

Letter of Intent on future common charging solution for smartphones

Version 15.12.2015

The signatories hereto recognise that the Memorandum of Understanding for Harmonisation of a Charging Capability for data enabled Mobile Phones, of June 5, 2009 and extended by two Letters of Intention signed in 2013 and 2014, respectively (the “MoU”), together with the development of a corresponding International technical standard, has been highly effective in increasing interoperability and promoting harmonisation of charging in the EU, resulting in reduced waste and a significant improvement in consumer convenience (RPA study, 2014). The number of different mobile phone charging solutions on the market has declined substantially over the period of the MoU, and the vast majority of handset owners now have a MoU compliant phone. Many manufacturers of mobile phones who did not sign up to the MoU have adopted MoU-compliant charging solutions, extending the benefits arising from the MoU.

Whilst the success of the MoU is recognised, advancement of smartphone phone technology shows the need for transition to a next common charging solution, providing improved charging performance and supporting new use cases which will improve user experience and will likely facilitate wider adoption for use with other devices. This transition provides an opportunity to encourage improvements, particularly in the area of electronic waste reduction, such as those noted in the RPA study.

The signatories hereby declare their intention to continue to enable Smartphones to be charged through a common charging interface.

To this end the signatories agree to take reasonable efforts to transition to the new USB Type-C™ IEC/EN standards¹. This addresses the interoperability between the External Power Supply and the Smartphone while leveraging the ability of USB Type-C to be the common charging interface for other types of portable electronic equipment. Signatories will report regularly to the Commission on the state of these efforts, taking into account the latest technological and market developments.

Definitions

For the purpose of this LoI:

A Smartphone typically means a battery-powered handheld communication touchscreen device which supports voice and data communication utilizing public cellular networks.

External Power Supply is a mains powered source enabling charging of Smartphones.

¹ Standards currently under development in IEC TC 100, among others: Universal Serial Bus Type-C Cable and Connector Specification Revision 1.1 (April 2015) (to be published as IEC 62680-1-3 USB Type-C Revision 1.1); Universal Serial Bus Power Delivery Specification Revision 2.0, V1.1. (May 2015) and Revision 3 (expected to be published December 2015) and to be published as IEC 62680-1-2 USB PD R3.0 V1.0; IEC 63002 Identification and Communication Interoperability Method for External Power Supplies Used With Portable Computing Devices (expected to be published in 2016).

Considerations

Signatories may continue to supply the EU market with chargers and Smartphones compliant with the technical requirements as laid out in the original MoU. Signatories may supply the EU market with Smartphones capable of being charged by any External Power Supply that meets the requirements of the relevant USB-C IEC/EN standards (currently under development).

This LoI shall not preclude innovation in the Smartphone and External Power Supply markets for example in relation to battery and charging technologies (e.g. wireless charging), new interfaces (with interoperability facilitated through use of adaptors or adaptor cables) and improved charging performance. Therefore it would be appropriate to review and report on the status of the market on a regular basis.

List of signatories

PROPOSAL