



Press Release

MEPs support the universal mobile phone charger

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On 26 September, the Internal Market & Consumer Protection Committee of the European Parliament unanimously adopted MEP Weiler's report on the proposed directive on radio equipment. ANEC welcomes the support of MEPs for an amendment intended to see the introduction of a universal charger for all mobile phones.

For many years now, we have been calling for a common external power supply (CEPS) for mobile phones¹. The present plethora of chargers – both within brands and among brands - represents unnecessary costs to the consumer in their direct (or implied) purchase, and to the environment in the extraction of the raw materials for their construction and in their disposal. ANEC has always been sceptical of the voluntary agreement with the manufacturers of mobile phones on the provision of standardised chargers initiated by the European Commission in 2009. Today, after the expiry of the industry agreement, it is unclear whether it was successful, not only in terms of adherence by its signatories but the actual compliance of their chargers with EN 62684².

¹ ANEC Position Paper on the European Commission Proposal for a Directive on the making available on the market of radio equipment (RED) <http://tinyurl.com/q2qwmnl>

² EN 62684 "Interoperability specifications of common external power supply (EPS) for use with data-enabled mobile telephones", available since December 2010; EN 301 489-34 Electromagnetic compatibility and Radio spectrum Matters (ERM); Electromagnetic Compatibility (EMC) standard for radio equipment and services; Part 34: Specific conditions for External Power Supply (EPS) for mobile phones, available since December 2009.

Moreover, it is far from clear what will happen to the new phones (and chargers) coming to the market this year, after the expiry of the voluntary agreement. Will consumers have to buy new chargers with their new phones? For these reasons, we are pleased with the decision of MEPs to support a legislative approach.

We are also pleased the review of the operation of the Directive by the Commission should also cover consumer protection and not only the creation of an open and competitive market for radio equipment in the EU.

MEPs also voted to delete the possibility to require manufacturers to register certain products showing low levels of compliance in a central system prior to placing them on the market. Nevertheless, ANEC believes that this rule could increase traceability of both the manufacturer/person responsible of placing equipment on the market and raise conformity, without delaying "time to market" or representing an "undue burden" for manufacturers.

Furthermore, we regret the Rapporteur's amendment suggesting reference to the "foreseeable behaviour" of consumers was rejected. Consumers can be effectively protected only if foreseeable behaviour is duly taken into account by manufacturers when designing products. If manufacturers are allowed to rely on the concept of "intended use", as set out in the instructions for use, consumers who are too young to read, or otherwise unable to read, are at higher risk of being exposed to harm or injury.

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About ANEC

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and conformity assessment, as well as related legislation and public policies.

ANEC was established in 1995 as an international non-profit association under Belgian law and is open to the representation of national consumer organisations in 33 countries.

ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.



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