



SIR RemanPulse

N°001

People: 85 % aware, 30 % buy — anatomy of a gap that reman can close

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SIR — Italian Remanufacturing Society

Weekly bulletin of the Italian Remanufacturing Society

TOPIC: PEOPLE

1 - Signal of the week

The *Refurbished over New* study by the Vodafone Institute, carried out by Kantar with the scientific support of the Wuppertal Institute on more than 5,200 consumers in five European countries (March 2025), provides a sharp picture: **85 % of European consumers are familiar with refurbished products, but only 30 % have ever bought one**. However, once they try refurbished, they stay: 81 % say they would buy refurbished again. This is the emblematic figure of a gap — between awareness and action — that also defines the perimeter of opportunity for remanufacturing.

2 - Beneath the surface

The paradox of the circular consumer

The 2026 European consumer is informed, environmentally aware — and paralysed. Data from several independent sources converge and outline a consistent profile: high awareness, low conversion into purchasing behaviour. The latest *Eurobarometer on environmental attitudes* shows that 77 % of Europeans feel a personal responsibility to act against climate change; yet, according to the European Commission's *Consumer Conditions Survey* (2024 edition), 43 % say they did not consider environmental impact in their recent purchases. Willingness to pay more for sustainable products has fallen from 72 % in 2007 to 59 % in 2024 — driven by inflation, rising energy prices and economic uncertainty.

The attitude–behaviour gap in remanufacturing

For remanufactured products, the gap between attitude and behaviour is fuelled by three specific barriers, quantified in the report *The Tipping Point* (BSI / Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, 2025), based on a global survey of more than 8,000 people: 56 % doubt the **quality**, 51 % the **safety**, and 49 % the **reliability** of circular products. Only one third of respondents say they are willing to buy second-hand technology. Research from Penn State University confirms that, for some product categories, consumers perceive remanufactured products as "dirty" or contaminated by previous use — an emotional reaction that persists even in environmentally aware consumers.

Generation Z: the turning point

The data point that breaks the narrative is generational. According to the Vodafone/Kantar study, 37 % of Generation Z have already bought a refurbished smartphone, compared with 18 % of Baby Boomers. 50 % of Gen Z plan their next purchase as refurbished. France leads with 38 % penetration, while Germany is stuck at 25 %. The *Recommerce Barometer 2025* (Kantar, 13 European countries, 7,750 respondents) confirms the trend: 46 % of Europeans have already bought a used smartphone and 55 % say they are willing to do so — up from 52 % in the previous edition. The European refurbished hi-tech market could double from the current 15 billion to 30 billion euro by 2029 (Recommerce/McKinsey estimates).

Greenwashing as a systemic saboteur

While potential demand is growing, greenwashing erodes the trust capital. 91 % of global consumers believe that at least some brands engage in greenwashing. For one third of BSI respondents (32 %), scepticism towards environmental claims is the factor that most inhibits the purchase of circular products. However, 59 % indicate that a credible and verifiable label could change their mind — a crucial finding for remanufacturing, which by nature offers measurability (energy savings up to 85 %, raw material savings up to 100 %, CO₂ reduction of 70–90 %).

Right to Repair as a cultural catalyst

Directive (EU) 2024/1799 — the *Right to Repair* — must be transposed by Member States by **31 July 2026**. Germany has already published its draft implementing law on 15 January 2026. The Directive obliges manufacturers to repair, within reasonable time and cost, the goods listed in Annex II (washing machines, smartphones, vacuum cleaners, etc.) and introduces a 12-month extension of the legal guarantee if the consumer chooses repair instead of replacement. The estimated savings for European consumers: 12 billion euro per year. But its deepest impact is cultural: it legitimises the "repairing consumer" and, with it, the paradigm of multi-lifecycle products — fertile ground for remanufacturing.

