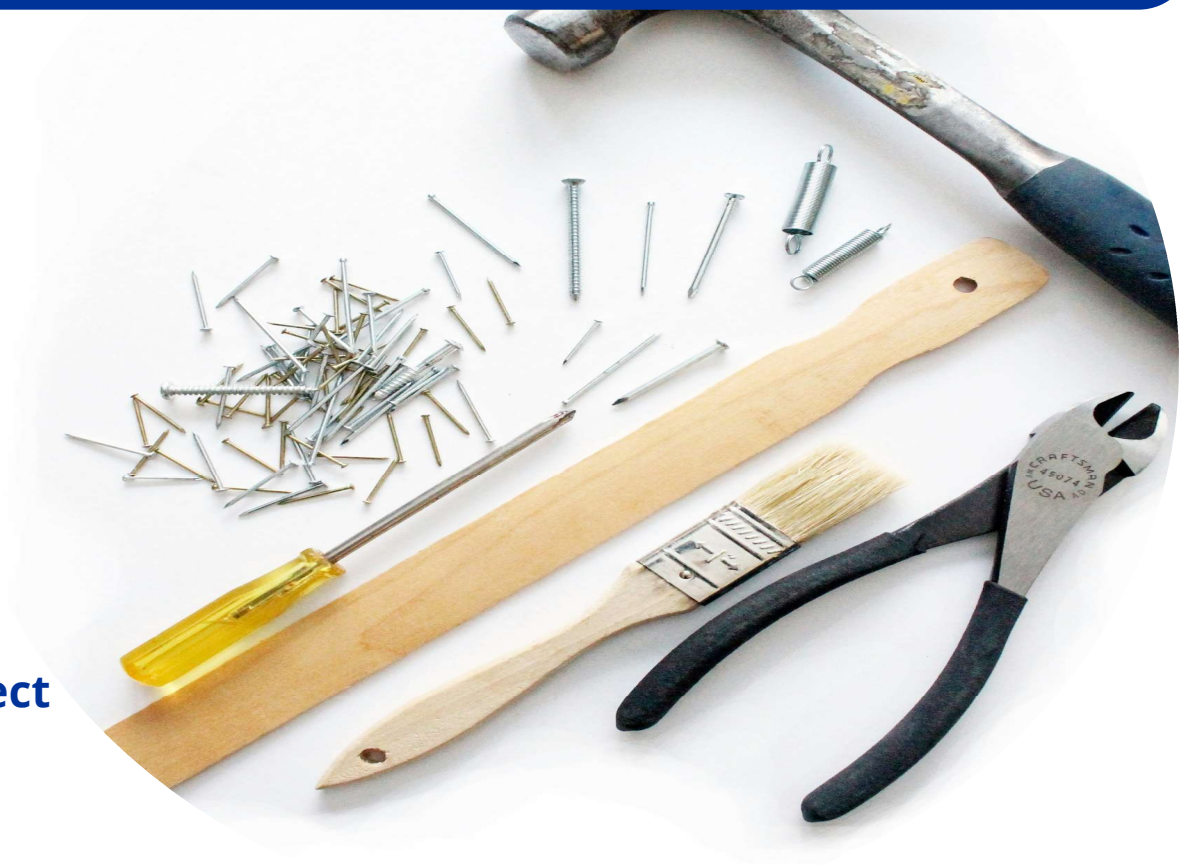


Innovative Sustainable Economy

Making repair the easy choice

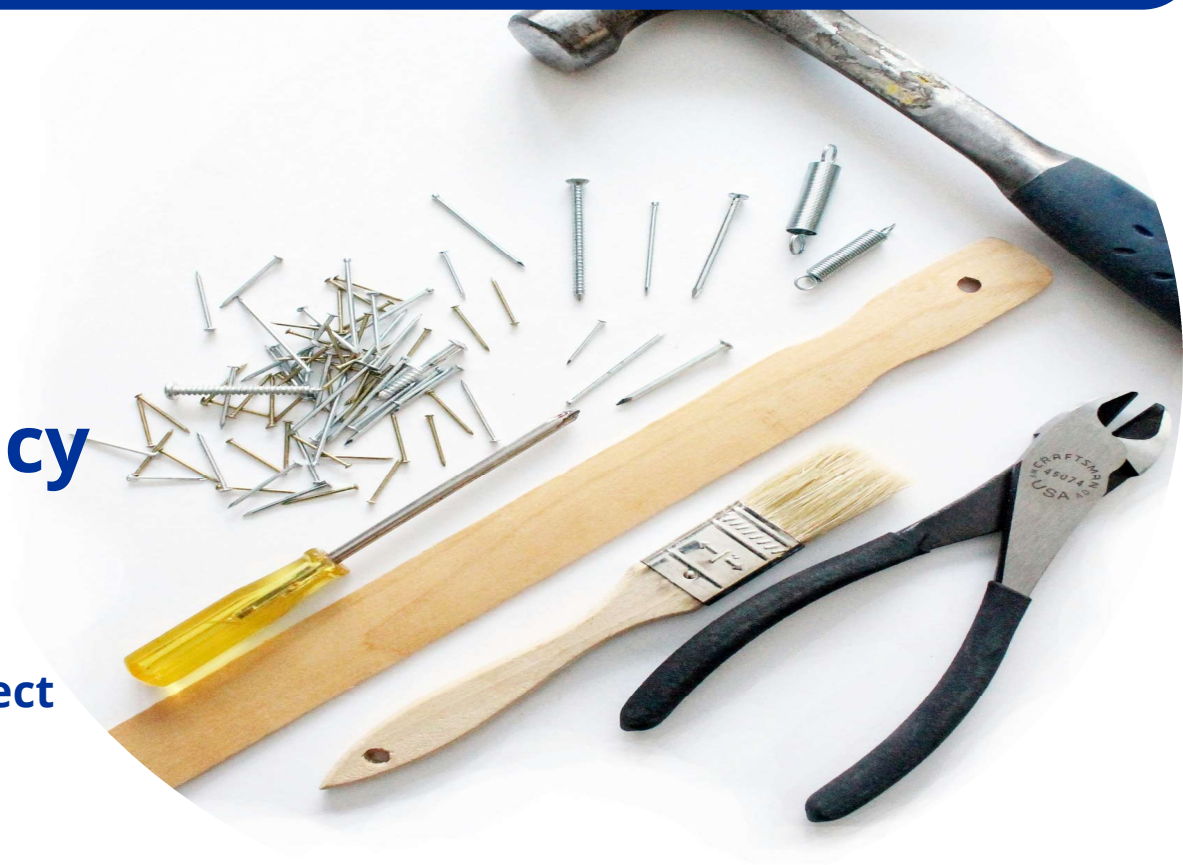
By the Interreg Euro-MED REPper project



Making repair the easy choice

6. Challenges, future perspectives and policy recommendations

By the Interreg Euro-MED REPper project





Challenges, future of repair and recommendations

Challenges, future of repair
and recommendations



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Throughout this training course, we have seen that the right to repair is **not just a legal rule**.

It is a **cultural change**. It was created to address a concrete problem: a system in which products that are still functional are discarded, with a huge impact on the environment and on the economy.

We have also seen that today there is a strong demand for repair.

Many consumers would like to repair their products, but they often give up because of high costs, lack of information or technical difficulties. And this is exactly where the right to repair comes in:

- making repairs more accessible
- guaranteeing the availability of spare parts
- increasing transparency
- extending the lifespan of products

But the transition toward a more sustainable model is not automatic. It requires **choices and responsibilities** from everyone.

Challenges, future of repair
and recommendations



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Recommendations and good practices

To make the right to repair truly effective, concrete actions and behaviors are needed.

For consumers:

- Learn about your rights and available repair services
- Prefer products that are repairable, durable and upgradeable
- Consider repair before replacement
- Support local initiatives such as workshops and Repair Cafés

Purchasing choices have a direct impact on the environment and can help guide the market toward more sustainable solutions.

Challenges, future of repair
and recommendations



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For companies:

- Design products that are easier to repair through ecodesign
- Guarantee access to spare parts and repair manuals
- Invest in training and technical skills
- Promote circular business models and long-lasting products

Product design is fundamental: it determines how easily an object can be repaired, reused or recycled.

