

**Question for written answer E-000173/2018
to the Commission**
Rule 130
Patrick Le Hyaric (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Planned obsolescence

The companies Apple and Epson have been caught in the act of engaging in planned obsolescence practices. Apple has been deliberately causing its old iPhone models to slow down, in order to encourage people to buy its new phones. Epson, meanwhile, has been inserting sensors into its toner cartridges to stop them from working before they are actually empty.

When it is well-known that smartphones contain a number of rare metals, that their production involves high energy consumption and that they produce toxic waste that is hard to recycle, what Apple is doing is an environmental crime. Unfortunately, the Apple and Epson affairs are probably just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the anti-environmental practices of the large digital firms.

On a finite planet with ten billion human beings, there is an urgent need to change the way we produce and consume, and to disseminate practices relating to the circular economy, repairability and upgradable design. That was the entire thrust of the own-initiative report adopted by Parliament on 4 July 2017, which was voted for also by my parliamentary group.

1. Will the Commission take measures to combat planned obsolescence?
2. Can it commission an EU investigation into the companies that are suspected of engaging in such practices?