Information and trust: operational levers

The European Commission's behavioural study on the circular economy (12,064 participants, 6 countries) has shown that simply providing information on durability and reparability at the point of sale significantly shifts purchasing decisions towards more sustainable products. The OECD, in its working paper on Italy (2024), confirms the existence of the attitude-behaviour gap and proposes pilot behavioural interventions on purchasing, repair and disposal. The Horizon Europe call HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-05, dedicated to consumption patterns and environmental awareness, funds precisely this research frontier. For SIR and remanufacturing companies, the message is clear: remanufactured products do not sell themselves. They need a verifiable communication strategy, leveraging transparency, data and educational storytelling — breaking existing perceptions rather than confirming them.

3 · From the network

Heinz Schandl (Senior Science Leader, CSIRO) — *Consumer psychology in the circular economy*

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/heinz-schandl-5221563b>

Schandl, one of the leading international experts on social metabolism and circular transition, shared in February 2026 an analysis of consumer psychology in the circular economy, highlighting that the notion of "a single type of consumer" is a myth — and that without value and cultural change the transition remains on paper. It is a direct reminder of the need to segment communication strategies also for reman.

Kantar / Vodafone Institute — *Refurbished over New: A Second Chance for Smartphones*

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/kantar_refurbished-over-new-activity-7371435921587458048-_Ycg

The post accompanying the publication of the study on 5,200 Europeans generated significant debate. The key figure — 81 % loyalty to refurbished after the first purchase — suggests that the real game is enabling the first purchase, not securing repeat business. The direct implication for reman: trial policies, returns and extended warranties are the true accelerators.

BSI with Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) — *The Tipping Point: Building Trust in the Circular Economy*

https://www.linkedin.com/posts/bsi_read-the-full-report-here-activity-7361049021211123712-WDIK

The 2025 report, based on 8,000 global interviews and B2B interviews, identifies trust as the "tipping point" for circular adoption: 67 % are motivated by environmental benefits, but 56 % have concerns about quality. 59 % ask for a credible label. For remanufacturing — which by definition guarantees "as good as new" — this is a huge opportunity for competitive differentiation, provided that verifiable certifications are in place.

4 - Our position

Note from the President of SIR

The data presented in this issue describe a European consumer ready to believe in circular products, yet held back by a trust deficit. For remanufacturing, this is both the greatest challenge and the greatest opportunity of 2026.

SIR believes that remanufactured products have a structural competitive advantage: they are measurable, traceable, verifiable. But this advantage remains latent if it is not communicated rigorously. The transposition of Directive 2024/1799 on the right to repair — expected by July 2026 — will open an unprecedented cultural window: for the first time, the European consumer will have the right to demand repair. From there to the conscious choice of a remanufactured product is a short step — if we are able to build the narrative and informational pathway that makes it natural.

As the Italian Remanufacturing Society, we work with our partner universities — from Palermo to Padua, from Naples to Politecnico di Milano — and with the European WGs of the ERC and LightingEurope precisely on this: making reman visible, understandable, desirable.

5 - Not to be missed

- **27 March 2026** — Deadline for transposition of Directive (EU) 2024/825 (*Empowering Consumers for the Green Transition*): new anti-greenwashing rules and consumer information on durability and repairability
- **30 May 2026** — EuAREman 2026 (Palermo, CNR): abstract submission deadline for the 1st Europe–Africa International Workshop on Remanufacturing
- **31 July 2026** — Deadline for transposition of Directive (EU) 2024/1799 (*Right to Repair*): repair obligation for manufacturers, European repair platform, warranty extension
- **27 September 2026** — Entry into application of the Green Transition Directive: harmonised EU label on warranty and durability active at points of sale
- **7–9 October 2026** — EuAREman, Palermo (CNR-ICAR): first Europe–Africa workshop on industrial remanufacturing, organised by SIR, CNR-ICAR and the Scottish Institute for Remanufacturing
- **Horizon Europe Call HORIZON-CL6-2025-01-CIRCBIO-05** — *Consumption patterns and environmental awareness as enablers of transition to circular economy*: funding for research on

consumption behaviours and circular transition

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