



Open Source perspective: enable and support consumers to extend the lifetime of their products

Law against planned obsolescence

Planned obsolescence was recently made punishable by law in France (through articles L441-2 and L454-6 of the Code de la Consommation). It is recommended to evaluate the implementation of the French law and, if effective, to consider EU-wide adoption and adoption in other countries/regions.

Minimum durability criteria

The European Ecodesign Directive already has minimum durability criteria for light bulbs and vacuum cleaners, and more measures are planned. The criteria in the European Ecodesign Directive could be extended and measurement standards, test standards and verification methods for durability and resource efficiency could be developed for a range of products.

Product lifetime labelling

A comprehensive study by the European Economic and Social Committee (2016) indicates that consumers respond positively to product lifetime labelling. More research and testing needs to be done to study the effectiveness of lifetime labels, and to develop standardized measurement procedures. If product lifetime standards are based on manufacturers' data, they have to be willing to participate, thus incentives need to be introduced.

Extended product warranty

France and Portugal have extended the period for the reversal of the burden of proof from 6 months to two years. It is recommended to evaluate the French and Portuguese measures and, if successful, to consider making this an EU-wide measure and introducing it in other countries/regions.

Right to Repair legislation

Repair needs to be affordable and accessible for consumers (for instance through publicly available repair manuals). A reduction of Value Added Tax on repair can further incentivize actions in this area. In France, manufacturers and retailers are obliged to inform consumers on spare part availability. It is recommended to evaluate the 2016 law (decree nr. 2014-1482) and, if effective, to consider adoption at EU level and introduction of similar legislation in other countries/regions.

Monitoring of trends in product lifetimes

Monitoring the trends in product lifetimes of a range of energy-use-intensive products consistently, over a number of years, can track the impact from different generations of products and provide up-to-date suggestions for lifetime extension.

Consumer education and information

The promotion of the development of (for instance) product buying/use guides, or consumer awareness/marketplace campaigns, can increase the understanding of product durability, induce a positive consumer attitude towards product maintenance and repair, and encourage consumers to hold companies to account.