

WRITTEN QUESTION E-0897/09
by Jens Holm (GUE/NGL)
to the Commission

Subject: Anonymity services

The need for reliable systems for giving information anonymously has been highlighted in connection with trials concerning serious criminal cases¹ and financial crime². Large sums can be lost if ordinary members of the public do not dare to contact journalists or the police³. The development of electronic anonymity services has come a long way in Sweden. They are used by both private individuals and companies, on both the internet and intranets, for both private and commercial use.

1. Does the Commission intend to submit a proposal to prohibit such services within certain fields?
2. Does the Commission consider that individual Member States have the right to prohibit such services?
3. Does the Commission consider that the right to electronic anonymity is or should be guaranteed at EU level?

¹ Polisen varnar för ny Bandidos-etablering i Västerås <http://www.vlt.se/artikelmall.asp?version=530104>

² Bank Julius Baer vs. Wikileaks http://wikileaks.org/wiki/Bank_Julius_Baer_vs._Wikileaks

³ 1995 Supreme Court ruling in *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission*:
Protections for anonymous speech are vital to democratic discourse. Allowing dissenters to shield their identities frees them to express critical, minority views . . . Anonymity is a shield from the tyranny of the majority. . . . It thus exemplifies the purpose behind the Bill of Rights, and of the First Amendment in particular: to protect unpopular individuals from retaliation . . . at the hand of an intolerant society.