

Common charger: MEPs agree on proposal to reduce electronic waste

- Fewer redundant cables and chargers: good for environment and consumers
- USB Type-C port as new standard for portable device
- MEPs also want harmonisation for wireless charging



Portable electronic devices should all include USB Type-C port for charging. © Engdao / AdobeStock

MEPs support a common charger for portable electronic devices, reducing e-waste and making the use of different mobile phones, tablets and digital cameras more convenient.

On Wednesday the Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee adopted its position on the revised Radio Equipment Directive with 43 votes in favour (2 against).

The new rules would make sure consumers no longer need a new charger and cable every time they purchase a new device, and can use one charger for all of their small and medium-sized electronic gadgets. Mobile phones, tablets, digital cameras, headphones and headsets, handheld videogame consoles and portable speakers, rechargeable via a wired cable, would have to be equipped with a USB Type-C port, regardless of the manufacturer. Exemptions would apply only for devices that are too small to have a USB Type-C port, such as smart watches, health trackers, and some sports equipment.

This revision is part of a broader EU effort to address product sustainability, in particular of electronics on the EU market, and to reduce electronic waste.

Clear information on charging

MEPs also want to see clear information and labelling on new devices about charging options, as well as whether a product includes a charger. This would, they say, help to avoid confusion and ease purchasing decisions for consumers that often own several different devices and do not always need additional chargers.

With the growing usage of wireless charging, MEPs want the European Commission to present a strategy by the end of 2026 that allows for minimum interoperability of any new charging solutions. The goal is to avoid a new fragmentation in the market, to continue to reduce environmental waste, ensure consumer convenience and avoid so-called “lock-in” effects created by proprietary charging solutions.

Quote

Rapporteur [Alex Agius Saliba \(MT, S&D\)](#) said: “With half a billion chargers for portable devices shipped in Europe each year, generating 11,000 to 13,000 tonnes of e-waste, a single charger for mobile phones and other small and medium electronic devices would benefit everyone. It will help the environment, further help the re-use of old electronics, save money, and reduce unnecessary costs and inconvenience for both businesses and consumers. We are proposing a truly comprehensive policy intervention, building on the Commission’s proposal by calling for the interoperability of wireless charging technologies by 2026 and improving information given to consumers with dedicated labels. We are also expanding the proposal’s scope by adding more products, such as laptops, that will need to comply with the new rules.”

Next steps

Once Parliament as a whole has approved this draft negotiating position at the May plenary session, MEPs will be ready to start talks with EU governments on the final shape of the

legislation.

Background

Parliament and its Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee have been [asking for a common charger solution over the last decade](#), continuously calling on the Commission to act. The [legislative proposal](#) was tabled on 23 September 2021. The Council adopted its negotiating position on 26 January.

Further information

[Procedure file](#)

[Voted text and amendments](#)

[Video statement by the rapporteur Alex Agius Saliba \(S&D, MT\) \(12.01.2022\)](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: free photos, video and audio material](#)

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