



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Industrial Transformation and Advanced Value Chains
Advanced Engineering and Manufacturing Systems

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CAB-DG MEETING

UPDATE ON THE HARMONISATION OF CHARGERS

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BACKGROUND

In June 2009, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in which mobile phone manufacturers agreed to harmonise chargers for new models of data-enabled handsets coming onto the market as of 2011. The MoU expired at the end of 2012 but it has been effectively extended by a number of its signatories through two subsequent 'Letters of Intent' signed in 2013 and 2014.

The European Parliament (EP) has asked the Commission to take action in this area. A concrete reference to a common charger was a major issue at the time of the adoption of the revised Radio Equipment Directive (2014). As a result, this new Directive (Directive 2014/53/EU) includes, in Article 3, a legal basis for adopting a delegated act on a common charger.

KEY ISSUES

The EP wishes that there is one common charger for mobile phones which means one cable that can connect with all types of mobile phones. Therefore EP is not particularly favourable to a solution based on the use of adaptors.

In order to achieve a solution based on a common cable, manufacturers must agree to place on the market mobile phones with the same connector (interface) which can accommodate and be interoperable with the common charger (cable).

POSITION OF STAKEHOLDERS

The Commission has taken contact with the representatives of major manufacturers of mobile telephones through Digital Europe and has invited them to make proposals to consolidate the achievements of the 2009 regarding Harmonisation of a Charging Capability for Mobile Phones and to ensure a smooth transition towards the next generation of devices. The representatives of Apple have required some bi-lateral meetings in order to explain their opinion.

Most stakeholders support the use of connector 'USB Type C' on the mobile phone.

APPLE, on the other hand, wishes to continue to use the specific connector to the I-phones which is their proprietary interest. More specifically, APPLE supports 'USB Type C' to be the standardized connector (interface) on a charger device but not on the mobile phone. The charger will then be connected with the mobile phone, via a detachable cable which on the "phone end" will only connect to Apple's proprietary connector but not to other mobiles phones.

As far as we were informed by Digital Europe, the possibility to obtain a memorandum of understanding between all manufacturers would require the acceptance of APPLE's approach.

NEXT STEPS

The representatives of Digital Europe are now waiting for a reply on whether the Commission would accept a Memorandum of Understanding including the solution proposed by APPLE, in which case they will prepare the MoU and will promote its signature by the manufacturers of mobile phones or if the decision of the Commission is to impose a unique connector to the mobile phones and therefore the same cable compatible with all mobile phones of the same generation.

The DG will prepare a more detailed note regarding the solutions proposed and elaborate on the consequences of one or the other solution in order to have the view and decision of our political authorities.

This work runs the risk of suffering from some delay because the desk officer has left the Unit in February and the replacement, a Telecommunications engineer, recruited in April 2015, is waiting for the official invitation form DG Human Resources to join DG GROWTH.