For public institutions:

- Make repairs economically accessible
 - Promote incentives and public policies
 - Support local repair networks
 - Encourage information and public awareness

Challenges, future of repair
and recommendations



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Public policies are essential to create a system in which repair becomes the simplest and most convenient option.

Despite the progress already made, several important **challenges still remain:**

- overcoming the throwaway culture
- fighting planned obsolescence
- making repair truly competitive compared to replacement
- spreading technical skills and knowledge

But the opportunities are just as significant.

Challenges, future of repair
and recommendations



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The right to repair can:

- reduce **waste** and **emissions**
- create **new jobs**
- strengthen **local economies**
- promote more **conscious consumption**

A more sustainable economy is built through everyday choices.

Repairing, reusing and extending the life of products means giving more value to resources... and less space to waste.

Challenges, future of repair
and recommendations



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Policy reflection to strengthen repair culture across Euro-MED regions

Policy reflection to strengthen
repair culture across Euro-MED regions



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This section presents policy recommendations based on REPper focus groups and roundtables about strengthening repair systems and **integrating repair into innovation and sustainability policies** and it is designed to **support policymakers, public authorities, educators, consumer groups, and repair-sector stakeholders**.

REPper, in fact, is a transnational project promoting a stronger culture of repair and reuse across Mediterranean countries. It focuses on improving repair services and sustainable business opportunities, developing green skills, and encouraging consumers to adopt more circular and sustainable behaviours. The project involves **partners from eight countries**, including EU and non-EU **Mediterranean** states.

Policy reflection to strengthen
repair culture across Euro-MED regions



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Stakeholder discussions across countries highlighted that extending product lifespans helps reduce waste and resource consumption while creating local economic opportunities and skilled jobs.

However, repair is still often less convenient and less affordable than replacing products.

Key barriers include regulatory challenges, limited spare parts availability, shortages of repair skills, low consumer confidence, and pricing structures that favor replacement.

Repair can only grow through **coordinated measures combining regulation, incentives, skills development, consumer awareness, community engagement, and tools such as green public procurement**. It is also important the new **EU Directive 2024/1799** on promoting repair, which Member States must implement **by July 2026**, while calling for broader and faster eco-design rules to expand “right to repair” policies across more product categories.

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This document presents results from three complementary stakeholder dialogue formats:

- **Focus groups (2025)** “How to strengthen repair solutions” (public authorities, waste and EPR actors, professional repairers, business associations, civil society, consumer organisations and education actors): main themes are practical and cultural conditions that make repair a “normal” option (skills, trust, convenience, visibility and affordability).
- **Roundtables (2025)** “How to include repair into Smart Specialisation and innovation policies (RIS3)” (national and regional policymakers, S3 experts, SMEs, research/support organisations, civil society and media): main theme is how public policy can support integrated repair ecosystems and finance replicable models.

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- **High-Level Roundtable (2026)** (EU-level panel including the European Commission (DG JUST), standards stakeholders, WEEE actors, civil society and industry representatives, REPper partners): panel validated the main findings and added complementary insights on the implementation of the EU Repair Directive, the eco-design roll-out, market surveillance and consumer information.

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Why repair culture matters for Mediterranean regions

- **Lower resource use**, especially for electronics, textiles and household appliances.
- **Local jobs and resilient small businesses**, since repair is labour-intensive and place-based.
- **Fairer access across the territory**, including rural areas, through networks, shared spaces and mobile solutions where permanent centres are not viable.
- **More informed consumers**, with clearer rights and practical information on warranties, spare parts, repairability and typical costs.

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- **Better-functioning markets**, when durability and repairability are visible at the point of sale and repair can compete fairly.

! Culture change does not happen through awareness alone: it requires a coordinated package of incentives, communication, community engagement, regulation and market conditions.

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Repair Barriers: Stakeholders Perspectives

Economic barriers of repair and hidden costs of replacement

New **low-cost products** seem cheaper and more reliable than repairing, even though their lower quality can mean a shorter lifespan and the environmental and social costs of replacing are not reflected in the price.

To close this gap, they called for **economic incentives** such as VAT reductions and repair vouchers funded by stable schemes supported by public budgets, eco-funds and producer-responsibility mechanisms. Two choices remain under debate: how to fund **vouchers sustainably** over time (producer-responsibility funding versus public budgets) and how far **fiscal measures** should go in discouraging ultra-low-quality products.

