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“By the numbers” of APPLiA: Circular Culture, smart homes and economic growth are on track

The third in a row snapshot of “By the numbers” of the home appliance industry in Europe shows a set of major trends that have the potential to make a difference to the society. Manufacturers have made concrete steps towards their 2025 goals - advancing sustainable lifestyles, living the connected home and accelerating Europe’s growth.

“While in the previous version of the report, we illustrated the circularity of the material flows of the industry, the greatest novelty this year is the insight on how repairable home appliances actually are”, said the Director General of the Association, Paolo Falcioni. Repair activities are well-established all around Europe, showing that over 80% of the requests for repair result in repaired products. “Repair activities do not only help in closing the loop, but also create jobs for another 32 000 Europeans”, he further added. At the same time, the greatest challenge for the industry remains - two-third of precious resources remain undocumented and are not coming back into material loops as secondary raw material, making it unclear how this waste is collected and thereafter treated.

Circularity is a key target for EU policy makers, the industry and citizens, but the area where we see the greatest progress is undoubtedly connectivity and smart homes. The number of smart homes in the EU is expected to increase tenfold by 2021. The annual revenue from energy management in smart homes in Europe is also expected to double in the coming years and reach more than 4 billion euros in 2023. APPLiA is also noticing an on-going democratisation process of smart appliances where cost per unit has reduced nearly by half between 2008 and 2016. Europeans also seem to be more and more relaxed in their use of smart appliances. Today, around 15 million citizens are actually using smart products and the tendency for this number is to grow reaching more than 30 million people in 4 years from now. “The scientific-based forecast is, of course, encouraging for the sector and we see a clear sign of rising innovation and technology solutions, with nearly 13 000 of patents submitted by our members to the European Patent Office”, Paolo Falcioni noted. The sector has maintained its yearly contribution to research and development, having Germany, Italy and Poland in the top position of countries investing in innovation. A new curious fact of the report is also the breakdown of users of smart appliances by age, where we see that 37% of the Europeans who have embraced the new technology are between 25 and 34-years-old.

Looking at Europe and the way the industry is performing on a global level, the continent still owns the second biggest share of units traded globally. What is more important, 74% of the exports of large appliances and over 60% of the exported small appliances remain within the European Union, helping EU countries’ economies to flourish.

“By analysing the latest report, we have seen that the membership has managed to overcome a number of challenges and maintained a good level of circularity, innovation and economic growth. Simultaneously, we also note areas where the sector’s development could be improved and APPLiA has already prescribed the solutions for that in its Better Lifestyles Manifesto”, Paolo Falcioni concluded.

APPLiA - Home Appliance Europe represents home appliance manufacturers from across Europe. By promoting innovative, sustainable policies and solutions for EU homes, APPLiA has helped build the sector into an economic powerhouse, with an annual turnover of EUR 50 billion, investing over EUR 1.4 billion in R&D activities and creating nearly 1 million jobs

