Impact Assessment Study to Assess Unbundling of Chargers - Stakeholder survey

Fields marked with * are mandatory.

Introduction

This survey forms part of an **Impact Assessment Study on Unbundling of Chargers**, which is being carried out by a grouping of independent companies (including Ipsos, Trinomics and Economisti Associati) on behalf of the European Commission (DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs).

This study is intended to further strengthen the evidence base for the Commission's **"Common Charger" initiative**. Since its launch more than ten years ago, this initiative has aimed to reduce the level of fragmentation of charging solutions for mobile phones (and potentially other small electronic portable devices), in order to enhance consumer convenience and reduce unnecessary electronic waste. Most recently, a study carried out in 2019 (accessible here) identified and assessed a series of technical options to work towards a "common" charger and their likely social, environmental and economic impacts.

The current study builds on the results of the previous study. Its main focus is on the issue of unbundling (frequently also referred to as "decoupling"), i.e. **the selling of mobile phones (and/or other devices) without a charger**. A voluntary or regulatory initiative to facilitate unbundling, in order to reduce the electronic waste and other negative environmental impacts generated by the high number of chargers currently being produced, sold and discarded, could potentially form part of a future Commission proposal in the context of the "Common Chargers" initiative.

This survey is intended to provide relevant stakeholders and interested parties with an opportunity to express their views, preferences and experiences. Responses will be used exclusively for the purpose of informing the findings and conclusions of the study. Any personal data will be treated in accordance with this privacy statement.

For the purposes of this survey, please review the following definitions of **key terms** that are used throughout the questionnaire:

Mobile phone charger: A device used to charge the battery of a mobile phone, typically consisting of an external power supply (charging block) and a cable to connect the power supply to the mobile phone (also sometimes called cable assembly)

External power supply (EPS): Charging block used to convert alternating current (AC) power into lower voltage direct current (DC) or AC output to charge a mobile phone

Cable (or cable assembly): Detachable cable used to connect a mobile phone (or other device) to an external power supply

Interoperability: The ability of a system or product to work with other products or systems. A charger is considered interoperable with a device if it is able to charge its battery correctly

Profiling questions

*Please specify which type of organisation (if any) you represent:

- ◯ Private company
- ◯ Public authority
- ◉ Civil society organisation
- ◯ Private citizen

○ Prefer not to say

* What is the geographical scope of your authority?

- ○ International
- ● European
- ○ National
- ○ Regional or local
- ○ Prefer not to say

* Which of the following best describes your organisation?

- ○ Consumer organisation
- ● Environmental organisation
- ○ Industry association / organisation
- ○ Other
- ○ Prefer not to say

* Where are you / where is your organisation based / headquartered?

- ● In the EU
- ○ Elsewhere in Europe (not a Member State of the EU)
- ○ In North America
- ○ In Asia
- ○ In another part of the world
- ○ Prefer not to say

Please provide the name of the organisation you represent

100 character(s) maximum

ECOS

Views on the common charger

The European Commission is considering adopting legislation to facilitate a **"common charger" for all mobile phones**. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
* All cable assemblies that are used for charging mobile phones should have the <u>same connector</u> (USB Type-C) at the device end	●	○	○	○	○	○

* The EU should adopt <u>legislation</u> to ensure all cable assemblies have the same connector at the device end.	◉	○	○	○	○	○
* All external power supplies (EPS) for mobile phones should be <u>interoperable</u> with all mobile phones, based on compliance with relevant USB (incl. USB Power Delivery) standards	◉	○	○	○	○	○
* The EU should adopt <u>legislation</u> to ensure all EPS for mobile phones are interoperable with all mobile phones.	◉	○	○	○	○	○

If legislation to facilitate a "common charger" is adopted, which **portable electronic devices** should this apply to?

