New EU rules encouraging consumers to repair devices over replacing them

The new rules would ensure access to information and spare parts for all, including independent repairers and end-users.

@GuruXOX/AdobeStock
A majority of EU citizens would rather repair a good instead of buying a new one

• New obligation for producers to repair products even after legal guarantee has expired

• Vouchers and other financial incentives to encourage consumers to opt for repair

Parliament adopted its negotiating position on new measures to strengthen the right to repair and reduce the environmental impact of mass consumption.

On Tuesday, Parliament adopted its position on a stronger “right to repair” for consumers, with 590 votes in favour, 15 against, and 15 abstentions. The proposal aims to encourage more sustainable consumption, by making it easier to repair defective goods, reducing waste and supporting the repair sector.

Choose repair instead of buying, even after the guarantee expires

Within the legal guarantee period, sellers would be required to prioritise repair if it is cheaper or equal in cost to replacing a good, unless the repair is not feasible or inconvenient for the consumer. MEPs also propose to extend the legal guarantee by one year once a product has been fixed.

Consumers will have a right to request repair for products such as washing machines, vacuum cleaners, smartphones and bicycles after the guarantee has expired. To make repairs the more attractive choice for consumers, MEPs want producers to offer replacement devices on loan for the duration of the repair. If a product cannot be fixed, a refurbished one could be offered instead.

More competitive repair market and incentives to opt for repair

Consumers are often discouraged from having a product repaired due to high costs, the difficulty of accessing repair services or design features preventing repair. Under Parliament’s position, independent repairers, refurbishers and end-users would have access to all spare parts, repair information, and tools at a reasonable cost.

Online platforms will help consumers find local repairers (including repair cafés) and sellers of refurbished goods in their area. To make repairs more affordable and attractive, MEPs propose
offering consumers vouchers and other financial incentives via national repair funds.

Quote

Rapporteur René Repasi (S&D, DE) said: “This House has consistently supported consumers’ right to repair and we can finally say that we are directly responding to people’s demands. People want to expand the lifespan of their devices, but it is often too costly or difficult. We adopted a series of measures to encourage consumers to choose repair over replacement, with a special focus on supporting independent repairers and establishing financial incentives. We expect Council to adopt their position soon, so we can begin negotiations to transform these measures into law and pave the way for a truly circular European economy.”

Next steps

Once Council adopts its own negotiating position on 22 November, talks with Parliament may begin, with a first meeting scheduled on 7 December.

Press conference

Rapporteur René Repasi (S&D, DE) will answer journalists’ questions on Tuesday, 21 November from 14.30 CET. Watch here.

Background

Throwing repairable consumer goods away has a profound environmental impact, resulting in the use of 30 million tonnes of resources, the production of 261 million tons of CO2-equivalent emissions and the generation of 35 million tonnes of waste annually in the EU. Consumers opting to replace a good instead of repairing it lose approximately €12 billion every year. According to a European Commission study, 77% EU citizens would prefer repair to buying new goods.

The right to repair proposal complement EU initiatives on Ecodesign and on Empowering consumers for the green transition.

Conference on the Future of Europe

The right to repair proposal responds to a number of citizens’ recommendations outlined in the report on Conference on the Future of Europe namely proposals 5 (6), 5(7), 5(10) and 11(2) on promoting the right to repair, ensuring long-term and sustainable use of products, information on repair, measures to tackle premature and planned obsolescence, ensuring longer warranties, providing access to spare parts, incentives to use products for longer and working towards a more sustainable and circular economy.
Further information
Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection
Procedure file
EP Study: Right to repair, new consumer right (November 2023)
Video of the plenary debate (20.11.2023)
Press conference with the rapporteur (21.11.2023)
Q&A: Right to repair (European Commission, March 2023)
Adopted text (click on 21.11.2023)

Contacts
Yasmina YAKIMOVA
Press Officer
(+32) 2 28 42626 (BXL)
(+32) 470 88 10 60
yasmina.yakimova@europarl.europa.eu
@EP_SingleMarket