To: Legislators in the European Union
In copy: Citizens of the European Union

The universal right to freely choose operating systems, software and services

> Software design is crucial for the ecodesign and sustainability of products and hardware. Free Software systems and services enable reuse, repurposing and interoperability of devices. The universal right to freely choose operating systems, software and services is crucial for a more sustainable digital society.

The ongoing digitization of infrastructures and services comes along with a continuously growing number of electronic devices that are connected to the Internet - be it in private, public or business environments. Many of these devices need more energy and natural resources to be produced than the energy they consume during their entire lifespan. And way too many of these devices are being wasted and not reparable simply because the software stops working or is not being updated anymore.

Once the pre-installed software stops users from continuing to use their hardware, restrictive ownership models prevent users from helping themselves to enjoy longer use of their devices. Restrictions span from physically locking down hardware, to technical obscurity by using proprietary software, to legal restrictions via software licenses and end user license agreements. This way, manufacturers often prohibit repairability, access and reuse of their devices. Even after purchase, customers often do not really own their devices. They are not able to do what they want with their very own devices. **If you cannot install the software you want on your own device – you don't own it.**

We, the signees of this open letter,

- recognize that free access to the hardware and software determines how long or how often a device can be used or reused.

- declare the increased longevity and reusability of our devices to be inevitable for a more sustainable digital society.

That is why we ask legislators around Europe to make use of the historic chance and enable a more sustainable use of electronic products and devices with a universal right to install and run any software on any device. To this end, we demand that:

Users have the right to freely choose operating systems and software running on their devices

> Our tablets, phones and other connected devices are general purpose computers. Replacing software and operating systems on these devices enables us to extend the initial lifespan of a device and to make full use of our hardware. For the ability to reuse and repurpose our resources in a creative and sustainable way we need **the universal right to install and develop any operating system and software we want on any of our devices**. Any legal, technical or other obstacles to reuse these devices for any purpose must not be allowed.

Users have the right to freely choose between service providers to connect their devices with

Users must have the free choice of providers offering software related services, meaning they can use the device from one manufacturer with the service provided by another. Many connected clients today go to waste simply because their online services go offline. Free choice of services allows these clients to be reused by connecting to another service.

Operating systems and embedded software determine possible interactions between generic sensors, modules and systems with their connected online services. For users to exercise free choice of services, they must be able to use the device from one manufacturer with any online service, which could be supplied by any other third party or by themselves. **Connected services as well as the software on connected devices and applications must offer interoperability and full functionality of a device's initial purpose with the use of Open Standards.**

Devices are interoperable and compatible with open standards

Software designs and architectures determine accessibility and compatibility of hardware via standards, drivers, tools, and interfaces. Proprietary software and protocols hinder competition among manufacturers, undermine repairability of devices and create an artificial incompatibility of different devices within the same infrastructure. Interoperability of single devices however is crucial for the creation of sufficient, sustainable and long-lasting IT infrastructures. To enable interoperability, **manufacturers must ensure that any data necessary to run a device's primary function is compatible with and possible to import/export in open standards.**

Source code of drivers, tools, and interfaces are published under a free license

Smaller components of a device often require specific drivers, tools, and interfaces to operate. Users need full access and free reusability of the source code of those drivers, tools, and interfaces to analyse and integrate a device within a set of interconnected devices from different manufacturers. Source code reusability is also key to exercise the full right to repair for any third-parties from professional repair shops to repair cafés to end users.

A free license is any license that gives everyone the four freedoms to use, study, share and improve the software, including Free Software and Open Source Software licenses. **The obligation to publish drivers, tools, and interfaces under such a free license after market entry is key for full access to our devices and exercising the universal right to repair.**

Signatures

This is the list of signatures of the initial co-signees of this open letter. For an up to date list, please visit: https://fsfe.org/activities/upcyclingandroid/openletter.html

1		/e/ Foundation
2		ANSOL - Associação Nacional para o Software Livre
3		APELL – European Open Source Business Association
4		Back Market
5		Barcelona Free Software Group
6		Citizen D
7		Deutscher Naturschutzring
8		Digitalcourage
9		Digitale Gesellschaft CH

10		Document Foundation
11		Environmental Coalition on Standards
12		EDRi – European Digital Rights
13		Elektronisk Forpost Norge
14		Epicenter Works
15		European Right to Repair Campaign
16		Fairphone
17		FifF - Forum InformatikerInnen für Frieden und gesellschaftliche Verantwortung e.V.
18		Free Software Foundation Europe
19		Germanwatch

20		GFOSS – Greek Open Technologies Alliance
21		Heinlein
22		iFixit
23		KDE
24		Mailbox.org
25		Mouvement Ecologique
26		NABU - Naturschutzbund Deutschland
27		Netzwerk Reparatur Initiativen
28		Nextcloud
29		Nitrokey

30		Norwegian Unix User Group
31		Oekozenter Pafendall
32		Open Kowledge Foundateion DE
33		OPNTEC
34		OSBA – Open Source Business Alliance
35		Runder Tisch Reparatur
36		Shift
37		Vrijschrift
38		Wikimedia DE