

Concerned Voter
A house
A road
A place

April 8, 2005

An MEP
The EU Parliament
Brussels

Dear Mr MEP,

I write to you today as a concerned member of the Information Technology industry within the United Kingdom. I would like to draw your attention to the proposed EU directive entitled "Directive on the Patentability of Computer-Implemented Inventions". It is currently awaiting its second reading in the EU Parliament and if passed will allow patents on the creation of software for computers. The UK is currently a world leader in this sector, and I believe this directive will severely damage our abilities to compete. I therefore ask that it not receive your support when the vote arrives.

Supporters of the directive claim it will encourage research and development of software in the UK, by allowing authors to own not only their work, but the concepts behind it. However, there is no lack of innovative development in the UK at present. This directive, therefore, seems entirely unnecessary. Smaller companies, whom the directive purports to protect, are more interested in creating new software than spending thousands on legal fees acquiring patents that will themselves cost tens of thousands to enforce.

Moreover, I believe that if passed, large foreign firms will use this directive to "patent grab" huge areas of new technology. Once patented, the new owners of these fundamental ideas will use the law as a cudgel against competition. It is already the case in the USA that exciting new markets such as computer based video services are covered by great swaths of trivial patents, which are routinely used to prevent competition.

When confronted with this scenario, supporters of the directive claim it will not allow patents on purely software inventions. This is false; the language of the directive has been written in such an ambiguous manner as to theoretically allow unlimited patentability of software methods. The European Parliament noticed this, and in September 2003 voted for a series of amendments that would clarify the situation, and ensure claims of non-patentability would be carried through.

The council rejected all of the parliaments amendments. The commission then rejected parliaments request for a restart of the legislative process. As you know, it will now require majority of the component members of parliament to reject the directive at its second reading.

Hence, I implore you to attend the upcoming vote, and ensure that this directive does not pass in its current form. It is imperative to the continued success of the UK information technology sector that we prevent the erection of intellectual and competitive barriers within a critical part of our economy.

Yours Sincerely,

Concerned Voter