	Common connectors at the device end	Common external power supply	Both common connectors and common EPS	Neither common connectors nor common EPS	Don't know
* Mobile phones	○	○	◉	○	○
* Laptops	○	○	◉	○	○
* Tablets	○	○	◉	○	○
* E-readers	○	○	◉	○	○
* Smartwatches and fitness trackers	○	○	◉	○	○
* Digital cameras	○	○	◉	○	○
* Portable speakers	○	○	◉	○	○
* Wireless headphones / earpods	○	○	◉	○	○
* Radio-controlled toys	○	○	◉	○	○
* Videogame devices	○	○	◉	○	○

You can use the text box below to briefly explain your views on the "common charger" initiative.

It is important that the minimum power delivery protocol is also specified - i.e. USB-C connector with USB 3.1 or higher power delivery protocol to prevent potential safety issues with non-USB 3.1 protocol cables.. Standardising connectors and EPS removes the need for proprietary connector adaptors and brings about corresponding savings in terms of consumer cost as well as environmental impacts. It reduces market fragmentation and enables a level playing field, and reduces consumer complaints arising from the lack of a common charger. Innovation lock-in is avoided as wireless charging is an alternative, plus innovation will occur via USB- PD protocols on which there is flexibility for new versions. Standardised marking/labelling of cables and chargers is also important. Marking on the product connector and on the mains plug should show compliance with USB 3.1 or above, and indicate available modes (data capability & speeds, power rating, display capability, compatibility).

Views on decoupling

The European Commission is also considering a possible initiative to foster **"de-coupling" or "unbundling"**, so that mobile phones are no longer routinely sold with a charger in the box. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
* All mobile phones should be sold with a complete charging solution (EPS and cable) in the box	○	○	○	○	●	○
* All mobile phones should be sold with a cable, but no EPS in the box. If needed, the EPS can be bought separately	○	○	○	○	●	○
* All mobile phones should be sold with neither an EPS nor a cable in the box. If needed, these can be bought separately	●	○	○	○	○	○
* All mobile phone manufacturers / distributors should give customers the option of purchasing (or not) a new EPS and/or cable with new phones	●	○	○	○	○	○

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* Each mobile phone manufacturer / distributor should be <u>free to choose</u> how they sell their phones and chargers (i.e. what to include in the box)	○	○	○	○	◉	○

A range of options to facilitate the decoupling of chargers from mobile phones could potentially be considered. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding such measures?

	Strongly Agree	Tend to agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
* The EU should work with the industry (mobile phone manufacturers and distributors) to explore how they could decouple <u>voluntarily</u>	○	○	○	○	◉	○
* The EU should adopt <u>legislation</u> to ensure mobile phones are no longer sold with a charging solution (EPS and/or cable) in the box	◉	○	○	○	○	○
* The EU should adopt <u>legislation</u> to ensure customers always have a <u>choice</u> of whether to purchase a charger (EPS and/or cable) with new mobile phones	◉	○	○	○	○	○
* EU citizens should be provided with more information on the negative <u>environmental</u> impacts of unnecessary chargers	◉	○	○	○	○	○
* EU citizens should be provided with more information on the fact that most modern chargers are <u>interoperable</u>. i.e. can be used to charge all mobile phones (as well as many other devices)	◉	○	○	○	○	○

* A new labelling scheme should be created to help EU citizens understand which chargers can be used with which phones or other devices	⦿	○	○	○	○	○
* Incentives for decoupling should be created (e.g. in the form of a better energy efficiency rating, or other advantages for phones sold without chargers)	○	○	○	○	⦿	○
* To enable decoupling, there needs to be a common connector at the device end for all mobile phones	⦿	○	○	○	○	○
* To enable decoupling, there needs to be a common EPS that is interoperable with all mobile phones	⦿	○	○	○	○	○

If measures to foster the decoupling of chargers are adopted, should these also **apply to portable electronic devices** other than mobile phones? Please select all that apply.

