

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2414/02  
by Michiel van Hulten (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Congressional bill to combat Internet file-sharing services (e.g. Kazaa)

According to a report in the 29 July 2002 edition of 'De Volkskrant' the US Congress is preparing a law which would give the US recording and film industry the right to hack into the computers of consumers who exchange files 'illegally' via the Internet. The industries would be given the right to disable the file-sharing software (e.g. Kazaa) and to block or otherwise disrupt users' Internet connections. The provisions of the law would apply to any breach of the rules which resulted in a loss of more than \$ 50.

1. Is the Commission aware of this bill?
2. Is the Commission aware of the judgment handed down by the Netherlands courts stipulating that use of the file-sharing service Kazaa is lawful?
3. Does the Commission share the view that, even after the adoption of the new law, American firms will not have the right to disrupt European computer users' Internet traffic or even damage their computers and that any such act would represent a criminal offence?
4. What steps does the Commission plan to take in order to protect European computer users against the new law?
5. Does the Commission share the view that the enormous success of file-sharing services such as Kazaa (which already has some 100 million users according to its own website) can be explained by the exorbitant prices charged for audiovisual products, such as DVDs and CDs? What steps does it plan to take with a view to reducing prices for such products on the internal market?