

Towards a future-proof Batteries Regulation – stocktaking one year after the Commission proposal

PRESS RELEASE - Brussels, 10 December 2021 – On the day one year ago, the Commission published the welcomed EU Batteries Regulation proposal, representing the next milestone in delivering on the Strategic Action Plan on Batteries. The proposed modernised EU rules for batteries are currently discussed by the co-legislators to establish a legislation fit for purpose. The Batteries Regulation will shape the future of the European battery value chain and its ability to assist in implementing the EU Green Deal and in meeting Europe’s carbon-neutrality objectives.

“The upcoming Batteries Regulation needs to deliver on the facilitation of the energy transition and decarbonisation of the economy, while ensuring that the European batteries industry is becoming a competitive global leader. Moreover, only a strong battery value chain in Europe will be able to set high sustainability standards for this industry across the rest of the world,” commented Claude Chanson, RECHARGE General Manager. “We call on the legislators to establish rules which enable a competitive European battery ecosystem and create a level playing field for all batteries placed on the EU market. We are in unique position today to translate Europe’s battery vision into a thriving industry,” Chanson continued.

RECHARGE has advocated for years for a batteries framework including requirements on the carbon footprint of the product and social responsibility of the companies active in the field. “Carbon intensity and due diligence provisions have been welcomed by the advanced rechargeable and lithium batteries value chain, supporting the efforts of European actors”, explained Patrick de Metz, RECHARGE Chairman. “These measures have the potential to not only prevent underperforming batteries from entering the EU market, but to truly work towards the EU climate-neutrality and sustainability objectives”.

De Metz added: “The European batteries industry could become one of the largest battery industries globally, and one of the most sustainable and innovative at the same time. We, however, still have a long way to go to reach this status. The industry will introduce many innovations over the coming years. We therefore caution the co-legislators to not overregulate product design and to not over-narrowly define product performance. Such measures could hamper the ability of the industry to innovate and to meet new and more complex customer demands.”

Batteries play a key role in decarbonising the economy, however some well-intended suggested changes to the Commission proposal may work against the establishment of the still nascent European batteries industry. As the voice of the advanced European battery industry, RECHARGE wishes to express its concern that several proposed changes currently being discussed by the co-legislators may be counter-productive:

1. The intrinsic difficulty of enforcing several of the proposed design requirements is likely to create an uneven playing field, in which the EU industry will bear the brunt of the regulatory constraints,
2. Measures which may disproportionately benefit non-European battery industry need to be changed in a way to rather reinforce the creation of a European battery ecosystem,
3. The indiscriminate extension of performance requirement placed on newly designed batteries to batteries designed years ago to provide energy to equipment already in use (and likely to stay for many years to come) will make servicing highly complex and force early obsolescence of such equipment,
4. All proposed measures and targets, including mandatory material recovery targets, should be designed to genuinely benefit the environment, without the unintended consequence of increasing the carbon footprint of batteries.

RECHARGE supports an ambitious regulatory framework, geared at facilitating decarbonisation and climate neutrality, crafted with uniform enforceability in mind – and we are confident that this can be achieved.

****ENDS****

Note to the editor: RECHARGE is the European industry association for advanced rechargeable and lithium batteries. Founded in 1998, it is our mission to promote advanced rechargeable batteries as a key technology that will contribute to a more empowered, sustainable and circular economy by enabling decarbonised electricity and mobility, and cutting-edge consumer products. RECHARGE’s unique membership covers all aspects of the advanced rechargeable battery value chain: From suppliers of primary and secondary raw materials, to battery and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), to logistic partners and battery recyclers. www.rechargebatteries.org

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