

[Energy regulators launch with BEUC the 2030 Vision for Energy Consumers: a call to action to ASPIRE!](#)

The new [CEER-BEUC Vision 2030 for Energy Consumers](#) was the focus of yesterday's 2020 Customer Conference of the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER). This year's online conference began with the thoughts of five young voices, bringing fresh insights from across Europe as young energy consumers looking for an energy sector that corresponds to a sustainable future. In opening the event, **CEER President Annegret Groebel** remarked that *"Despite this annual CEER outreach event not taking place in person due to Covid-19 restrictions, the virtual format has pushed us to be more creative in engaging with an even broader audience."*

CEER Customers and Retail Markets Working Group Vice Chair Natalie McCoy introduced the CEER-BEUC Vision 2030 for Energy Consumers, outlining the ASPIRE principles for all consumers (**A**ffordability, **S**implicity, **P**rotection, **I**nclusiveness, **R**eliability and **E**mpowerment), which have been renewed and enhanced to be future-proofed for the energy transition to a sustainable and carbon neutral society; underpinned by a commitment that no one is left behind.

CEER Customers and Retail Markets Working Group Chair Anne Vadasz Nilsson moderated a high-level session on the 2030 Vision, bringing together the perspective of co-sponsor BEUC, European Parliament Members and a youth adviser to the European Commission:

BEUC Executive Director Monique Goyens stated that *"BEUC is proud to work with CEER to develop and support these principles, which bring in a stronger support for sustainability than the original Vision, as well as social justice via the addition of the principle on inclusiveness. Consumers should be able to heat and cool their homes by 2030 in an affordable and sustainable way, considering the context of 34 million consumers in Europe who cannot afford to do so now."*

MEP Maria Spyraki focused on information, engagement and innovation toward sustainable and affordable energy. *"It is of paramount importance to engage with consumers on new ways to consume energy – e.g. expanding their access to charging points for electric vehicles or providing information and substantial funding for a renovation wave to save money for consumers, particularly those suffering from energy poverty."*

MEP Dragoş Pîslaru discussed how the Covid-19 recovery strategy can contribute to the push for a more sustainable energy sector. He noted that it is a historic moment at EU level to take this opportunity to change things for the better in transforming the economy/society: *"It is important that the changes are done by the people and with the people. This means ensuring that the vulnerable do not suffer. Funding will be key. If we leave people behind, no technological process can be considered a success."*

Youth climate activist and special **adviser to EC Vice-President Frans Timmermans, Adélaïde Charlier** stressed the urgency of the climate change issue: *"...doing nothing will have a huge cost for the world. Getting to a successful transition means bringing everyone along, in a fair way: green energy must be the affordable choice."*

The second part of today's conference allowed 12 different stakeholders to give short reactions to the individual ASPIRE principles. **Linda Steg, Professor of Environmental Psychology, University of Groningen**, launched the session with a reflection on what motivates consumers to act sustainably. More altruistic and biosphere-conscious values are key to this. *"People tend to underestimate others' motivation on these two points, in turn demotivating themselves. Understanding that can spur yourself and others to act."*

Some reactions to the ASPIRE principles:

Sorcha Edwards, Secretary General of Housing Europe, noted the link between **affordable** housing and affordable energy. As regards delivering **simplicity**, Bruno Liebhaber, Director General of CERRE, underlined that reforms must be done not only with consumers in mind, but directly with consumers so that they can understand and be empowered. Frauke Thies, Executive Director of SmartEn, stated that it must be easy for consumers to make the most of their energy consumption with services and technology; making it as simple as possible for consumers to choose the best offer for them. Commenting on **protection**, Petra Čakovská of the Slovak Consumer Protection Society (SOS) warned that many energy consumers in her region of Europe still lack basic protections, such as from illegal commercial practices or having understandable energy bills. Paul Voss, Managing Director, Euroheat & Power, noted the importance of local conditions and policies in ensuring **inclusiveness**. On **reliability and trust**, James Watson, Secretary General of Eurogas, emphasised that consumers must be able to trust green certificate systems for renewable gases to enable the energy transition. Meanwhile, Martin Salamon, Chief Counsel, Danish Consumer Council, emphasised that **empowerment** includes the importance of system operators being properly regulated, including their handling of large amounts of consumer data, in order to ensure competitive markets that protect consumers. REScoop, E.DSO, Manchester Urban Institute, Eurelectric and National Energy Ombudsmen Network (NEON) also provided insightful interventions.

During the closing Q&A, the speakers shared some ideas on how to put these principles into action. A recording of the entire conference can be viewed [here](#).

What's next?

CEER and BEUC will bring their Vision to the 12th Citizens' Energy Forum (Dublin Forum) and expand the discussion on which effective policies and frameworks must be put in place in the next ten years to ensure that consumer rights are promoted and protected, whilst delivering on our climate objectives.

Key CEER publications coming up this autumn with a consumer focus include the Retail and Consumer Protection Volume of the ACER/CEER Market Monitoring Report and a new status review for CEER's Roadmap to 2025 for Well-Functioning Retail Energy Markets.

Brussels, 21 October 2020

Ends – see Notes to Editors

Notes to Editors:

1. The Council of European Energy Regulatory (CEER) is the voice of Europe's national energy regulators. Its Members and Observers are the independent statutory bodies responsible for energy regulation in 39 European countries. CEER, based in Brussels, deals with a broad range of energy issues including retail markets and consumers, distribution networks, smart grids, flexibility, sustainability and international cooperation. Further information on the CEER website: www.ceer.eu
2. CEER and the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) have renewed our Vision for Energy Consumers with a horizon to 2030. Looking ahead to 2030 and the EU's 2050 sustainability and climate neutrality objectives, CEER and BEUC envision a future where effective policies and frameworks ensure that consumer rights are promoted and protected, whilst delivering these objectives. The core principles of our original 2020 Vision – reliability, affordability, simplicity, protection and empowerment – are timeless and universal, and now reflected in Europe's energy laws. The new [CEER-BEUC 2030 Vision for Energy Consumers](#) includes our newest principle, inclusiveness, to ensure no one is left behind in the energy transition. The renewal and expansion of our core principles are driven by the deep transformation of our society and economy towards a decarbonised and sustainable future.
3. BEUC is the umbrella group for 44 independent consumer organisations from 32 countries. BEUC's main role is to represent them to the EU institutions and defend the interests of European consumers. BEUC's acronym originates from its French name, 'Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs'. BEUC's daily work involves making sure the EU takes policy decisions that improve the lives of consumers. This covers a range of topics including competition, consumer rights, digital rights, energy, redress and enforcement, financial services, food, health, safety, sustainability and trade policy. Further information on the BEUC website: www.beuc.eu

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