

Extracts

Mr Chairman, Honourable Members,

It is a pleasure for me to be here today. It has become tradition that every spring Commissioners discuss with the Parliamentary Committees responsible for their respective portfolio the priorities for the forthcoming year. I welcome such opportunities because I recognise that the Commission does not have a monopoly on good ideas.

(...)

Intellectual property

I would also like to say a few words on intellectual property rights.

(...)

On the related issue of design protection, the so-called 'spare parts proposal', we have seen little progress. I can only regret this. Over-protecting the designs market does nothing to stimulate competitiveness – on the contrary, this may just perpetuate “economic rents”. I have no doubt that the adoption of this proposal would result in more choice and lower prices. There are economic benefits to be gained – for consumers as well as industry. Consumers will benefit from lower prices and more choice. Business will benefit because newcomers will have a chance to enter this market and create growth and jobs.

Safety issues have been raised repeatedly. Safety must remain a primary concern, but let me stress that this concern has already been addressed by other EU laws, for instance by the type approval framework directive in the automobile sector. I hope that discussions on the “spare parts proposal” can resume quickly. Businesses and consumers are waiting for concrete results. This is what they are entitled to. *(Page 4 of the speech)*