

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2828/03
by Kathleen Van Brempt (PSE)
to the Commission

Subject: Readability of rewritable CD ROMs

Valuable data on CD ROMs does not always last long in practice. A trial carried out by a Dutch computer magazine, PC-Active, has shown that data on a self-burned CD (CD-R/REW) can become unreadable in less than two years. PC-Active tested the quality of thirty brands of rewritable CD. The discs were stored for 20 months in their original packaging in a locked cupboard. Then the condition of the CDs was assessed by a professional CD analyser. The test showed that a number of CD-Rs had become totally unreadable, and others partly unreadable. Data that had been saved on the discs 20 months before had become unreadable. The manufacturers involved include both well-known and less well-known brands. CD-ROM manufacturers claim, however, that their products last at least ten years; some even claim they have a useful life of a hundred years.

- Is the Commission aware of this research?
- Does the Commission intend to take action in light of these findings? If so, what?
- If not, why not? Does the Commission believe that the claims of readability of CD-ROMs are misleading?