**Press Release**

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# MEP Alex Agius Saliba formally writes to the European Commission calling for an investigation into SONY and PlayStation over practices that may undermine consumer right

Earlier today, MEP Alex Agius Saliba formally wrote to the European Commission, calling for an investigation into major companies, including SONY and PlayStation, to determine whether certain practices in the video gaming industry are in breach of European consumer rights.

There is currently considerable online controversy surrounding the upcoming release of GTA IV. One of the changes emerging in the gaming market concerns how gamers will be able to access newly released products. For example, although the game appears to be sold in CD packaging, GTA IV is not actually available on a physical CD. Instead, when consumers open the box, they find only a code which they must enter in order to download the game from the servers of the company that produced it.

“Nowadays, there is a legitimate question as to whether consumers who purchase these games actually own them. When you are given a code, you are effectively granted access to the game you have purchased only for as long as the servers operated by the company that produced it remain accessible. This is in addition to the high price consumers are expected to pay for these games,” stated MEP Agius Saliba.

Furthermore, Agius Saliba stressed that consumers have the right to be clearly informed when purchasing a game in a retail store. The product packaging should explicitly indicate whether it contains a physical CD or merely a download code. Consumers should not be sold a box that appears to contain a CD, only to discover upon opening it that it contains nothing more than a code.

“We are creating a monopoly in the distribution of these games, leaving gaming retailers with an increasingly limited role in the market. There are still many collectors who rely on physical CDs to access games, including titles that were released years ago. This practice is also undermining consumers' ownership of the games they purchase. Several years may pass before a company

decides to discontinue or shut down its servers, leaving consumers unable to access a game they have already paid for," Agius Saliba added.

The main objective of this investigation is to ensure that clear legislation is introduced at European level, establishing the ownership rights associated with purchased video games and guaranteeing how long consumers will be able to access the products they have paid for.