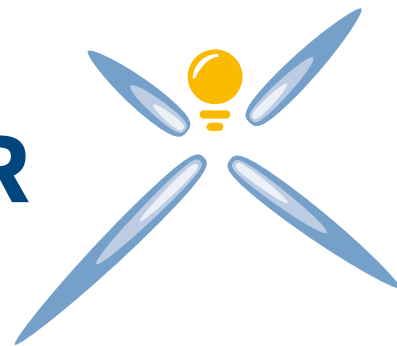


Putting consumers at the heart of EU energy policy



The Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) is working hard for consumers, empowering them to engage in and benefit from the new smarter energy markets

CEER



CEER champions consumer interests

What is CEER?

The Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) is the voice of Europe's national energy regulatory authorities (NRAs). NRAs oversee the efficient functioning of energy markets. Regulators have been given significant responsibilities under EU energy legislation to protect and empower customers.

Working at European level through CEER, a not-for-profit association, regulators have been championing consumer interests for many years.

Why does CEER champion consumer interests?

So that customers across Europe can benefit from competitive pressure on prices, better quality services and greater choice.

Our work

Consumer empowerment and building trust in the markets is central to all our work, whether it is:

- monitoring and enabling markets
- developing recommendations to improve market services and consumer experiences
- facilitating smart grids and demand side management
- strengthening the voice of consumers and consumer organisations in energy policy development
- conducting market monitoring to ensure that Europe's energy markets are working for consumers
- advancing our 2020 Vision for Europe's Energy Customers

2020 Vision for Europe's Energy Customers

In 2012, CEER developed with stakeholders and consumer bodies a 2020 Vision for Europe's Energy Customers.

Our Vision is for a European energy sector that puts customers first.

Four so-called “RASP” principles underpin our Vision:



These principles must be the touchstone of the Internal Energy Market so that it delivers tangible benefits to customers.

Implementation – progress so far

The Vision has won widespread support from 16 key EU energy stakeholders and the European Commission. Now the focus is on implementation. CEER, for its part, launched a 3-year rolling Action Plan which sets out what regulators are committed to doing to help make the Vision a reality.

Our approach recognises that the Vision is not static – it must evolve to meet developing challenges. Realising the Vision requires a common effort by all market actors. Regulators, policy makers, consumer bodies and industry must work together to make the Vision a reality.

CEER is working to place consumers at the heart of EU energy policy – here's how

We put in place **tools** that regulators can use and **rules** to facilitate customer engagement in (and fair treatment by) the energy market.

Retail market design

CEER has developed forward-thinking guidelines to improve market services and consumer experiences including on:

- switching and billing practices
- data management to improve retail market functioning
- standards for distribution services (connection, disconnection, maintenance)

These recommendations (although voluntary) are often picked up and pursued in European Commission initiatives or lead to changes in practices within the energy sector that benefit consumers. For example, removing obstacles to supplier switching can help customers obtain better deals. We are also looking at future market models including the changing role of Distribution System Operators (DSOs) as markets become more complex.

Demand Response

This is about allowing customers to manage their energy, such as when they want to adjust their usage, produce their own power or even sell it back to the system. The demand side of the market is a core part of CEER's work.

CEER has developed advice on:

- the take-off of demand response with smart meters
- demand-side flexibility

Market monitoring

Regulators are vested with powers to ensure energy consumer rights are effective and enforced. Periodic monitoring is important to test if markets are functioning in the consumers' interest.

CEER:

- has developed common indicators that NRAs can use at a national level
- undertakes various monitoring exercises including (jointly with ACER) the annual ACER-CEER Report on the Results of Monitoring the Internal Electricity and Natural Gas Markets



Complaint handling

EU law requires complaint handling standards to be in place and for customers to have recourse to alternative dispute settlement. More efficient complaint handling procedures can help suppliers improve their customer service and empower customers.

CEER has:

- developed guidance on complaint handling, reporting and classification
- conducted analysis of customer complaint data across Europe



Smart metering

New types of meters are being rolled out across Europe, which can offer enhanced communication and control of consumption data. Regulators developed advice on the kinds of services and functions this new technology should deliver to ensure that, when installed, smart meters work in ways which benefit consumers.

- CEER has reviewed smart meter roll-out and the extent to which Member States and National Regulatory Authorities are applying the regulators' 2011 recommendations



Price comparison tools


In competitive retail markets, consumers should have a choice of energy supplier. Price comparison websites or services can help customers to compare offers and choose the right deal.

- CEER has developed guidelines on principles and features for price comparison tools to simplify their structure and improve transparency



2020 Vision for Energy Customers

The Vision seeks to ensure markets deliver reliability, affordability, simplicity, and that they protect and empower customers. CEER has an Action Plan of concrete work and measures to empower customers to actively engage in the market.



