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Letter | 27.05.2021

Durability and repairability of printers

Letter to the European Commission

The European Right to Repair campaign is a coalition of 47 organisations from 16 European countries representing civil society groups, repair businesses, community repair initiatives and public institutions demanding longer-lasting and more repairable products. The campaign is steered by the European Environmental Bureau, ECOS, iFixit, Repair & Share, The Restart Project, Runder Tisch Reparatur. We are working at the European level but also within member states to remove the barriers to repair our products and implement a universal Right to Repair, for all products and for everyone.

Brussels, Wednesday 26th of May

To:
Mr Virginijus Sinkevičius, European Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries
Mr Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market
Mr Frans Timmermans, European Commission Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal

We urge the European Commission to keep its promises and propose a regulatory measure addressing the durability and repairability of printers as well as the reusability of cartridges as part of the forthcoming Circular Electronics Initiative. And we ask that the Commission rejects the proposed voluntary agreement drafted by manufacturers.

The Commission's flagship Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted in March 2020, has set out to address the entire life cycle of products and tackle their premature obsolescence notably by promoting the right to repair for ICT products. In addition to mobile phones, laptops and tablets, the Plan has rightfully identified printers as a particularly wasteful product category, and has included a commitment to tackle them by means of a dedicated regulatory instrument “unless the sector reaches an ambitious voluntary agreement” by September 2020.

Nearly one year later, the discussions on the voluntary agreement have not yielded any tangible results. Voluntary approaches clearly do not work. We need strong regulatory action now.

We are extremely concerned by this situation. Not only because of the negative impacts of short-lived printers on the environment and on consumers but also because we are witnessing promises made being walked back on.

Printers are one of the most iconic examples of premature obsolescence. Our analysis of printers in use today suggests that over 80% of them have been in use for less than 3 years, and only about 4% have been in use for 5 years or longer. The voluntary agreement wouldn’t require manufacturers to supply spare parts and repair information for printers priced below 350€ - the vast majority of consumer printers - deeming them disposable products.

Moreover, printer cartridges are a major source of uncontrolled proliferation of electronic waste in the EU. Some 100,000 tonnes of e-waste are created each year due to limited reuse and remanufacturing of cartridges.

Given the absolute lack of ambition in the discussions on the voluntary agreement to date, we call on the Commission to initiate work on mandatory requirements addressing both the durability and repairability of printers as well as the reusability of cartridges without delay so that they are an integral part of the forthcoming Circular Electronics Initiative.

Yours sincerely,

MEPs signatories:

1. MEP David Cormand, Greens/EFA
2. MEP Rasmus Andresen, Greens/EFA
3. MEP Sara Matthieu, Greens/EFA
4. MEP Kim van Sparrentak, Greens/EFA
5. MEP Patrick Breyer, Greens/EFA
6. MEP Rosa D’Amato, Greens/EFA
7. MEP Anna Cavazzini, Greens/EFA
8. MEP Piernicola Pedicini, Greens/EFA
9. MEP Eleonora Evi, Greens/EFA
10. MEP Kathrin Langensiepen, Greens/EFA
11. MEP Alviina Alametsä, Greens/EFA
12. MEP Heidi Hautala, Greens/EFA
13. MEP Michael Bloss, Greens/EFA
14. MEP Claude Gruffat, Greens/EFA
15. MEP Mounir Satouri, Greens/EFA

16. MEP Philippe Lamberts, Greens/EFA
17. MEP Kira Peter-Hansen, Greens/EFA
18. MEP Margrete Auken, Greens/EFA
19. MEP Thomas Waitz, Greens/EFA
20. MEP Jordi Solé, Greens/EFA
21. MEP Damien Boeselager, Greens/EFA
22. MEP Saskia Bricmont, Greens/EFA
23. MEP Grace O'Sullivan, Greens/EFA
24. MEP Ciarán Cuffe, Greens/EFA
25. MEP Pär Holmgren, Greens/EFA
26. MEP Alice Bah Kuhnke, Greens/EFA
27. MEP Jakop Dalunde, Greens/EFA
28. MEP Diana Diana Riba I Giner, Greens/EFA
29. MEP Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, Greens/EFA
30. MEP Manuela Ripa, Greens/EFA
31. MEP Alexandra Geese, Greens/EFA
32. MEP Anne-Sophie Pelletier, GUE/NGL
33. MEP Kateřina Konečná, GUE/NGL

Added after the letter was sent:

34. MEP Mick Wallace, GUE/NGL
35. MEP Clare Daly, GUE/NGL
36. MEP Luke 'Ming' Flanagan, GUE/NGL
37. MEP Petros Kokkalis, GUE/NGL
38. MEP Idoia Villaneuva, GUE/NGL
39. MEP Pernando Barrena, GUE/NGL

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Contact person



Narmine Abou Bakari

Digital Rights campaigner

Attached documents

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