K.

Last year, a survey for the Chartered Institute of Marketing showed that parents were still worried about the sexualization and commercialization of childhood despite the British prime minister's promised crackdown.

David Cameron gave his backing to a report prepared by Reg

Bailey of the Mother's Union, which called on businesses and regulators to "let children be children."

But the survey showed almost 90 percent were still worried about their children being exposed to inappropriate marketing.

Parents still cite sexually explicit outdoor advertising and inappropriate products, like padded bras for kids, among their main concerns.

In 2011, a *Daily Mail* investigation revealed that girls as young as 3 were being offered "pink cocktails," temporary tattoos, manicures, lipstick and limos by companies providing "pamper parties" for tiny tots.

The newspaper discovered companies up and down the country advertising such services to youngsters, some not even of primary school age.

Critics expressed concern about the activities, with one warning such parties could give girls "an image of themselves which is based solely around their physical appearance."