

Petition Initiators Thank the European Parliament

<http://swpat.ffii.org/journal/03/epet0929/index.en.html>

Workgroup

swpatag@ffii.org

2003-10-06

Last Wednesday the Parliament voted against software patents and for freedom of publication, freedom of interoperation and other basic values of the information society, thereby reversing the thrust of a directive proposal from the European Commission, so as to basically satisfy the demands of a quarter million signatories of the “Eurolinux Petition for a Software Patent Free Europe” and 30 eminent computer scientists. The initiators of both petitions will speak before the European Parliament’s Petition Committee on tuesday 18.00 to express their thanks and explore with MEPs what still needs to be done.

Contents

1 details	2
2 Media Contacts	2
3 About the FFII – www.ffii.org	2
4 About the Eurolinux Alliance – www.eurolinux.org	3
5 Permanent URL of this Press Release	3
6 Annotated Links	3

1 details

The Petition for a Software Patent Free Europe¹ and the Scientists' Petition² are being presented on Tue 30 Sept 2003 at 6 pm in the Petition Committee in the European Parliament Room A3G2, Spinelli Building (ASP) at Brussels by Bernard Lang³ and Philippe Aigrain.

On 10 Nov, software patents are possibly on the agenda for a meeting of governmental patent experts from EU member states in the European Council⁴. The software patent owner lobby and EU Internal Market Commissioner Frits Bolkestein are now counting on the Council, whose "patent policy working party" has proven in the past to be very responsive to patent owner wishes. Bolkestein and his supporters have predicted that the Council will withdraw the directive or, if that fails, give in to anticipated US pressure. The day before the vote Bolkestein⁵ warned MEPs that they would ruin their chances of democratic participation if they voted as they did last wednesday. The US⁶ and UK⁷ governments sent warnings of similar content to MEPs earlier this month.

In this atmosphere of fear, uncertainty and distrust (FUD) launched against the European Parliament, both Mr Aigrain⁸ and Mr Lang are expected to strenghten the position of the Parliament in European legislation.

For attending the meeting, please send mail to Benjamin Henrion⁹.

2 Media Contacts

mail: media at ffi.org

phone: FFII Munich (German, English and French): 0049/89/18979927 Benjamin Henrion (French and English): 0032/498/292771 or 0032/10/454779 Jonas Maebe (Dutch and English): +32-485-36-96-45 Dieter Van Uytvanck (Dutch and English): +32-499-16-70-10 Erik Josefsson (Swedish and English): +46-707-696567 Alex Macfie (English): +44 7901 751753 Joaquim Carvalho (Portugues and English): +35-1-93-6169633 More Contacts to be supplied upon request

3 Permanent URL of this Press Release

<http://swpat.ffi.org/journal/03/epet0929/index.en.html>

¹<http://petition.eurolinux.org/>

²<http://swpat.ffi.org/papers/eubsa-swpat0202/komp0305/index.en.html>

³<http://pauillac.inria.fr/lang/reperes/patents/>

⁴<http://swpat.ffi.org/players/consilium/index.en.html>

⁵<http://swpat.ffi.org/papers/eubsa-swpat0202/plen0309/deba/index.en.html#bolk>

⁶<http://swpat.ffi.org/papers/eubsa-swpat0202/usrep0309/index.en.html>

⁷<http://swpat.ffi.org/papers/eubsa-swpat0202/ukrep0309/index.en.html>

⁸<http://swpat.ffi.org/journal/03/epet0929/aigrain/index.en.html>

⁹<mailto:epreg030929@ffi.org?subject=http://swpat.ffi.org/journal/03/epet0929/index.en.html>

4 Annotated Links

- **Bolkestein’s warning to MEPs**¹⁰

Similar statements were uttered previously by Arlene McCarthy and later by several patent attorneys, some in names of organisations.
see Reactions to EP Vote¹¹

- **EU Parliament Votes for Real Limits on Patentability**¹²

In its plenary vote on the 24th of September, the European Parliament approved the proposed directive on “patentability of computer-implemented inventions” with amendments that clearly restate the non-patentability of programming and business logic, and uphold freedom of publication and interoperation.

- **Vote in 8 days: 2000 IT bosses ask European Parliament to say NO to software patents**¹³

A “Petition for a Free Europe without Software Patents” has gained more than 150000 signatures. Among the supporters are more than 2000 company owners and chief executives and 25000 developers and engineers from all sectors of the European information and telecommunication industries, as well as more than 2000 scientists and 180 lawyers. Companies like Siemens, IBM, Alcatel and Nokia lead the list of those whose researchers and developers want to protect programming freedom and copyright property against what they see as a “patent land-grab”. Currently the patent policy of many of these companies is still dominated by their patent departments. These have intensively lobbied the European Parliament to support a proposal to allow patentability of “computer-implemented inventions” (recent patent newspeak term which usually refers to software in the context of patent claims, i.e. algorithms and business methods framed in terms of generic computing equipment), which the rapporteur, UK Labour MEP Arlene McCarthy, backed by “patent experts” from the socialist and conservative blocks, is trying to rush through the European Parliament on June 30, just 13 days after she had won the vote in the Legal Affairs Committee (JURI).

¹⁰<http://swpat.ffii.org/papers/eubsa-swpat0202/plen0309/deba/index.en.html#bolkestein>

¹¹<http://swpat.ffii.org/journal/03/plen0924/index.en.html#links>

¹²<http://swpat.ffii.org/journal/03/plen0924/index.en.html>

¹³<http://swpat.ffii.org/journal/03/epet0622/index.en.html>

- **30 Scientists 2003/05: Petition against Software Patent Directive**¹⁴

30 famous computer scientists sharply criticise the European Commission's proposal to legalise software patents in Europe.

¹⁴<http://swpat.ffii.org/papers/eubsa-swpat0202/komp0305/index.en.html>