Batteries and waste batteries

2020/0353(COD) - 10/03/2022 - Text adopted by Parliament, partial vote at 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 584 votes to 67, with 40 abstentions, amendments to the to the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning batteries and waste batteries, repealing Directive 2006/66/EC and amending Regulation (EU) No 2019/1020.

The matter was referred back to the competent committee for inter-institutional negotiations.

The main amendments adopted in plenary concern the following points:

Subject matter and scope

The Regulation establishes requirements on environmental, economic and social sustainability, safety, labelling and information to allow the placing on the market or putting into service of batteries. It should lay down measures to protect the environment and human health by preventing and reducing the generation of waste batteries and the adverse impacts of the generation and management of such batteries, as well as by reducing the overall impacts of resource use and by improving the efficiency of such use.

The Regulation should apply to all batteries, namely portable batteries, light means of transport batteries (such as e-bikes and e-scooters), automotive batteries, electric vehicle batteries and industrial batteries, regardless of their shape, volume, weight, design, material composition, use or purpose. It should also apply to batteries incorporated in or added to other products.

Carbon footprint

Members backed proposed rules on a carbon footprint declaration and labelling, a maximum value for the life cycle carbon footprint, and minimum levels of cobalt, lead, lithium and nickel recovered from waste for reuse in new batteries.

Batteries for electric vehicles, batteries for light transport and industrial batteries should be visibly, legibly and indelibly labelled with the carbon footprint of the battery and the carbon footprint performance class to which each battery belongs. The carbon footprint performance class requirements would apply from 1 July 2025.

Removability and replaceability of portable batteries and batteries for light weight means of transport

By 1 January 2024 at the latest, portable batteries incorporated in appliances and batteries for light means of transport should be designed in such a manner that they can be readily and safely removed by qualified independent operators and replaced with basic and commonly available tools and without causing damage to the appliance or the batteries.

Clear and detailed instructions for removal and replacement should be provided by the relevant economic operator at the time of purchase of the appliance and, should be made available permanently online in an easily understandable way for end users, including consumers, on its website for the expected lifetime of the product.

Automotive batteries, industrial batteries and electric vehicle batteries shall be readily removable and replaceable, if the battery has a shorter lifetime than the appliance or vehicle it is used in, by qualified independent operators, which shall be able to discharge the battery safely and without prior disassembly of the battery pack.

Common chargers

By 1 January 2024, the Commission should assess how best to introduce harmonised standards for a common charger, to be applicable no later than 1 January 2026, for a variety of rechargeable batteries.

Labelling of batteries

Members proposed that:

- from 1 January 2027, portable batteries, light means of transport batteries and automotive batteries should be marked with a label containing information on their nominal energy capacity and marked with a label containing information on their minimum average duration when used in specific applications and the expected lifetime in terms of number of cycles and calendar years;

- from 1 January 2023, non-rechargeable portable batteries of general use should be marked with a label indicating non-rechargeable;

- from 1 July 2023, batteries should be labelled with a symbol indicating a harmonised colour code based on the battery type and its chemical composition.

Obligation for economic operators to conduct value chain due diligence

Members believe that responsibility for respecting human rights, social rights, human health and the environment should apply to all manufacturing activities and other business relationships of an economic operator along the value chain.

Due diligence requirements for the battery value chain should be established to address the social and environmental risks inherent in the extraction, processing and trade of certain raw materials, chemicals and secondary raw materials for battery manufacturing, the treatment of battery waste, the manufacturing process itself and all other associated business relationships.

Waste management

Members called for more stringent collection targets for portable batteries (45% by 31 December 2023; 70% by 31 December 2025; 80 % by 31 December 2030). They also introduced minimum collection rates for batteries for light means of transport (75% by 2025 and 85% by 2030). All waste automotive, industrial and electric vehicle batteries must be collected.

All waste batteries collected should undergo preparation for reuse, preparation for repurposing or a recycling process, except batteries containing mercury, which shall be disposed of in a manner that does not entail any negative impacts on human health or the environment;

Union-wide deposit return systems for batteries

Members proposed that the 31 December 2025, the Commission should assess the feasibility and potential benefits of establishment of Union-wide deposit return systems for batteries, in particular for portable batteries of general use.