

Common charger: Parliament commits to reducing electronic waste

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



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

Parliament is ready to start negotiations on a common charger to reduce e-waste and make the use of different mobile phones, tablets and digital cameras more convenient.

The Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee adopted its [position on the amended Radio Equipment Directive](#) on 20 April and a plenary announcement confirmed Parliament's negotiating position on Wednesday morning. Parliament is now ready to start talks with EU governments on the final shape of the legislation.

The new rules would mean 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 portable electronic devices. Mobile phones, tablets, digital cameras, headphones and headsets, handheld videogame consoles and portable speakers that are 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-C port, such as smart watches, health trackers, and some sports equipment.

This revision is part of a broader EU effort to make products more sustainable, in particular 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 help to avoid confusion and make purchasing decisions easier for consumers, who often own several different devices and do not always need additional chargers.

As wireless charging is used more and more, MEPs want the European Commission to present a strategy by the end of 2026 that allows for any new charging solutions to work in conjunction with each other. The goal is to avoid a new fragmentation in the market, to continue to reduce environmental waste, ensure charging solutions are convenient for consumer and avoid so-called "lock-in" effects created by a consumer being dependent on a single manufacturer.

Quote

Rapporteur [Alex Agius Saliba \(S&D, MT\)](#) said: "With half a billion chargers for portable devices shipped into 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. This truly comprehensive policy change builds on the Commission's proposal by calling for the interoperability of wireless charging technologies by 2026 and improving information given to consumers with clear 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."

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.

Further information

[Press release on committee vote \(20.04.2022\)](#)


[Procedure file](#)


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