**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution** **on a common charger for mobile radio equipment**

1. **Resolution tabled pursuant to Rule 132(2) and (4) of the European Parliament's Rules of procedure**
2. **Reference numbers:** 2019/2983 (RSP) / RC-B9-0070/2020 / P9\_TA-PROV(2020)0024
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:** 30 January 2020
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** N/A
5. **Brief analysis/assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution takes stock of the implementation of Directive 2014/53/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of radio equipment (hereafter referred to as RED) and, in particular, of article 3(3)(a) that empowers the Commission to take action in this area.

The resolution reminds that fragmentation of the market for chargers for mobile phones and other small and medium-sized electronic devices results into consumers inconvenience and increase in e-waste. The resolution highlights that consumers still have to acquire different chargers for different or new devices and sellers have to include chargers with every purchase resulting in overproduction and waste.

The resolution stresses that a significant amount of e-waste is generated by the existing situation and that, in the framework of the European Green Deal, there is a need for an ambitious new circular economy action plan aiming to reduce the use of resources and the total environmental footprint. It is therefore reminded that the current short life-cycle of some radio equipment, such as smartphones, lead to the production of additional e-waste, including chargers.

The resolution observes that, though voluntary agreements between industry players have significantly decreased the number of charger types available on the market, they have proved unsuccessful in terms of achieving a common charging solution. The resolution reminds that, although this point has been on the table for more than 10 years, the adoption of a delegated act supplementing Directive 2014/53/EU on radio equipment has been repeatedly postponed. Therefore, the resolution concludes by asking the Commission to take regulatory action to implement a common charging solution.

Proposed measures are:

* For the Commission: implement a regulatory action to reduce electronic waste, empower consumers to make sustainable choices, and allow them to fully participate in an efficient and well-functioning internal market;
* For the Commission: to publish the results of the impact assessment study on the introduction of a common charger for mobile telephones and other compatible devices with a view to proposing mandatory provisions;
* For the Commission: to elaborate a standard solution for a common charger for mobile radio equipment by adopting the delegated act supplementing Directive 2014/53/EU on radio equipment defining a standard for a common charger for mobile phones and other small and medium-sized radio equipment by July 2020, or, if necessary, by adopting a legislative measure by July 2020 at the latest;
* For the Commission: it is reminded that such legislative framework for a common charger will have to be designed without hampering innovation and will have to be scrutinized in order to take into account technical progress, such as wireless charging;
* For the Commission: it is noted that, in line with the Standardisation Regulation, European standardisation organisations must facilitate the participation of relevant stakeholders, which include, in this context, SME organisations, environmental organisations, people with disabilities, the elderly and consumers;
* For the Commission: regarding environmental footprint, legislative initiatives to increase the volume of cables and chargers collected and recycled in the Member States should be considered;
* For the Commission: to consider measures to ensure that consumers are no longer obliged to buy new chargers with each new device, by considering that decoupling strategies would allow for greater environmental benefits. It is however stressed that any measure aiming at decoupling should avoid potentially higher prices for consumers.

**6. Response to requests and overview of action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission**

The Commission shares overall the concerns presented in the resolution.

The Commission reminds that since the expiration of the original Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding Harmonisation of a Charging Capability for Mobile Phones in 2012, the Commission has facilitated a dialogue with industry that resulted in two Letters of Intent signed by the industry and therefore extending the MoU on common chargers until 2014.

After 2014, great effort has been made from the Commission’s side to find a consensus on a new Memorandum of Understanding. Eventually, the Commission received a new MoU from mobile phone manufacturers published by DigitalEurope in March 2018. The new MoU did not, however, fulfil the desired policy objectives of consumer convenience, safety and interoperability of chargers and reduction of electronic waste. Industry proposed to continue allowing for proprietary solutions, instead of implementing one common charger. As a result, the Commission launched a study to assess impacts of possible regulatory options, including a standard solution for a common charger.

The study was published in January 2020 under <https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-law-and-publications/publication-detail/-/publication/c6fadfea-4641-11ea-b81b-01aa75ed71a1>.

According to the study, imposing a common interface on the side of the electronic device (smartphone, but possibly also tablets, cameras, e-readers, etc.) in combination with incentivising/ imposing decoupling (i.e. selling the smartphone without chargers) would benefit consumers and reduce electronic waste the most.

Building on this study, the Commission is currently working on an impact assessment in support of a regulatory proposal for a common charging interface for certain classes of radio equipment. This measure has been included in the Commission’s Work programme for planned adoption in the third quarter of 2020.

Measures on decoupling would however need to be supported by complementary studies. Innovations such as fast charging, which are increasingly being adopted by major manufacturers, will have to be assessed to guarantee minimum performance and safety levels when a different charger than the one originally designed for the device is used. Possible measures for a wider range of products, wireless charging, quality of the cord would also need additional assessment.

The Commission agrees that the preparation of a measure on the common charging interface would need to take into account its impact on innovation and would need to be regularly updated to consider technological progress.

In this respect, standardisation of the charging solutions, both wired and wireless, will continue to be a crucial aspect. With respect to the request of the European Parliament, the participation of relevant stakeholders in the standardisation work will be further facilitated. To this end, and according to Regulation 1025/2012, the Commission will continue to support the active participation of representatives of European stakeholder associations, and in particular, the representatives of consumers, in the standardisation work at European level.

In this context, it is crucial to note that the information and communications technology (ICT) and electronics sector is one of the priority sectors in the recently adopted Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe[[1]](#footnote-1). The plan proposes a ‘Circular Electronics Initiative’, which will promote longer product lifetimes and include, among others, the following actions:

• regulatory measures for electronics and ICT including mobile phones, tablets and laptops under the Ecodesign Directive so that devices are designed for energy efficiency and durability, reparability, upgradability, maintenance, reuse and recycling;

• focus on electronics and ICT as a priority sector for implementing the ‘right to repair’, including a right to update obsolete software;

• regulatory measures on chargers for mobile phones and similar devices and introduction of a common charger, improving the durability of charging cables, and incentives to decouple the purchase of chargers from the purchase of new devices.

Concerning the request of the European Parliament that the Commission should implement regulatory actions to reduce electronic waste and increase the volume of cables and chargers collected and recycled in the Member States, the Commission will explore options for an EU-wide return scheme of mobile phones, tablets and other small electrical and electronic equipment.

In that respect, the Commission is launching a study to analyse implementing such options under the umbrella of the WEEE (waste electrical and electronic equipment) Directive, which already requires the Member States to set up systems that allows for WEEE to be returned free of charge.

Finally, any regulatory measure needs to provide a reasonable transition period to give the industry sufficient time to adapt to the new requirements. This would also allow a natural phasing-out of older devices.

1. <https://ec.europa.eu/environment/circular-economy/pdf/new_circular_economy_action_plan.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)