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Cultural and behavioural barriers

Consumers are accustomed to **fast consumption** and “replace rather than repair”. Younger generations are more exposed to a fast-consumption model.

Key obstacles include perceived inconvenience (time, effort), fear of hidden costs, limited DIY confidence, and limited awareness of rights and available services.

Educational and awareness activities were widely supported, but stakeholders stressed that **awareness alone is insufficient** unless accompanied by coherent regulation and market conditions.

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Skills shortages, rural gaps and generational renewal

Shortage of qualified technicians, especially in rural and remote areas, was repeatedly identified as a structural challenge

Participants proposed **regional repair hubs**, better coordination between local actors, and hybrid coverage models (local workshops complemented by mobile units or subcontracted networks), while recognising risks to service consistency and quality control.

Repair professions also face low prestige and weak generational renewal. Stakeholders emphasised VET, lifelong learning, certification and repair skills labs, including modern skills (electronics, digital diagnostics) and customer-facing skills.

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Trust, transparency and safety

Low consumer confidence up to now is due to **opaque pricing**, uncertainty about spare parts availability, and confusion around who is a **qualified professional**.

Repairers' directories and future **national/EU repair platforms** should include filters, minimum requirements and user reviews, and still allow community repair formats (repair cafés) to play a complementary role.

Balance professional requirements with the possibility for citizens to **repair independently**.

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Product design, spare parts and the waste-repair interface

Why are many products still **designed to be difficult or even impossible to repair**?

Repairs are often blocked by limited access to spare parts and repair information, especially for older products. Stakeholders called for European standards for certified spare parts (including used parts) to ensure repairs are safe and affordable, and noted the logistical and environmental **burden of storing parts for long periods**, as unused stock can eventually become waste.

Structural mismatch between waste and repair systems: WEEE flows still prioritise collection and recycling over prevention, reuse and repair. To avoid reusable products being destroyed unnecessarily, “**preparation for reuse**” should become the default step **before recycling**.

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Public procurement and regional policy instruments

Many authorities **overlook repair requirements** in public procurement due to uncertainty about how to formulate them in tenders. Stakeholders stressed that the main barrier is often not unwillingness, but misinformation and persistent myths.

Similar gap in **regional policy instruments**: when repair and lifetime extension are not explicitly recognised in regional strategies and funding calls, they are harder to finance, assess and monitor, and risk being diluted under broad “circular economy” objectives.

Finally, price should never be the sole criterion in public procurement.

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Strategy to build repair culture

Repair culture will not emerge from a single intervention: economic incentives, enabling rules, skills development and training, trustworthy information, **community engagement** and market-shaping public action are all usefull.

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Culture, education and awareness



*shift standard behaviour from
“use and replace” to “care and
repair”*

- Run sustained **awareness campaigns** that link repair to concrete household benefits (savings, convenience, quality) and environmental impact (waste prevention).
- Embed repair, maintenance and sustainability across the **education system**.
- Disseminate **video tutorials and step-by-step guides** for simple home repairs; support remote assistance where appropriate.
- Scale citizen-facing formats such as **repair cafés**, repair **festivals** and **community workshops**.

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Trust, transparency and consumer empowerment



*reduce uncertainty and
strengthen consumer confidence
so that choosing repair feels safe,
predictable and fair*

- Increase **transparency** on repair costs, spare parts availability and product durability.
- Promote **repairability labelling and clear point-of-sale information** (French repairability index).
- Promote the broad use of **professional repair directories** by establishing minimum requirements and user feedback features.
- **Improve consumer information on rights** (warranty rules, repair options, availability of spare parts). Consumer associations stressed that extending legal warranty periods is among the most tangible measures for consumers to encourage repair.

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Economic and fiscal incentives



*shift standard behaviour from
“use and replace” to “care and
repair”*

- **Repair vouchers**, starting with priority product categories.
- **Align the fiscal treatment of vouchers** to avoid unintended taxation.
- **Design sustainable funding mixes** (public budgets, eco-funds and EPR) for citizens and repairers.
- **VAT reductions where feasible** to further narrow the price gap between repair and replacement.
- **Keep schemes simple for citizens and repairers** (fast reimbursement, clear eligibility, minimal paperwork).

