



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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C(2022)6909 final*

*Mr Ion-Marcel CIOLACU
President of the Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
RO – 050563 BUCHAREST*

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions On making sustainable products the norm {COM(2022) 140 final}.

The Communication, published on 30 March 2022, accompanied the adoption by the Commission of a package of circular economy initiatives¹. These initiatives stem from commitments set by the Commission in the European Green Deal² and the Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe³, and aim at making products on the European Union market more sustainable and circular via actions on a number of fronts.

A centrepiece of the package is the proposal for a Regulation on Ecodesign for Sustainable Products⁴ (ESPR). This proposal will target how products are designed and set requirements to make them more durable, reliable, reusable, upgradable, repairable, easier to maintain, refurbish and recycle, as well as more energy and resource efficient, amongst other aspects. In addition, it will lay down information requirements to ensure that consumers and other economic actors are more aware of the environmental characteristics of products, and require products to have digital product passports. The future rules will be based on Article 114 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2013

² COM(2019) 640 final.

³ COM(2020) 98 final.

⁴ COM(2022) 142 final.

European Union and will strengthen the functioning of the European Union's internal market.

The Commission welcomes the support expressed by the Camera Deputaţilor for the Communication and has taken careful note of the points raised.

We agree in full with the recommendation of the Camera Deputaţilor to make best use of opportunities offered by digitalisation. The Commission proposed that digital product passports should become the norm for all products regulated under ESPR.

As regards the problem of destruction of unsold consumer goods, the Commission proposes far-reaching, directly applicable transparency requirements for all large businesses choosing to engage in this practice. While this is expected to act as a powerful disincentive in itself, the Commission will in addition be in a position to ban this practice completely, for product categories for which it proves a particularly prevalent issue.

We also recognise the need to develop a flexible policy, regulatory and administrative framework aimed at reducing the impact of price increases on consumers. It is for these reasons that impact assessments carried out under the ESPR framework should look carefully at the issue of affordability for consumers. As regards providing incentives to foster uptake of new circular economy-oriented technologies, the Commission plans to develop guidance on boosting circular business models – including guidance on funding.

The Commission is pleased that the Camera Deputaţilor agrees on the need for broad participation of key stakeholders in future consultations under the ESPR and in the development of standards. We also agree on the crucial role of education in understanding environmental information. We are committed to ensuring future product information requirements set under ESPR are clear, meet consumer needs, and help facilitate rather than complicate their choices.

The Commission notes the calls for action on labelling under ESPR, as well as for adoption of voluntary ecodesign standards, and confirms that several provisions to enable such action have been included in the proposal (for example, Articles 14 and 18).

The Commission takes note of the recommendation to link the work of the European Centre for Circular Affairs with that of the European Environment Agency and the results of the European Union's funding programmes, and agrees in general on the need to ensure available information and research is well linked and easily accessible for use. In this respect, it notes the commitment set out in the Communication to take the results of research projects funded by the Horizon Europe Programme into account when developing new methodologies to underpin ESPR.

The Camera Deputaţilor's point on the potential for recycling and upgrading medical devices has also been well noted. These products will be duly examined in the light of the criteria for prioritisation set out in the ESPR proposal.

Concerning the recommendation to step up research on the rapid design and production of safe batteries that are less dependent on critical raw materials, the Commission agrees on the importance and need for further action in this area, while also flagging the

achievements of the European Battery Alliance that triggered some 111 major projects and EUR 127 billion in public and private investments in developing the European battery ecosystem. We would further like to point out that the Commission proposal for a Batteries Regulation is currently being discussed between the co-legislators and that a legislative proposal on critical raw materials is being prepared, as announced in the REPowerEU Plan.

Discussions on the ESPR proposal between the Commission, the European Parliament and the Council, are underway. The Commission aims at reaching an agreement in the near future so as to enable the roll out of European Union level requirements on product sustainability as soon as possible.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Virginijus Sinkevičius
Member of the Commission*