

Persrelease 14 October 2023, Delft

Europe needs broader approach in 'Right to Repair' legislation

White paper from 4 Dutch knowledge institutions shows chances & pitfalls in 'repair' laws

The European Commission wants to make it easier for consumers to repair their products (or have them repaired). This is good news for our budget and the environment. But there is a lot to consider. Eight scientists from Leiden University, TU Delft, Erasmus University Rotterdam and Hogeschool Rotterdam offer advice in a new white paper. "Better repairability requires a design approach that includes product, legislation, business model and consumer education."

There is an increasing number of European initiatives to legislate the right to repair. The 'Right to Repair' proposal, the 'Ecodesign Directive', and the 'Empowering Consumers' law for example. But the European Commission needs to consider many aspects when preparing legislation. Product design, legal aspects, business models and consumer behaviour all have a role to play if we really want to integrate 'repairability' into our daily lives. Eight scientists from Leiden University, TU Delft and Erasmus University Rotterdam offer advice from their expertise. Discover some insights below.

"We are looking at how 3D printing for repair can benefit businesses"

Bas Flipsen, TU Delft

The can-do consumer

Ruth Mugge, Professor at TU Delft writes that we as consumers hold the key to making the transition to repairability a success. "It is therefore important to influence consumer behaviour. For example, you can use the design of a product to spark the 'can do' spirit. Think of a light or an error message indicating that the battery needs to be replaced, for instance."

"Not repairability, but extending the total lifespan of products should be the ultimate goal," adds Professor at TU Delft Ruud Balkenende. "There could be a legally required warranty period that is somewhat longer than the average lifespan of the product. That would encourage manufacturers to design solid and repairable devices."

Tax materials more and wages less

Steve Kennedy, Associate Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam notes that it pays more for companies to sell new products than to opt for repair. "In addition, there is the cheap labour in low-wage countries. Having products repaired across borders makes little sense because of the environmental impact, and repair in Europe is expensive because of wage rates. But with higher taxation on materials and lower taxation on labour, repair becomes more attractive and replacement less attractive."

"Intellectual property of manufacturers will become a key discussion point"

René Repasi, Erasmus University Rotterdam

3D printing your own parts

Professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam René Repasi wonders whether we are addressing the right party with 'Right to Repair'. "Independent repairers are perhaps more important than manufacturers. They note that spare parts are too expensive. If they get access to a spare parts register, they can 3D-print them themselves relatively cheaply. But many manufacturers are hesitant. They refer to the safety of their products and want to protect their intellectual property. This will be an important point of discussion."

More on the white paper

This white paper is an initiative of TU Delft Faculty of Industrial Design Engineering and the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Sustainability and includes contributions from:

- Conny Bakker, professor Circular and Sustainable Design, TU Delft and vice-president of the Circular Industries Hub at Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Sustainability
- René Repasi, professor Public and Private Interests, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Alex Geert Castermans, professor Private Law, Leiden University
- Steve Kennedy, researcher Business Sustainability, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Stefano Cucurachi, researcher Industrial Ecology, Leiden University
- Bas Flipsen, senior lecturer Circular Product Architecture Design, TU Delft
- Ruud Balkenende, professor of Circular Product Design, TU Delft
- Ruth Mugge, professor of Design for Sustainable Consumer Behaviour, TU Delft
- Marcel den Hollander, Lector Circular Design & Manufacturing, Hogeschool Rotterdam
- Ellen Loots, assistant professor cultural organizations and creative entrepreneurship, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Willem Lijmbach, R&D-manager Freudenberg Home and Cleaning Solutions
- Bart van Straten, CEO Van Straten Medical
- Jan van Os, Innovatie- en Duurzaamheidsmanager ATAG Nederland
- De Consumentenbond
- Techniek Nederland

Meet-up

The white paper will be presented on 13 November 2023 at the Meet-Up 'From disposable economy to repair society'. This is an event of TU Delft, faculty of Industrial Design Engineering, the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Sustainability and Techniek Nederland. If you would like to participate in this Meet-Up, please go to www.centre-for-sustainability.nl for registration and programme.

For more information about the paper and interview requests, please contact the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre for Sustainability via [Ester Segers](#).



Universiteit
Leiden

 TU Delft

Erasmus
University
Rotterdam

The Erasmus University logo, featuring a stylized signature of the name 'Erasmus'.