

Radio Equipment Directive: common charger for electronic devices

2021/0291(COD) - 17/09/2021 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to revise the Radio Equipment Directive with a view to proposing a universal charger for mobile phones and similar electronic devices.

PROPOSED ACT: Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: since 2009, there have been EU-wide efforts to limit the fragmentation of charging interfaces for mobile phones and similar items of radio equipment. Recent voluntary initiatives do not fully meet the EUs policy objectives to reduce e-waste, ensure consumer convenience and avoid market fragmentation of charging devices.

The lack of harmonisation in this area can lead to substantial differences between the Member States' laws, regulations, administrative provisions or practices on the interoperability of mobile phones and similar categories or classes of radio equipment with their charging devices, and on the supply of radio equipment without charging devices. In addition, there are several types of fast charging communication protocols for which a minimum level of performance is not always guaranteed.

Therefore, EU action is needed to promote a common level of interoperability and the provision of information to end-users on the charging characteristics of radio equipment.

In January 2020, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) calling for the urgent adoption of a standard for a universal charger for mobile phones to avoid further fragmentation of the internal market.

Mobile phone chargers were estimated to account for around 11000 t of e-waste in 2018 and the associated life-cycle emissions were around 600 ktCO_{2e}. The proposal would thus reduce e-waste generated by the sale of radio equipment as well as the extraction of raw materials and CO₂ emissions related to the production, transport and disposal of chargers.

CONTENT: the proposal aims to introduce into [Directive 2014/53/EU](#) appropriate requirements regarding the charging communication protocols, the charging interface (i.e. charging receptacle) of certain categories or classes of radio equipment, as well as the information to be provided to end-users regarding the charging characteristics of those categories or classes of radio equipment.

Harmonised charging port for electronic equipment

The proposal requires that mobile phones and similar radio devices (tablets, digital cameras, headphones and headsets, handheld videogame consoles and portable speakers), that are recharged via a wired cable, be equipped with the USB Type-C receptacle and, if they also require charging at voltages higher than 5 volts or currents higher than 3 amperes or powers higher than 15 watts, incorporate the USB Power Delivery charging communication protocol.

The Commission may adopt delegated acts to take into account additional types of charging technologies other than wired charging in the future.

Harmonised fast charging technology

The proposal ensures that devices, when enabling fast charging, incorporate at least the same communication protocol for charging. This will help to ensure that the charging speed is the same when using any compatible charger for a device.

Supply of equipment without a charging device

The proposal introduces requirements to ensure that end-users are not obliged to buy a new charger when purchasing a new mobile phone or similar radio equipment.

Better information for consumers

When purchasing a mobile phone or similar radio equipment, end-users should be provided with the necessary information on its charging characteristics and on the charging device that can be used. This information should be indicated in printed form on the packaging or, if there is no packaging, on a label accompanying the radio equipment, provided that the label is visible.

This would allow consumers to determine the most appropriate external power supply for charging their radio equipment.

According to the Commission, all these measures would help consumers limit the number of new chargers purchased and save them around EUR 250 million per year.