

**COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN ENERGY REGULATORS (CEER)
CONFERENCE
BUILDING A 2020 VISION FOR EUROPE'S ENERGY CUSTOMERS**

ALBERT BORCHETTE CENTRE

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SPEECH

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here today to represent Commissioner Dalli and on his behalf I would like both to thank the organisers of this conference for their kind invitation and to congratulate the Energy Regulators on showing leadership and commitment in their engaging initiative to build a vision for Europe's energy customers.

In these times of economic difficulty, to develop a vision for energy and consumers in the European Union Internal Energy Market is a truly ambitious and challenging task which deserves praise and support.

Ladies and Gentlemen, your initiative to present a 2020 Vision for Europe's Energy Consumers is most welcome, particularly because it comes from the authorities that will be primarily responsible for making energy markets work.

And the Commission is, of course, very keen to see that energy markets work also and in particular, to the benefit of consumers.

Energy is a key sector – a basic resource for our daily lives and our welfare, as well as for the economy. How we produce and consume energy has a direct impact on the planet, and also on our pockets.

The importance of energy for consumers is highlighted in the Commission's new proposal for a "European Consumer Agenda".

The Consumer Agenda, adopted last month, sets out the Commission's strategy for the years to come, and is built around four main objectives.

- First, to further strengthen consumer safety, for products, services and food;
- Second, to enhance knowledge for both consumers and traders;

- Third, to step up enforcement and to secure redress.
and
- Fourth and finally, to make sure that consumer rights and key policies are in line with current technological and societal developments.

Energy is one of the five key sectors in the Consumer Agenda.

And we know that we need to establish the right conditions to enable energy consumers to feel confident and empowered so that they can take an active role in electricity and gas markets.

With this in mind, your engagement to work towards better, faster and full implementation of the consumer provisions of the Third Energy Package is key.

We need to take action to activate energy consumers as their choices matter. More than 30% of all electricity in the EU is consumed by households.

The Commission is striving to prepare for the Europe of the future. It seeks to make sure that Europe remains 'ahead of the curve' on energy use and energy.

But together with European legislation, we need of course, concrete input at national level.

And we also need to build on the good practices and experience from 'early starters' in the EU electricity and gas markets.

In particular, we need to:

- disseminate and replicate best practices;
- avoid repeating mistakes; and
- wherever we can look for synergies.

With these aims in mind, we have the London Citizens' Energy Forum and within it several Working Groups run by the Commission.

For the Commission and for Regulators it is crucial to take action to improve markets both in the long term, but also to deliver concrete results to make everyday lives better, simpler and easier for all European citizens and consumers.

To this end, our working groups, with the participation of some of you, focus on:

- energy billing;
- complaint handling and alternative dispute resolution;
- transparency in prices and offers in retail energy markets; and
- vulnerable consumers in the energy sector.

I think we would all agree that we need:

- correct, clear, concise and comparable bills;
- inexpensive, simple and rapid ADR, in energy as in other sectors;
- contracts, offers and marketing practices that do not confuse or mislead consumers; and
- careful treatment of those energy consumers that cannot pay their energy bills.

The multi-stakeholder working groups that have already concluded their work have delivered high quality reports of use to both European institutions and to national policy makers.

I would like to encourage you to make maximum use of the recommendations in the reports in your work at national level.

But beyond legislation and the ad hoc working groups, initiatives such as today's event that allow us to consider and discuss the challenges, the expectations, the priorities and the possible solutions for energy consumers, deserve praise and support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to close by simply saying that we need to maintain the momentum – not only to deliver economic success but also to deliver true benefits to **all** European citizens and consumers.

Thank you very much.

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