

Whirlpool Carinaro, appliance refurbishment to boost circularity

Brussels, 31 January - In September 2022, APPLiA member Whirlpool opened its first refurbishment centre in Italy, in Carinaro. With over one thousand appliances refurbished each month, the initiative aims to close the circular gap and boost the sustainability of products.

The project

Drawing from the experience in the UK, where Whirlpool's recycling and refurbishment centre has operated for over 25 years, the company decided to expand the project further with the opening of the new Italian site looking to **provide consumers with a more sustainable choice for their appliances.**

The refurbishment process starts when products return from the market and arrive at the Carinaro centre. There, they are stored in a dedicated area and analysed by technical experts to be reworked or disposed of, in full compliance with the applicable legislation on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE). After reworking the appliance, electrical and functional tests are performed to ensure the safety and full functionality of the product. This includes running washing or drying cycles, assessing the correct operation of cooling circuits by keeping the refrigerator running for 24 hours, or the correct electrical consumption of an oven, among others. Once the testing is over, the product is ready to be packaged along with the instruction manual and all accompanying materials, and to be finally reintroduced to the Market. The whole process takes between 10 to 15 days.

All refurbished products come with a 2-year warranty on product functionality, excluding aesthetic components. If the product becomes irreparable within the 2-year warranty period, it will be replaced with a similar product, or if unavailable, with an equivalent product.

Over one thousand products are refurbished each month in Carinaro, showing the scale of this sustainability effort.

The UK Refurbishment Centre

The very first Whirlpool's recycling and refurbishment centre has been in operation in Peterborough for over 25 years. Only in the last decade, the site counted over 500,000 refurbished appliances out of which over one thousand were donated to local charities and communities.

Overall, repair and refurbishment practices help keep the product in the loop for as long as possible, reducing the environmental footprint and cost on consumers.