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Territorial repair ecosystems and infrastructure



ensure equitable access to repair across the territory and strengthen local economies

- Develop **repair hubs** combining training, professional services and public access (e.g., repair cafés).
- Support **Libraries of Things and tool lending**.
- **Balance large repair centres with small local workshops**; avoid over-centralization that could weaken local economies and turn small repairers into mere intermediaries.
- Promote **coordination** between municipalities, repair SMEs, social enterprises, VET providers and community initiatives.

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**Enabling framework:
regulation, ecodesign,
waste systems and GPP**



*remove systemic barriers and
align markets with repair culture*

- Speed up the implementation of sectoral **eco-design** rules and **Digital Product Passport** and expand the product categories covered.
- Introduce **common European standards** for certified spare parts.
- Clarify definitions and responsibilities along the **repair-reuse-waste chain**, including the status of products entering waste collection systems, to avoid the destruction of reusable goods.
- Rebalance **waste policy and contracts** so that prevention, reuse and repair are prioritized alongside collection and recycling.

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**Smart Specialization
and innovation policy
to support repair culture**



*finance practical enablers that
reinforce repair culture (skills
labs, hubs, trusted platforms,
spare-part traceability)*

- **Explicitly recognize repair in RIS3 priorities and action plans**, so it is not diluted under the broader “circular economy” umbrella and link it clearly to territorial cohesion and green jobs.
- **Set monitoring indicators** that capture real repair outcomes, such as product lifetime extension, CO₂/material savings, repair service availability and jobs supported.
- **Enhance the role of local authorities**, as they can stimulate repair culture by organizing repair festivals and events, providing repair infrastructure, and developing partnerships with environmental education centres.

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Conclusion and call to action

Key messages for policymakers

- 1. Make repair economically attractive:** scale up repair voucher schemes with stable, long-term funding (producer responsibility schemes, eco-funds and public budgets), keep delivery simple and predictable for citizens and repairers, and consider VAT reductions where feasible, so repair can genuinely compete with replacement.
- 2. Build trust through transparency and verified professionalism:** make information on repair prices, spare parts availability, repairability and durability easy to access and compare, and strengthen confidence with trusted repairer directories and minimum professional requirements (registration, liability insurance, traceable invoicing, and certification/accreditation where applicable).

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3. **Treat repair as a skills, jobs and territorial access strategy:** address technician shortages and weak generational renewal (especially outside major cities) by strengthening vocational education and training, lifelong learning and repair skills labs, and by supporting local repair ecosystems.
4. **Strengthen the ecodesign framework:** Accelerate eco-design implementation to broaden product coverage. And strengthen market surveillance to guarantee that the same safety, durability and repairability requirements apply to all products sold (including ultra-low-cost imports), preventing market distortions that undermine repair.
5. **Align waste systems with repair and preparation for reuse:** Make preparation for reuse the default before recycling in WEEE systems, including safe spare-part recovery and clearer responsibilities across the repair-reuse-waste chain, so reusable products and components are not unnecessarily destroyed and can re-enter repair and reuse loops.



6. **Use green public procurement to normalise repairability and durability:** contracting authorities often omit repair requirements due to uncertainty and persistent myths. Provide ready-to-use templates, model clauses and training, apply total cost of ownership (not price-only awards), and structure tenders so small repair and service providers can participate.
7. **Make repair investable and measurable in regional policy instruments:** explicitly embed repair and lifetime extension in RIS3 priorities, funding calls and KPIs, so repair is eligible, visible to evaluators and measurable, rather than diluted under broad “circular economy” wording.





ANNEX

Short “good practice” fiches (transferable models)

Challenges, future perspectives
and policy recommendations



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Awareness hubs for consumers



Consumer-facing online hub led by consumer organisations (one-stop information and guidance platform)

- Provides practical guidance when a device breaks: warranty and repair rights, repair and maintenance tips, supports finding spare parts, provides professional experts references, as well as donation, second-hand and recycling routes.
- Reduces friction at the key moment “my device broke” by offering a simple pathway: rights → basic checks → repair options → service access → reuse and recycle.
- Build confidence through practical, trusted advice.
- News and Videos to reinforce repair culture

Example: Altroconsumo [RIPARARE](#) Hub in Impegnati a Cambiare, DECO Proteste Hub [REPARAR](#), and OCU website [REPARA REVIVE](#)

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches
(transferable models)



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Repair festivals as high-visibility behaviour change



- Turns awareness into action, attracts media attention, and creates momentum among local stakeholders.
- Co-host with municipalities and waste prevention actors; use a simple booking system; communicate safety rules; publish a short results note after the event.

