

## **Apple announces a Self Service Repair program Here's what EU refurbishers have to say about it...**

The European Refurbishment Association - EUREFAS - welcomes Apple's latest announcement giving access to spare parts and repair schemes for customers among their "Self Service Repair" program. This announcement sends a general message for more responsible habits toward reparation, encouraged by the first stakeholder in the consumption chain - manufacturers and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).. As 77% of Europeans are more likely to repair their products instead of buying new ones<sup>1</sup>, reparation and re-employment schemes must be encouraged and facilitated by OEMs at the very beginning. Among the upcoming legislations, it also shows that even the biggest manufacturers such as Apple have heard this message and that those efforts were possible.

But progress is still to be made and this announcement raises three questions among European Union (EU) refurbishers:

### **1. On a spare part's full and real availability with affordable prices**

Promised spare parts should be put on the market at an affordable price. Procuring spare parts and repairing activities are pushing consumers towards repair only if the overall cost is minimal. Otherwise, consumers will buy a new product instead for the same price.

Spare parts should also be made available on the market for a determined amount of time after the last unit placement on the market, also at their retailers and distributors without prejudice to OEMs' obligations. From the first placing on the market, spare parts should also be stocked and available. The delivery delay should eventually be reglemented to not prevent reparation in any way.

Transparency has a key role if we really want to push reparation : Prices should be published on a free publicly accessible website.

Last but not least, spare parts availability means nothing without a repair scheme. Its' access should meet the same criterias as for spare parts : affordable prices and public information.

**Our proposal to go a step further: as we have done 20 years ago on pharmaceutical drugs: let's build a world with generic spare parts.**

We took a bold step in 1993, nearly 30 years ago, to make medicines available and affordable for many more people by stopping the monopoly on pharmaceutical drugs and moving to generic drugs. Generic drugs now supply over two third of all medicines in Europe, and over the last ten years, generic medicines have increased the overall access to medicines by over 100% in 7 key therapeutic areas. For the treatment of high blood pressure alone, almost 50 million patients are

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<sup>1</sup> Eurobaromètre Flash 338 juin 2014 "L'attitude des européens à l'égard de la gestion des déchets et l'utilisation efficace des ressources"

taking generics each day, and 20 million people across Europe are now being treated for diabetes with generics.

It is time to do the same for spare parts !

By having generic spare parts we will ensure quality, affordability, availability and increase significantly the number of products really repaired. This will be a very efficient measure with a very positive impact on the environment, employment in Europe, and the EU trade balance deficit. This was recommended by CENELEC (European Committee for ElectroTechnical Standardisation) in their report published in 2018 on requirements for the preparation of reusing electrical waste and electronic equipment.

We are currently asking the French government to put this proposition in the agenda for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union starting in January 2022.

## **2. We should avoid any practices aimed to protect spare parts monopoly**

As all refurbishing companies' clients may have experienced by now, the Big Tech is known for its' software locks, from pop-up messages on the smartphone warning about the non genuine battery in place to unfunctional Face ID functionality when the screen has been changed by a "non agreed OEM" actor.

Those part-pairing and serialisation behaviours strongly discourage customers towards independent repair or refurbished products, and weaken the emerging trust towards the second hand market while reinforcing OEMs' monopoly. We demand the end of part-pairing practices.

## **3. Including refurbishers in the reparation scheme**

Apple does not mention refurbishment actors in its announcement. Yet, refurbishing is not to be confused with the mentioned "repairers". Refurbishers have a key role in the second hand and repair industry. In fact, Refurbishers are able to provide a professional service and warranty, and most of the time includes reparation if needed. Refurbishers should therefore be totally included and recognised in any reparation and reemployment topic.

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