

ORAL QUESTION H-0788/02
for Question Time at the part-session in December 2002
pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure
by Göran Färm
to the Commission

Subject: Problems for European patent holders in protecting their patents before American courts

Earlier this year the Swedish inventor Dr Håkan Lans lost a case on his colour graphics patent before a court in Washington D.C on unfair grounds. The court has hitherto refused to admit Dr Lans's appeal. Because of this he risks losing other patents to American firms, including the world standard for flight navigation systems (VDL Mode4) which is largely funded by the EU. On 26 June 2002 the Swedish Foreign Office sent an official letter to the US Attorney General and asked the authorities to look into the matter. No reply has yet been received, in spite of persistent pressure from the Swedish government.

In the light of the above, what opportunities are there for the EU to support the Swedish government in its presentation of this case, and what does the Commission usually do to help European patent holders in asserting their rights before American courts?

Tabled: 12.11.2002
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