

Press Release

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iPhone 5 - Consumers struck by Lightning

ANEC wants to add a discordant note to the fanfares that have greeted the release of the Apple iPhone 5 which goes on sale tomorrow in some European countries. In the introduction of Lightning, its new proprietary connector, Apple has in a flash rendered obsolete many millions of accessories that are compatible with the 30-pin dock connector first introduced with the iPod in 2003. Although Apple promises “a bunch of accessories to help you deal with that”¹, these fixes will not be made available to consumers free-of-charge.

“Apple has established itself as the cultural icon of the 21st century”, said ANEC Secretary-General, Stephen Russell. “Its products have become must-have items for hundreds of millions of consumers worldwide. We are therefore dismayed that Apple seems ready to exploit its loyal fans by expecting them to pay for the fixes necessary to make Lightning compatible with all the existing devices using the 30-pin dock connector.”

“Moreover, although the use of Lightning as the connection through which the iPhone 5 is charged complies with the Voluntary Agreement that Apple – and other manufacturers – signed with the European Commission in 2009² on the harmonisation of smart phone chargers, it is disappointing that Apple has chosen not to adopt the micro-USB solution favoured by its competitors. If Apple is not willing to adopt micro-USB, it should ensure the adaptor to make Lightning compatible with micro-USB is made freely-available to consumers. As it is, we understand the adaptor will cost the equivalent of 19€ in the EU.”

“The lack of harmonisation among phone chargers has taken advantage of consumers and been wasteful of environmental resources for far too long. But instead of making progress towards a single, universal charger for all mobile devices (including tablets and digital cameras) in line with consumers’ expectations, it seems we are as far away as ever from reaching a common solution for mobile phones”, Russell added. He concluded, “We believe the Commission will need to take very serious note of the ineffectiveness of the Voluntary Agreement when the Agreement expires at the end of this year”.

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1 Phil Schiller, Apple Senior V-P, Worldwide Marketing at iPhone 5 launch event, 12 September 2012

2 See <http://tinyurl.com/92uxbrm>

ANEC in brief

Raising standards for consumers

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 represents consumer organisations from 32 European countries. ANEC is funded by the European Union and EFTA, with national consumer organisations contributing in kind. Its Secretariat is based in Brussels.

More information: www.anec.eu

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