

Europe's energy markets are delivering benefits for households, but more progress is needed

- **Falling electricity and gas prices for households, and increased switching**
- **CEER works to empower and protect consumers**
- **PEER to PEER collaboration of consumer rights enforcers to strengthen EU consumer rights**

Europe's energy markets are delivering more benefits for households was welcome news at today's [2017 Customer Conference](#) of the Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER)¹.

Falling electricity and gas prices for households

Regulators (ACER and CEER) market monitoring² shows that electricity and gas retail prices fell in the EU last year for both household and industrial consumers. European households paid 8.4% less for their gas in 2016 compared to 2015. Households also saw the first electricity price decrease since 2008, of 2.1% last year. These reductions are being driven by lower wholesale energy prices are better market functioning.

A new [CEER Retail Markets Monitoring Report](#)³, launched today, monitors retail markets across Europe. It shows that, although we are seeing new suppliers, retail energy markets in some European countries remain highly concentrated. Furthermore, regulated electricity prices persist in 11 countries for electricity and 12 countries for gas. Household customer switching rates in electricity have increased from an average of 5.0% in 2011 to 6.4% in 2016, and for gas from on average from 5.5% in 2011 to 6.4% in 2016. However, this masks a wide variation among countries. Overall more needs to be done to encourage consumers to switch and benefit from liberalised retail energy markets.

The new CEER President, **Garrett Blaney** stated

“Energy consumers are seeing increased benefits from competition but still face many problems. CEER is pushing for pro-competitive, pro-consumer Clean Energy legislation that allows consumers to engage in energy markets as individuals or collectively, while their rights are protected.”

CEER works to empower and protect consumers

With our customer-focus, CEER works to iron out the problems consumer face. In 2016, CEER published a report on commercial barriers to supplier switching⁴. Regulators are calling for supplier switching to be much faster (24 hours) to help boost switching rates, for bills to be clear and simple, and for reliable comparison tools.

CEER will soon publish an update on its (2012) advice on comparison tools in the light of new developments. CEER is also working on new and improved metrics to monitor retail markets and consumer rights, on cybersecurity, and on good practices on customer-driven smart technology development.

PEER to PEER collaboration of consumer rights enforcers to strengthen EU consumer rights

CEER is also leading an initiative (called [PEER](#)) to strengthen the enforcement of European consumer rights by improving cross-authority collaboration of relevant public authorities with consumer-related responsibilities and liaising with stakeholders across different sectors.

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Ends (see Notes for Editors)

Notes for Editors:

1. The Council of European Energy Regulatory (CEER) is the voice of Europe’s national energy regulators. Its 36 members and observers are the independent statutory bodies responsible for energy regulation at national level. Visit www.ceer.eu for reports and much more.
2. See the joint [Annual Report on the Results of Monitoring the Internal Electricity and Natural Gas Markets](#)¹, published by the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) and CEER in October 2017. This so-called ACER-CEER “Market Monitoring Report (MMR) consists of four volumes, focusing respectively on: the Electricity Wholesale Market, the Gas Wholesale Market, the Electricity and Gas Retail Markets, and Customer Protection and Empowerment.
3. The [CEER Retail Market Monitoring Report](#) (November 2017) covers issues such as market structures in Europe and concentration levels, customer switching activities and regulated prices. The average switching rate in the European retail electricity markets for household customers increased from 5.0% to 6.4% (non-weighted), when comparing the 2011 and 2016 levels with a decline being observed in 2015 (5.9% non-weighted). Among countries, external switching rates of household customers differ significantly. The comparison between the latest developments in 2016 and the five preceding years does not show a clear trend for external switching. In some countries external switching rates for electricity and for gas household customers in 2016 were higher than the average from 2011 to 2015, while in some countries it is the other way around.
4. The 2016 [CEER Report on commercial barriers to supplier switching in EU retail energy markets](#) identifies two potential barriers to switching:
 - (1) Customer perception whereby the customer perceives insufficient monetary gain, a complex switching process, or has a lack of trust in alternative suppliers; and
 - (2) Commercial contract conditions such as unjustified termination fees and value-added services that lead to customer “lock-in” where the customer bears a cost in switching.
5. The Partnership for the Enforcement of European Rights (PEER) is an initiative of CEER to enhance cross-sectoral and cross-authority cooperation at EU level to benefit consumers. PEER aims to bring together different regulators (telecoms, energy, financial etc.) and other authorities (e.g. Ombudsmen, Consumer Protection Authorities, Consumer Associations, Data Protection Authorities) to strengthen the enforcement of European consumer rights.



See the [PEER platform on the CEER website](#) for the exchange of good practices (e.g. case studies, guidelines developed by regulators, lessons on bundled products etc).