

CEER 2013 Consumer Conference on Energy Customers

Break-out session C: Protection and empowerment Involvement of consumer organisations in the regulatory process

Introduction

One of the principles that characterises the CEER-BEUC *2020 Vision for Europe's energy customers* is **protection and empowerment**. This principle aims to ensure access to energy supplies, and to guard against unfair commercial practices and unsatisfactory outcomes, recognising the diverse needs of customers, in particular the most vulnerable in society. It also relates to the possibility for consumers to participate in competitive energy markets: for customers to be engaged, to take choices and to exercise their rights as energy customers, based on trust in and knowledge of how the energy sector operates.

This break-out session focuses on exchanging experiences and identifying good practices to bring the consumer perspective into the energy regulatory process.

CEER's work

Bringing to life the CEER customer strategy and the principles in the Vision requires, among other things, decision-making processes based on widespread consultation and involvement of interested and affected parties. For the regulatory process to benefit customers, the crucial views of consumers can be channelled through their representative organisations.

CEER is currently undertaking a status review on how consumer organisations interact with National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) with the objective of identifying current good practices and positive experiences that could help encourage other effective partnerships.

The Panel

This panel brings together representatives from consumer organisations and NRAs. The debate will focus on the different experiences from the Member States represented. The objective will be to identify existing channels of cooperation between consumer representatives and regulatory authorities. In addition, this should provide a better understanding of how regulatory authorities can empower and protect consumers by listening to them when developing regulatory texts at national level.

Break-out C is moderated by Mr Dirk Van Evercooren, Chair of CEER's Consumer and Empowerment Task Force, with the participation of:

- Mr Roberto Malaman, Italian NRA
- Mr Benny Borg Bonello, Consumers' Association (Malta)
- Ms Heidi Ranscombe, Consumer Futures, UK
- Mr Rimantas Zabarauskas, Lithuanian Consumer Association