Strengthening the voice of consumers

With smart meters and smart grids, CEER believes that customers will be much more engaged in energy markets than they are today. Consumers will become prosumers, producing as well as consuming energy.

“**CEER** strives to make sure that the voice of consumers is clearly heard.”

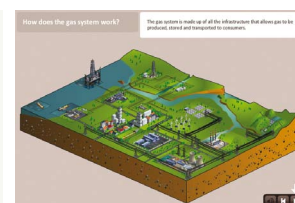
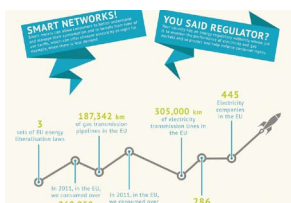
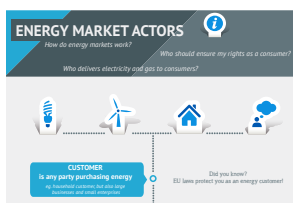
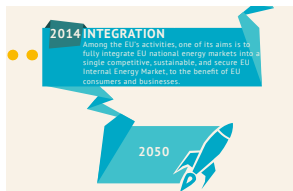
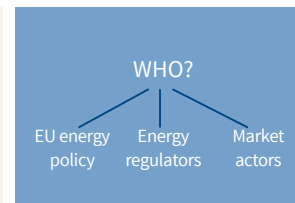
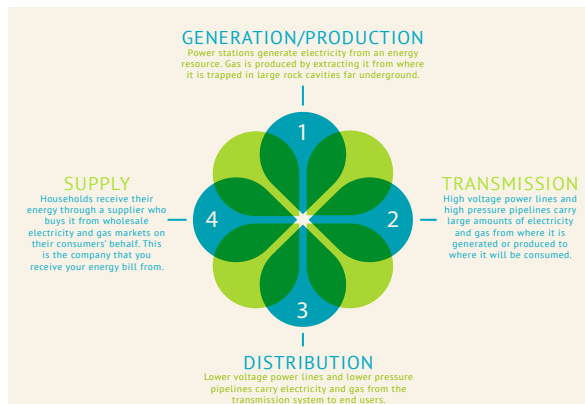
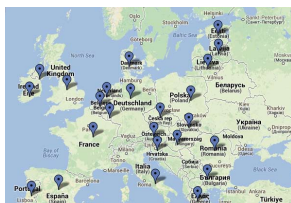
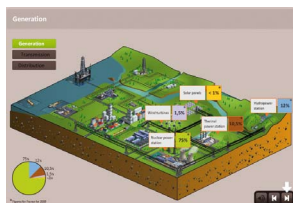
Hence, in view of consumers' more active role in energy markets, CEER is working in a variety of ways to strengthen the voice of consumers.

- In our continuing efforts to **reach out to national consumer bodies** to improve our understanding of their perspective, we are formulating advice on how to **enhance the role that consumer bodies play in the regulatory process**.
- CEER proactively **helps consumers participate more fully in EU energy debates**. Our many workshops and events are an important means of engaging in dialogue with stakeholders. This is particularly true for consumer bodies who have repeatedly told us that they find it easier to advocate their position at an event than to respond in writing to public consultations.
- The annual **CEER Customer Conference** is a unique opportunity for consumer bodies to come together to discuss key energy issues with representatives of the EU Institutions, regulators and energy industry.
- We try to communicate clearly, sharing expertise more effectively and widely, including through our **dedicated consumer webpage** which seeks to make energy easy and our **Citizens' Q&A memos** which accompany each of our technical reports.
- As well as contributing substantive work to the annual **Citizens' Energy Forum (London Forum)**, a forum which we strongly encouraged the European Commission to set up back in 2008, we listen carefully to what consumer bodies say about their challenges and needs.

Do you want to know more about energy customer issues?

Access to information is key

- CEER produces a large number of position papers and fact-based reports. These are posted on our website (www.ceer.eu) along with videos, press releases, monthly online newsletters, annual reports, presentations and much more.
- All technical reports now contain a customer section explaining the relevance of the topics to consumers.
- Reports are accompanied by a Citizen Q&A memo, drafted in a non-technical way.



Want to know more?

Visit our website www.ceer.eu

1. The dedicated energy customer section of the website is packed with information presented in simple, visual and interactive ways such as games and jargon-free factsheets.
2. Visit our interactive map of Europe for links to your national energy points of contact.
3. Subscribe online (it's free) and receive our free monthly newsletter.

CEER Secretariat



Cours Saint-Michel 30a, box F, B-1040 Brussels



+32 2 788 7330



brussels@ceer.eu



www.ceer.eu



twitter.com/CEERenergy



Give us your feedback!

We would be pleased to receive your feedback and suggestions on how we provide customer information. If you have any useful tips or practical experiences to share, please don't hesitate to drop us a line or go online and share. We're on Twitter too!