
MEPS call for measures to ensure products last longer

MEPs want to set criteria for how long products should last, better inform consumers about the durability of what they buy and encourage them to repair.

The average smartphone lasts only between one or two years. Other small electrical appliances, toys, clothes and shirts have an equally short life-expectancy, according to a [paper by the European Parliament's research service](#). Laptops, bicycles, sports clothing or bed items do not fare much better and usually have to be replaced after three or four years. On 4 July MEPs adopted a report calling for concrete measures to tackle this waste of money, energy and resources.

Higher standards and modular design

MEPs want to see longer-lasting products on the market. They are calling for minimum standards that could be set with help from European standardisation organisations.

French Greens/EFA member [Pascal Durand](#), who wrote the report on the lifetime of products, wants to encourage the modular construction of goods, so that they can easily be mended and upgraded. Other possible improvements involve manufacturers using easily replaceable materials and techniques that allow for repairs (for example using screws rather than melding parts together).

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77%

of European consumers would rather repair a broken product than replace it

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Measures against products failing prematurely

The Parliament also wants to tackle a more insidious aspect of "planned obsolescence", which is when companies build defects into a device to make it expire at a set date or after a set number of cycles. As it can be very difficult to even prove it exists MEPs call on the European Commission to establish an independent system to determine whether any malfeasance took place.

Clearer labelling

More than 90% of Europeans believe that products should be clearly tagged to indicate their longevity, according to a [Eurobarometer survey](#). MEPs agree and are calling for a labelling scheme to be put in place.

Durand said: "If a consumer sees a product that is 30 to 40% cheaper and seems to perform just as well, and doesn't know that the machine will break down after two years, instead of ten, then obviously he will choose the cheaper product."

Should producers worry?

Extending the lifetime of products, although a challenge to manufacturers, can give a competitive edge to companies that maybe cannot compete on price but can do so on the quality of their products.

The Parliament's initiative fits the environmentally-friendly [circular economy model](#) that aims to reduce the amount of waste by re-using, collecting, recycling and repairing as much as possible.

Find out more

[Procedure file](#)

[Waste management: MEPs to vote on plans to boost recycling rates](#)

[A longer lifetime for products: benefits for consumers and companies](#)

[Planned obsolescence](#)

[How an EU lifespan guarantee model could be implemented across the European Union](#)



Video

<https://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/programme/economy/planned-obsolescence-why-things-don-t-last>



Video

<https://www.europartv.europa.eu/en/programme/others/repair-reuse-and-recycle>