Combines a public-facing event with practical formats such as repair cafés, demonstrations by repair professionals and artisans, and interactive activities

Examples: Cuba (Alentejo) event led by DECO; Thessaloniki repair festival followed by a roundtable; *Milano CSR and Innovation Fair Social* with an interactive game on the right to repair followed by a roundtable

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches (transferable models)



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Repair Hubs for local stakeholders and authorities



- Creates a stable governance and coordination space for local repair ecosystems (authorities, repairers, education actors, community initiatives); can be adapted to local context (municipality-led, NGO-led, mixed public–private, community-based).
- Start with a small group of hub members and clear governance; combine a simple online presence with regular public-facing activities (repair cafés or workshops); use accessible locations.

Provides a local point to coordinate and scale repair culture actions: stakeholder dialogues, networking, public-facing activities (repair cafés, workshops, festivals, local training)

Examples: REP.per hub models combining digital and physical activities across partner countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Greece, Italy, Slovenia

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches
(transferable models)



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Community repair cafés as a social practice



- Makes repair visible, normal and social.
- Builds confidence through peer learning.
- Strengthens community ties and can support local micro-economies around repair.
- Partner with municipalities and community centres; define safety rules (especially for electrical items); create a referral route to qualified professionals for complex repairs; track basic results.

Citizens bring broken items; repairs are attempted with volunteer support, and participants learn basic maintenance

Example: Rusko repair café (Bologna)

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches
(transferable models)



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Tool lending and “Libraries of Things”



Members borrow tools needed for maintenance and small repairs, reducing cost barriers and making self-repair feasible

- Addresses a common bottleneck: people want to repair, but lack tools, space or confidence.
- Avoid people to buy object they will use few times, putting these objects in common.
- Create social relations among people who live in the same area. Host in libraries or community hubs; provide short safety guidance; set clear rules on liability, tool maintenance and booking; link to local repair services for more complex cases.

Examples: Leila “library of things” (Bologna); tool lending initiatives discussed in Slovenia

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches
(transferable models)



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Roundtables and repair workshops



Combines in person repair workshops with a public discussion with experts to capture barriers and solutions

- Builds trust, makes repair tangible, helps citizens act, and generates policy-relevant insights grounded in real repair experiences.
- Issue a call one week in advance with a sign-up list so technicians know which devices they will handle; For the expert roundtable, use an active participation format to ensure citizens can speak.

Examples: OCU roundtable preceded by a repair workshop with ANOVO technicians (Madrid); DECO Proteste roundtable followed by a repair café (Cuba, Portugal).

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches
(transferable models)



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Educational webinars for consumers



- Reaches large audiences at low cost, builds confidence on repair, and can directly link awareness to real service options (directories, hubs, repair events).
- Keep sessions short and practical (60-90 minutes), use real-life examples and include a large section for Q&A.

Delivers 1.30h sessions combining practical guidance (DIY repair, spare parts, local repair options), consumer rights (guarantees and the Right to Repair), EU policy developments on circular economy and conscious consumption

Examples: REP.per consumer-facing webinars delivered by OCU and DECO Proteste.

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches (transferable models)



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approaches that can support a repair culture

Moves repair “upstream” to the design stage and makes it measurable at portfolio level.



Integrates eco-design and reparability criteria into product design, using internal performance indicators and dedicated roles to drive reparability

Examples:

MediaWorld: fast in-store repair services: Provides rapid in-store repair services and develops repair-related professional profiles within retail.

Epson: rental and service-based models that reward durability: Uses service-based models (rental) in which the company retains ownership of the product and remains responsible for maintenance, performance and end-of-use management.

Annex: Short “good practice” fiches (transferable models)



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