	Yes, measures to foster decoupling should be adopted	No, measures to foster decoupling should not be adopted	Don't know
* Mobile phones	⦿	○	○
* Laptops	⦿	○	○
* Tablets	⦿	○	○
* E-readers	⦿	○	○
* Smartwatches and fitness trackers	⦿	○	○
* Digital cameras	⦿	○	○
* Portable speakers	⦿	○	○
* Wireless headphones / earpods	⦿	○	○
* Radio-controlled toys	⦿	○	○
* Videogame devices	⦿	○	○

Do you know of any **examples of relevant measures or schemes** that have been, or are expected to be, adopted in the EU, one of its Member States, or elsewhere in the world, and that may contribute directly or

indirectly to decoupling of chargers or similar products? If so, please provide a brief summary, and if possible, a link to further information on such schemes.

2500 character(s) maximum

(Further comment on answers above): Decoupling is the priority policy that can reduce environmental impacts in this area. A legislative requirement that products are no longer sold with cables and charger plugs in the box is imperative.

Benefits and risks of decoupling

What **impacts** do you expect would follow from widespread decoupling of chargers from phones in the EU (i.e. a situation where most mobile phones are sold without a charger 'in the box')? Would you expect each of the following aspects to increase, decrease, or remain broadly unchanged?

	Major increase	Minor increase	No change	Minor decrease	Major decrease	Don't know
* Total number of new mobile phone chargers sold		●				
* Greenhouse gas emissions					●	
* Consumer convenience	●					
* Prices for consumers				●		
* Profits of mobile phone manufacturers		●				
* Profits of legitimate charger manufacturers	●					
* Profits of counterfeit charger manufacturers		●				
* Product safety risks for mobile phones and/or chargers			●			
* Conformity assessment, inspection and/or enforcement costs for public authorities		●				
* Innovation in charging technology		●				
* Competitiveness of EU businesses		●				

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* Competitiveness of EU SMEs	◯	◉	◯	◯	◯	◯

Survey close and wrap-up

You can use the text box below to briefly explain further why you are in favour or against a possible "decoupling" initiative, your preferred policy option(s), and/or the main benefits and/or risks you perceive.

2500 character(s) maximum

> Assuming that a mandatory common charger policy will reduce the need for 80% of power supplies currently shipped with smartphones and other devices, the savings brought about by a comprehensive decoupling policy would amount to approximately 29,000 tonnes of e-waste per year, as much as over 70 International Space Stations put together. The associated positive climate impacts would equal over 1,800 kilotonnes of CO_2 equivalent spared, which corresponds to some 1 million cars being taken off our roads.
>
> A decoupling policy is essential for the environmental savings to be achieved, and this will not be accomplished with standardised connectors alone – as the now expired Memorandum of Understanding clearly demonstrated. Addressing decoupling notably via a dedicated Ecodesign Regulation enables a wider focus beyond smartphones, reducing market fragmentation and leading to major increases in environmental benefits. For a more detailed proposal on how a legislative proposal could be designed, see our recent report on the issue: https://ecostandard.org/news_events/new-report-one-charger-to-fit-them-all-using-ecodesign-to-deliver-an-ambitious-common-charger-initiative/
>
> The shift to USB-C / USB 3.1+ power delivery protocols offers endless opportunities for innovation, but as is often the case, it needs to be steered in the direction of cooperation and standardisation. It is important that there is an effort made to standardise labelling/marking of cables so to indicate the power delivery protocol level, and available modes (data capability & speeds, power rating, display capability, compatibility).
>
> With foresight and bold action, the European Commission can collaborate with the Member States, civil society representatives and manufacturers to create innovative technology and policy solutions that align with circular economy goals, and set an example on a global scale.

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your responses will be treated with the strictest confidentiality. The study team may wish to contact you again to participate in further research related to this study.

* Do you agree to be re-contacted by Ipsos to participate in a follow-up telephone interview for this study? Your personal information will be securely deleted when this research is concluded (July 2021).

◉ Yes
◯ No

* Could you please provide your email address so that we can contact you again?

> ernestas.oldyrevas@ecostandard.org

If there is anyone else in your organisation or network that you think would have views or experiences relevant to this survey, it would be very much appreciated if you could send the survey link to them so they can complete it and give their feedback. You can do this by copying the survey link into an email or

message to them.

Thank you for your support.

Contact

[Contact Form](#)