

OPEN LETTER  
TO THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
REGARDING  
EU INITIATIVE ON REDUCING  
REDUNDANT TV REMOTE CONTROLS (TVRCs)

August 16, 2017

**TO:  
EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
JEAN-CLAUDE JUNCKER  
PRESIDENT**

**JYRKI KATAINEN  
VICE – PRESIDENT  
JOBS, GROWTH, INVESTMENT AND COMPETITIVENESS**

**ELŻBIETA BIEŃKOWSKA  
INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, SME'S**

**MIGUEL ARIAS CAÑETE  
CLIMATE ACTION AND ENERGY**

**KARMENU VELLA  
ENVIRONMENT, MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES**

**VĚRA JOUROVÁ  
JUSTICE, CONSUMERS AND GENDER EQUALITY**

**MARIYA GABRIEL  
DIGITAL ECONOMY AND SOCIETY**

**OGNIAN ZLATEV  
EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATION IN BULGARIA**

CC:  
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT  
Industry, Research and Energy Committee  
Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee  
Environment, Public Health and Food Safety Committee

CC:  
Estonian Presidency of the Council (2017)  
Bulgarian Presidency of the Council (2018)  
Austrian Presidency of the Council (2018)

## **DEAR COMMISSIONERS:**

We are delighted to address you with a proposal, benefiting the European consumers, the environment and the circular economy alike, and to bring to your attention the issue of redundant TV remote control (TVRC) handsets used in our everyday life.

In 2017 the Atlantic Digital Net in Bulgaria sponsored a [study](#) to illustrate the amount of CO2 emissions that could be saved from the production of redundant TVRCs and their components: plastic, batteries and fiberglass.

According to the study if there was a single TVRC compatible with all TV brands and DVD players, we could save approximately 240,718 tons of CO2 emissions, which exceeds 24.5 million gallons of petrol, every 7 years (which is the average life span of a TV set).

In addition:

- a. the usage of several TVRCs confuses consumers;
- b. all of the components are harmful to the environment;
- c. the eco-design policy of the EU demands to eliminate the least performing products in line with the energy efficiency objectives.

Furthermore, the EU circular economy strategy demands to take into account the challenges of e-waste of redundant TVRC's.

**It is our understanding that the best option would be to reduce the number of redundant TVRCs by initiating a mandatory common EU standard for manufacturing TV sets, allowing for a new generation of devices that would be operated by a universal and standardised TVRC.**

Currently Panasonic is offering a so-called “learning remote control”, copying signals from pre-programmed handsets, which actually adds more waste to the already produced TVRCs. We know also of mobile apps controlling the TV, but this presumes the use of a smartphone.

An initiative for a mandatory standard for TVRCs for all brands of TV sets would be consumer-friendly and reduce the carbon footprint on the environment, thus benefiting future generations.

We were encouraged to undertake this current initiative of ours, hoping to continue our positive experience of cooperation with the Commission so far:

- Our open letter of May 2008 to Vice-President Gunter Verheugen regarding standardisation of all chargers for mobile phones resulted in an initiative that came into effect in 2014 as part of the eco-design package (published in *24 Hours Daily*);
- Our open letter of June 2011 to the then Vice-Presidents Neelie Kroes, Viviane Reding, and Commissioner John Dalli, calling on the EU to become a “WiFi paradise” which eventually evolved into “#WiFi4EU” initiative adopted on 29 May 2017, aimed at bridging the digital divides in Europe (published in *24 Hours Daily*).

**DEAR COMMISSIONERS:**

We are confident that working together for the benefit of the European citizens will make our Union the best place for the generations to come.

With warmest regards,

Dr Solomon Passy

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President & Founder / Atlantic Club Bulgaria  
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Chairman of the UN Security Council (2002, 2003)  
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