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## Watchdog sues labels over copy-protected CDs

Jan. 05, 2004 LONDON –

A European consumer watchdog body is suing the world's largest music companies for selling copy protected compact discs that won't play in car stereos and on computers, the Belgium-based organisation said on Monday. 18:53 21/01/2004

The group, known in Dutch as Test-Aankoop, said it has received more than 200 complaints from consumers who objected to a technology that prevents consumers from making a back-up version on a blank disc and limits playback on certain devices. -5

Industry observers believe Test-Aankoop's suit is the biggest European legal challenge yet to the music industry's controversial campaign to release

copy-protected discs, to minimise the impact that digital piracy is having on sales. -10

EMI, Universal Music, Sony Music and BMG have been named in the suit, which is expected to be heard this week in a Belgium court.

Warner Music is the only one of the five major music labels not named. The group said it wants the labels to end the practice of issuing protected discs and to reimburse customers. -15

"We are trying to establish legal precedent in this matter. Then, we expect other consumer organisations will follow," said Mechels Ivo, a spokesman for the group.

Since introducing two years ago copy-protection technology the music industry has been hit with torrents of criticism from individual consumers. -20

The question of whether consumers are entitled to make back-up copies of music they buy has also become a heated legal debate.

In defence of the technological measures, the music industry blames the practice of copying, or "burning" discs for creating a massive black market of online song-swapping that has eaten into sales for three consecutive years. -25

Test-Aankoop, whose name in French is Test-Achats, said it had contacted industry trade group the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) in the autumn about the consumer concerns.

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