



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP  
AND SMES  
Sustainable Industry and Mobility  
Engineering, Maritime and Rail Industries

# Meeting Minutes

## **Inter-service group for impact assessment (IASG) on common charger of portable devices 6 March 2020**

Participating DGs: GROW, ENER, ENV, SG, JUST

DG GROW opened the meeting. It was explained that the draft circulated to the IASG is very preliminary because the approach to be taken is still subject to validation by the Commissioner.

DG ENER asked what the definition is of ‘common charger’ used for the purpose of the initiative and what exactly the existing possibilities are under the Radio Equipment Directive (RED).

GROW explained that the European Parliament inserted into the RED, before its final adoption in 2014, the expression ‘common charger’. Most probably, the aim at that time was to empower the Commission to harmonise only the interface on the phone. Given that the empowerment is from a legal point of view weak, an option is to amend the RED so that the obligation is inserted in the RED, define the wired charging solution in a new Annex in the RED and empower the Commission to amend that new Annex. The amendment could also include obligations on the wireless charger but empower the Commission to define the date of applicability and the common solutions for wireless chargers in the future. This could be the first step in response to the call of the Parliament on the Commission to take an urgent action, which would need to be combined with instruments addressing e-waste and decoupling at a later stage.

ENER mentioned the ongoing work on review of eco-design on laptops and desktops. As part of the initiative, possibilities will be investigated how to incentivize decoupling of chargers.

ENER pointed out that harmonisation of the connectors alone will not guarantee the possibility of charging different smart phones with a single charger. There are other aspects, in particular the charging protocol, which is important for a secure charging and for ensuring the required quality of charging. Apart from the specifications for USB Power Delivery) another important aspect is the safety mechanism embedded in the smartphones. Furthermore, importance was stressed of providing the consumers with correct information about the use of chargers (for example as part of eco-design requirements). Concerning the scope of the initiative, opportunities should be explored for preventing risk of future fragmentation of wireless charging.

GROW informed about a planned launch of a study on eco-design requirements for smartphones.

GROW reminded about the conclusion of the impact assessment study with regard to the option of extending the scope to other portable devices. This option should be considered very carefully, taking into account the potential technical constraints.

SG stressed that harmonisation of connectors (“chargers”) alone is unlikely to have any substantial impact unless it is accompanied by decoupling as indicated by the study. SG indicated therefore that going alone with harmonisation without decoupling entailed risks and called for political guidance on the way forward and coordination with other actions of the Circular Economy Initiative.

GROW informed that the initiative might be on agenda of the IMCO committee in March. The other services were invited to send preliminary comments, although the draft impact assessment is likely to be substantially revised after decision is taken on the scope.

GROW asked the other services for inputs concerning the planned or ongoing initiatives to: tackle the problem of e-waste, such as take-back schemes; labelling; or to address decoupling, e.g. through the revision and/or implementing acts under the eco-design Directive. SG also suggested to ask DG CNECT concerning the circular device initiative. The inputs will be used to describe the context of the possible intervention on common charger.