



EC To Research the Dangers of Software Patents

EuroLinux Provides
a Public Forum and a Rich Knowledge Base

EuroLinux Alliance
petition.eurolinux.org

For immediate Release

Bruxelles, Copenhagen, London, Madrid, Munich, Paris. October 25th 2000. On Thursday 19th October 2000, the European Commission announced the opening of an official consultation on the economic and social impact of software patents in Europe. In order to help European Authorities to conduct an open consultation, the EuroLinux Alliance of software publishers and non profit organisations debuts a public forum and a rich knowledge base.

The General Directorate for Internal Market has recognised recently the potential negative impact of software patents on innovation, their danger for small and medium enterprises and the requirement for Europe to conduct in-depth researches on the economic impact of software patents before changing European Patent Law. Obviously, there is no economic consensus in Europe on this matter.

It is also widely admitted that any extension of the patent system to software is equivalent to an extension of the patent system to intellectual or business methods implemented with software. Patents on "internet auctions", "electronic voting", "organising virtual call centres", "distributing recipes in supermarkets" or "managing a company with a single accounting book" are typical examples of software patents legally granted in the United States. Once software patents become legal in Europe, most of these examples will become enforceable in Europe too.

Previous European consultations on software patents were mainly targeted at patent attorneys and patent offices. Obviously, patent attorneys and patent offices expressed a position in favour of software patents. This new consultation should now be considered by European companies, organisations and citizens as a real opportunity to voice their own concerns.

EuroLinux kindly asks European consumers, European IT professionals and European companies to urgently send public statements, reports and position papers on software patents to consultation@eurolinux.org. Emails sent to this address will be automatically published on the EuroLinux web site (<http://petition.eurolinux.org/consultation>) and forwarded to the General Directorate for Internal Market at the European Commission.

EuroLinux does not recommend sending private emails to the General Directorate for Internal Market. Only open and public information about the dangers of software patents will be considered seriously. The EuroLinux public forum and its rich knowledge base are currently the best guarantee for a transparent and democratic debate on software patents in Europe.

References

The EuroLinux Public Consultation – <http://petition.eurolinux.org/consultation>

The EuroLinux Petition for a Software Patent Free Europe – <http://petition.eurolinux.org>

The EuroLinux File on Software Patents – <http://petition.eurolinux.org/reference>

Official Consultation on Software Patents

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/intprop/indprop/softpaten.htm

About EuroLinux – www.eurolinux.org

The EuroLinux Alliance for a Free Information Infrastructure is an open coalition of commercial companies and non-profit associations united to promote and protect a vigorous European Software Culture based on Open Standards, Open Competition, Linux and Open Source Software. Companies members or supporters of EuroLinux develop or sell software under free, semi-free and non-free licenses for operating systems such as Linux, MacOS or Windows.

The EuroLinux Alliance launched on 2000-06-15 an electronic petition to protect software innovation in Europe. The EuroLinux petition has received so far massive support from more than 50.000 European citizens, 2000 corporate managers and 200 companies.

The EuroLinux Alliance has co-organised in 1999, together with the French Embassy in Japan, the first Europe-Japan conference on Linux and Free Software. The EuroLinux Alliance is at the initiative of the www.freepatents.org web site to promote and protect innovation and competition in the European IT industry.

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