

ORAL QUESTION O-0062/99

pursuant to Rule 42 of the Rules of Procedure

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to the Commission

Subject: The European Community patent system and the position of small and medium-sized enterprises

At the Council of Internal Market Affairs on 25 February 1999, the European Commission presented its communication on the actions concerning the creation of the European Community patent system on the basis of the Green Paper (COM (97) 314 fin.). The actual communication was forwarded to the Council on 5 February 1999 (COM (99) 42 fin.).

The basic European innovation lies in the development and dynamics of European small and medium-sized enterprises. The economic value of the innovations and benefits of intellectual property rights should also be accessible to SMEs, through a process which is efficient and not too costly.

Concerning the creation of the European Community patent system, how will the Commission take into account the position and the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises? At the moment, SMEs face many problems including the costs of patents of the current system. These costs are based on the European Patent Convention, which has been approved by all the Member States. Has the Commission checked that it is necessary to create a new system and not to improve the system on the basis of the current conventional system? How will the Commission ensure that the system now in preparation will not harm small and medium-sized enterprises?

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