



Raising standards for consumers

POSITION PAPER

ANEC comments on the European Commission proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2014/53/EU on the harmonisation of the laws of the Member States relating to the making available on the market of radio equipment (COM(2021) 547 final, 2021/0291 (COD) [**common chargers**]



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European Association for the Co-ordination of
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Introduction

For many years, ANEC – the European consumer voice in standardisation – and other consumer organisations have been calling on manufacturers to provide a common external power supply for mobile phones and other devices. 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.

We therefore welcome the European Commission proposal to amend the Radio Equipment Directive (2014/53/EU) about common chargers as it takes into account many of the comments we made in the past .

In this position paper, ANEC makes some proposals in order to ensure the highest practicable level of interoperability and waste reduction for consumers and the environment.

Categories of products to be covered

While we take note of the Commission's power to update the legal provisions to take into account future technical innovation, we think that it would be opportune to already extend the scope of the products covered, bearing in mind that legislation takes time to be discussed and adopted.

We suggest including in Annex 1a e-readers, smart watches, electronic toys, personal care devices, GPS/portable navigation and sport devices, smart speakers, digital radios, rechargeable power tools, rechargeable vacuum cleaners, electric screwdrivers and other rechargeable devices. We also wonder whether laptops/notebooks should be included as 'higher power category' devices (Annex 1a, Part 1(2)).

However, we believe that an alternative approach could be to refer to power requirements for charging, irrespective of whether the product is included in the list or not of Annex 1a. This approach would cover devices not yet available in a rechargeable form and also the situations where products have more than a single function (eg: tablets with e-reader functions) but might not be included in the list of products.

Charging technologies to be covered

While we take note of the Commission's power to update the legal provisions to take into account future technical innovation, as wireless charging might replace wired charging in the future, it would be wise to already include that in the proposed legislation. However, it would be useful to have more technical information about the possibility of referring to the commonly used Qi technical specification. We suggest that the European Parliament commission a short study on the topic, albeit without slowing down the legislative process.

As an alternative, we think that the European Commission should be tasked to analyse the market trends of wireless charging technologies two years after the entry into force of the amended Directive and report to the co-legislators with proposals of including the wireless charging in the scope of application. Criteria for the evaluation of the level of

interoperability and risk of fragmentation of wireless charging solutions should be developed in the legislation.

Dedicated and additional funding for market surveillance

It is essential that Member States conduct market surveillance activities about the information obligations of economic operators, especially at the beginning of the applicability of the new rules. Specific funding should be foreseen for these activities. In addition, it is important to ensure that consumers of all ages and abilities are able to get the information about the charging capabilities of individual products in order to make their choice. Consumers should be informed about the possibility of using a charger they already have at the point/moment of sale.

It should not be forgotten that at the moment many unsafe chargers are available on the market, and therefore strong market surveillance activities about the safety of the chargers should also be carried out.

Conclusions

The sustainable choice must be the easiest one: available, affordable, attractive and convenient for all consumers. If consumers would be financially penalised because they buy a device without a charger for the same price of a device with a charger or if the separate charger price would increase, then the aim of the proposal would be defeated.

Lack of interoperability and safety as well as lack of information result in detriment to consumers' wellbeing.

Effective standardisation of charging equipment for as many devices as possible, and a requirement for consumers to have the option to make an informed choice on whether or not to buy a new charging set with a new product, will be beneficial to both consumers and the environment.

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ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, defending consumer interests in the processes of technical standardisation and the use of standards, 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 34 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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