



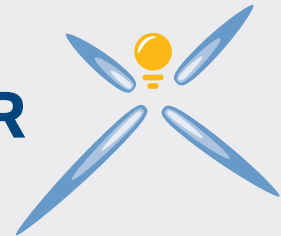
PEER to PEER collaboration on consumer rights

The Partnership for the Enforcement
of European Rights (PEER)

Providing consistent consumer rights
solutions in complex markets

CEER

Council of European
Energy Regulators



What is PEER?

The Partnership for the Enforcement of European Rights (PEER) is an initiative, led by Europe's energy regulators, to strengthen the enforcement of European consumers' rights through enhanced inter-authority cooperation, at EU level, of relevant public entities with consumer-related responsibilities.

PEER brings together interested authorities responsible for protecting and enforcing European consumers' rights across a range of sectors, including regulators (e.g. energy, telecommunications, financial, energy, etc.); consumer protection authorities; data protection authorities; consumer bodies; ombudsmen and Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) entities; and competition authorities.

Why a need for PEER collaboration?

Consumer markets are increasingly intertwined: products and services are delivered in combination, software is embedded in products and more and more devices are connected to the internet. Ever-growing complexity means that the traditional sectoral responses are no longer sufficient to provide adequate protection and supervision, creating regulatory uncertainties and enforcement gaps.

Increasingly, energy companies also sell “bundled” services, such as an appliance maintenance service contract or a telecoms subscription.

If something goes wrong with the latter, to whom should the consumer turn – the energy regulator, the telecoms regulator, the ombudsman or the consumer protection authority?

With digitalisation, future homes are expected to be not only more energy efficient but also smarter. Adding smartness to people’s homes can indeed provide multiple benefits to consumers – through the ability to remotely control various appliances and devices within the house – to control their energy usage more efficiently without spending too much time thinking about it.

But what if something goes wrong? Is the regulatory framework ready to handle consumer questions and disputes? For instance, what if your smart fridge caused a fire? Who is liable – the fridge manufacturer, the software provider, the energy supplier or the telecoms company?

Or what if the data collected by your smart meter has been breached. **Who is to blame?** The energy company, the producer of the smart meter, the producer of the software embedded in the smart meter or the party processing the data?

And who is in charge? The data protection authority, the energy regulator, the consumer protection authority or the ombudsman?

These are the questions we seek to address in PEER – by bringing to the table the various public authorities charged with handling such situations.

What are the objectives and the mission of PEER?

PEER aims to help deliver Europe's Digital Single Market, Consumer, and Energy Union objectives across various sectors.

The ultimate objective is to benefit consumers: to deepen understanding of cross-sectoral issues and contribute to facilitating consistent consumer rights enforcement generally.

PEER cross-sectoral and cross-authority collaboration on issues such as smart meters, the Internet of Things, data privacy and protection, cyber security, bundled products and ADR will benefit consumers.

"To help protect, empower and engage European consumers through the collaboration of relevant authorities with consumer-related responsibilities."



What are the PEER deliverables?

PEER's activities are focused on building a community of public authorities and relevant EU agencies committed to improving together the enforcement of European consumers' rights.

PEER's immediate activities focus on: :

- raising awareness of the need for more cooperation between authorities, both at EU and at national level
- organising PEER events on cross-cutting issues (e.g. Internet of Things, bundled products, cyber security) that raise challenges to different regulators and consumer rights enforcers.
- building an online platform for the sharing of good practices (e.g. case studies and guidelines on enforcement) that help consistent consumer enforcement generally.

A mid-term activity could potentially involve working with the European Commission on:

- developing common principles for the enforcement of rights that are partially covered by the different public authorities. An example could be guidelines on bundled products;
- training for sectoral regulators on general consumer law; and
- mapping the different regulatory authorities and their associations in the EU and its Member States.



Who can join PEER?

PEER is a voluntary partnership of interested sectoral regulators and consumer rights enforcers.

Membership of PEER is free, flexible and informal.



WHO CAN ATTEND PEER EVENTS?

- Sectoral regulators (e.g. telecoms, financial etc.)
- Data protection authorities
- Consumer protection authorities
- Competition authorities
- Consumer associations
- Ombudsmen and ADR entities
- European Commission
- European Agencies

What future for PEER?

PEER started on a pilot basis, in 2017, on the initiative of the European Energy Regulators (CEER), in the context of market developments that burst the traditional sectoral bubbles on which regulatory supervision is based.

PEER is the first initiative to promote a consistent enforcement landscape within the EU.

The European Commission and several EU agencies (e.g. ACER and ENISA) as well as the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and the Network of Energy Ombudsmen and ADR bodies (NEON) support PEER's objective of cross-authority collaboration in the consumer interest.

We warmly invite relevant supervisory authorities (such as the data protection authorities, the consumer protection authorities, the product safety authorities, financial regulators, the telecom ombudsmen etc.) and their European representatives to work with us.

The ultimate aim is to provide consumers and businesses with a consistent regulatory framework that helps consumer enforcement generally.



Interested in PEER?

PEER events (and onward sharing of lessons learned) allow regulators from different sectors and consumer rights enforcers access to case studies and guidelines that can help as new consumer cases arise.

@ Visit the PEER section of the CEER website
(www.ceer.eu)

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For reports and much more, visit our website www.ceer.eu

1. The dedicated energy customer section seeks to make energy easy (infographics, jargon-free Citizen Q&A memos, etc.)
2. Check out our calendar of events and of CEER public consultations.
3. Subscribe online (it's free) and receive our monthly newsletter.

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