

# **ISSG on sustainable product policy initiative – dedicated meeting on common charger**

**10 September 2020, 10h00 to 11h30**

**Skype meeting**

## **Minutes**

**Attendance:** GROW, CLIMA, ENV, OLAF, CNECT, ENER, MARE, BUDG, ECFIN, JRC, SJ, SG

### **1. Introduction**

The SG gave an introduction on the background to the file and its importance as a concrete deliverable for the Commission and the ambitious timetable.

### **2. Presentation of the initiative by DG GROW**

DG GROW explained the background and state of play of the initiative, as set out in the note circulated to the ISSG before the meeting (attached as Annex). DG GROW also updated the group that the contract for the two studies would hopefully be signed end of September. On a question from SG, DG GROW explained that the relevant expert group has been informed about the shift of approach to also including decoupling and debriefed about preliminary reactions.

### **3. Presentations of related initiatives and discussion**

DG ENV explained on behalf of the three co-leading DGs (ENV, GROW, ENER) the sustainable products policy initiative (SPPI), including the widening of scope of the Ecodesign directive it entails. As regards electronics already covered, the expected changes in scope are not so major for these products.

DG ENV briefly referred to its study on take-back and return schemes for small electronics (also tablets), which will likely finish in February 2021.

DG ENER presented the common GROW/ENER preparatory work on the Ecodesign working plan 2020-2024 and the relevant product groups likely to be covered by Ecodesign and/or labelling product regulations in the medium-term. Two product categories are related to the discussion on the common charger (or rather “power supply”). It explained about how it is necessary to use an end-to-end approach covering all communication aspects. Conversely, an approach only covering the powered product would miss fundamental requirements related to safety and durability of the

powered product. Also wireless charging can be covered using the same USB common power supply instead of a further one, using the current prevailing industry standard.

DG GROW stressed that its work under this initiative focuses on a common interface while the related eco-design initiatives of DG ENER has a wider perspective.

DG ENER confirmed that the Ecodesign approach spans across the full set, including charger, connectors, wires, the powered product and the communication between.

Therefore the initiatives may be seen as possibly complementary.

As regards decoupling, DG ENER has a preference for soft requirements, i.e. incentives for decoupling but under condition of full interoperability possible. Implementing acts for ICT products such as phones and computers could incentivise voluntary decoupling under the condition of full adherence to standards for full interoperability and safety.

SG underlines that in all communications the Commission should highlight the complementary character of the work with the different approaches.

DG ENER stresses that the work under Ecodesign can reach a far wider range of mass-market products, including many not covered by the radio equipment Directive and even products now sold with internal power supplies, from 0,1 Watt to 100 Watt, i.e from a smart watch to a 60 inch TV or desktop computer, or even cleaning, gardening, and a number of battery-powered DIY and professional tools. It is important that all communications highlight this other and more encompassing work, which is very important to pursue on the medium-term, for reducing WEEE and consumer expenditure and for enhancing product life-time and consumer convenience, particular in some exploding market sectors.

SG agrees that it is important to design and communicate a clear path for a wider and more ambitious approach. This, however, should not delay the work on the common interface, which has been promised and is already overdue.

DG CNECT stated that it has no strong views about a common interface. It is important to push for reparability requirements and a right to repair. It is important to package well all the work relevant for circularity of electronics.

LS stated that a discussion between DG GROW and LS on the legal basis as regards the common interface has taken place already and that Article 114 TFEU appears to be a suitable legal basis. As regards decoupling, more details are needed on what and how this would be achieved and on this basis LS offered to discuss with DG GROW. The SG encouraged to discuss this important issue at an early stage.

#### **4. Conclusions and next steps**

The SG closed the meeting with the following conclusions:

- DG GROW will take the work forward, liaising closely with other services with relevant initiatives. DG GROW will involve other DGs in the studies (kick-off meeting with contractors).
- Once more concrete, communication should be carefully prepared, stressing the interaction and the complementary character of the different initiatives.
- Next meeting in this format probably on the basis of a first draft of an Impact Assessment (according to current timing in Jan 2021).
- DG GROW and LS are encouraged to discuss the legal questions concerning decoupling, keeping SG in the loop.