(English version)

Question for written answer E-003016/26
to the Commission
Tomáš Zdechovský (PPE)
(16 July 2026)

Subject: Protecting consumers and competition during the transition to exclusively digital distribution of PlayStation console games

Sony Interactive Entertainment has announced that, as of January 2028, it will cease production of physical discs for newly released PlayStation games. New titles will be available exclusively in digital format from the PlayStation Store.

This move raises questions regarding consumer protection. Unlike a physical copy, which can be kept or resold, with digital games the consumer usually acquires only a licence. Access to the game may therefore be restricted under the terms of the licence or at the discretion of the platform operator. At the same time, the phasing out of physical games may restrict the second-hand market and competition among retailers, whilst strengthening Sony's control over prices and distribution within a closed ecosystem.

This situation is also the focus of the European Citizens' Initiative 'Stop Destroying Videogames', to which the Commission has responded by stating that it does not currently plan to introduce an obligation to keep games playable after support has ended, and that it favours dialogue and voluntary standards.

1. Does the Commission feel that the current EU rules provide sufficient protection for consumers purchasing digital games?

2. Will the Commission assess whether this distribution model could restrict competition or lead to the abuse of a dominant position?

3. How will it ensure that a voluntary approach guarantees consumers clear information on licensing, the duration of support and continued access to the game, and when will it consider introducing binding legislation?

Submitted: 16.7.2026

Answer given by Mr McGrath on behalf of the European Commission
(15 September 2026)

EU consumer law does not prescribe how digital providers should supply their products, such as video games, which can be online or on a tangible data carrier. It protects consumers in all these supply modes.

Digital content or service must be in conformity with the contractual stipulations and the consumer's reasonable expectations, including as regards its continuity ([1]).

Digital providers must also provide consumers with clear information before the conclusion of the contract ([2]). These EU instruments are transposed into national laws. Member States' authorities and courts deal with their enforcement.

The Commission has observed the changes in the distribution model of Sony Interactive Entertainment and is actively monitoring the market. Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union prohibit anti-competitive agreements and the abuse of a dominant position.

The application of these provisions depends on the specific facts and circumstances of each individual case. The Commission cannot, at this stage, take a position on whether investigative steps will be taken in this case.

In its communication on the European Citizens' Initiative Stop Destroying Videogames ([3]), the Commission indicated that it does not envisage new legislation and explained the reasons, notably, the existing EU rules protecting consumer's economic interests and providers' intellectual property rights.

The announced stakeholder exchanges towards a self-regulatory code of conduct will aim at improving the management of video games' end-of-life and transparency to consumers, without prejudice to the application of the above-mentioned EU consumer rights.

([1]) Directive (EU) 2019/770, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/770/oj.
([2]) Directive 2011/83/EU, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2011/83/oj.
([3]) https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/documents-register/detail?ref=C(2026)4110&lang=en.