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European Parliament votes to help consumers get their products repaired

Today, the European Parliament has adopted rules¹ that will give consumers new rights enabling them to use their products longer. BEUC supports the Parliament's position, which will pressure producers to ensure their products are repairable and of good quality. We call on Member States to adopt an equally ambitious position for upcoming negotiations.

Most importantly, consumers could have their faulty products repaired by the producer directly and not just by the seller as is currently the case. This will be possible for free if the product is still covered by the two-year legal guarantee, or for a reasonable fee in other instances. BEUC also applauds the Parliament's ambition to ban anti-repair techniques by producers, as well as expand the scope of the new obligation to repair which will oblige manufacturers to provide repair beyond the guarantee period.

BEUC regrets however that the Parliament followed the original Commission proposal to abolish the current consumer right to choose between repair and replacement of the defective good in the first two years after purchase. Consumers will now always have to accept that the faulty product is repaired. The Parliament tried to soften the blow by clarifying that consumers could still choose replacement if the repair is impossible or causes significant inconvenience. This measure is insufficient. The best approach would be to create the right incentives for consumers to choose repair. That's why BEUC strongly supports the Parliament's proposal to offer consumers an extra year of guarantee for their repaired product.

Ursula Pahl, BEUC's Deputy Director General, commented:

"Longer lasting and more repairable products can save consumer money and planet resources. Consumer groups from across Europe report that too many ordinary products break too soon and are impossible to fix. We are happy that the Parliament is putting pressure on producers to make durable and repairable products the norm.

"The Parliament is restricting consumer choice by forcing them to have a defective product repaired instead of replaced. Repair should be encouraged not imposed on consumers, especially if their product breaks within the two-year legal guarantee period. Not all goods can be properly repaired, and consumers should have the right to a well-functioning product they paid for. We hope Member States will not agree to reduce existing consumer rights.

¹ The legislative initiative on 'common rules promoting the repair of goods'

“Anti-repair practices must be banned, and measures promoting repair must be introduced by Member States. Financial incentives, such as the repair fund in France or the repair bonus in Austria, are needed to promote repair and bring repair prices down.”

The Parliament’s new position makes the following changes:

Within the two-year legal guarantee:

- Consumers will be able to directly ask the producer to repair their products, not just the seller.
- Priority of repair over replacement: if cheaper or equally expensive unless the repair is impossible or causes significant inconvenience to the consumer.
- An additional year of guarantee will be granted after the product is repaired.

Beyond the two-year legal guarantee:

- The scope of the new producer obligation to repair will be expanded to include bicycles, in addition to other products already included such as vacuum cleaners and washing machines.
- Producers will be obliged to provide spare parts and repair information during the entire expected lifetime of products.
- Producers should not impede repair by any contractual, hardware or software techniques.
- Member States will have to adopt measures promoting repair to consumers, such as repair funds or vouchers.
- Producers should not refuse to repair products that were previously repaired outside of their authorised network.
- A European Repair Information Form with key information on conditions and repair costs will only be voluntary.
- Online Repair Platforms, allowing consumers to easily find the nearest repairer, will have to exist in every Member State.

Background

[BEUC position paper on the right to repair](#)

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