

# EU, phone makers agree on charging standard

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European Commission Vice President Guenter Verheugen explains a mobile phone agreement during a press conference at the EU Commission building in Brussels, Monday June 29, 2009. The voluntary agreement among some mobile phone manufacturers will standardize phone chargers. (AP Photo/Jim Buell)

(AP) -- No more asking around the office for the right sort of charger. At least that's what European Union and cell phone makers are hoping.

The world's leading mobile phone makers announced Monday that they will ensure that their data-enabled phones and chargers will all work together, as of next year.

EU Industry Commissioner Guenter Verheugen said a standardized [charger](#) will cut costs for manufacturers and reduce the number of chargers thrown away when consumers buy new phones.

Though the agreement applies to the EU, it's likely that the standardization will apply to phones and chargers sold outside the member countries.

[Nokia](#) Corp., Samsung Electronics Co., LG Electronics Inc., [Sony Ericsson](#), [Apple](#) Inc., [Motorola](#) Inc., [Research in Motion](#) Ltd. and NEC Corp. committed to developing a standard for phone charging based on the Micro-USB interface. Together, they account for more than 80 percent of the world market for cell phones.

Several of those companies already make phones that charge through Micro-USB ports, but they don't guarantee that they will work with chargers made by other companies.

"What we are doing here is we are agreeing that any external power supply will be able to charge other manufacturers' phones," said Tony Graziano, technical director for DigitalEurope, which represents digital technology associations and companies that do business in Europe.

This doesn't mean that all new data-enabled phones will come with Micro-USB ports. Graziano said manufacturers can satisfy the terms of the agreement by producing an adapter. Apple, for instance, has consistently used a proprietary connector for its iPhone and could produce an adapter that plugs into the phone to accept a Micro-USB charger.

Bridget Cosgrove, director general of DigitalEurope, said the group is "optimistic" other countries and regions across the world will adopt the same universal charger soon.

Consumer rights groups called for more ambitious plans.

"You could have extended this to different small appliances, such as

MP3 players, small digital cameras and PDAs," said Gabriele Fleischer from the Consumers' Council in Berlin.

Texas Instruments Inc. and Qualcomm Inc., two U.S. companies that make components for cell phones, also signed the agreement.

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