



Strategy 2026—2029

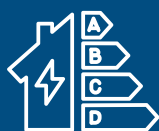
“Ensuring regulatory stability  
and citizen engagement  
amidst change to reach  
the decarbonisation goals  
efficiently”

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# Abstract

This document presents the Council of European Energy Regulators' (CEER's) Strategy for 2026-2029 "Ensuring regulatory stability and citizen engagement amidst change to reach the decarbonisation goals efficiently" (the Strategy).

The Strategy builds on CEER's long-standing commitment to empower consumers and foster well-functioning, resilient markets by reaffirming the importance of regulatory independence, collaboration, and the effective implementation of existing frameworks. In response to evolving megatrends, the Strategy identifies three strategic priorities:

**01**

## **Optimising market-oriented solutions to deliver best results for consumers and the energy system**

- Emphasizing the importance of market mechanisms
- Optimising existing infrastructure
- Incentivising efficient investment in grid expansion

**02**

## **Empowering and protecting consumers, while promoting affordability and accessibility**

- Empowering and protecting consumers
- Monitoring the emergence of new actors and services

**03**

## **Deepening the Integration of a Decarbonised Energy System**

- Supporting security of supply and market resilience
- Facilitating decarbonisation and gas-power system integration
- Encouraging efficient infrastructure use and future-proof investment
- Promoting regulatory clarity and innovation



# Note from the President

In this CEER Strategy “Ensuring regulatory stability and citizen engagement amidst change to reach the decarbonisation goals efficiently” CEER sets out its vision and mission as well as its strategic priorities for the years 2026–2029.

We have built on the CEER Strategy 2022–2025 as the main pillars remain valid. However, we have updated them in the light of the geopolitical challenges affecting our regulatory work and also taken on board the lessons learnt from the energy crisis. This led to the emphasis of regulatory stability amidst change. At the same time we are well aware of the need to be agile and respond to the changing environment ensuring the energy transition is supported by adaptive regulation. Regulators need to address the risk of decreasing public acceptance through active engagement and transparent communication with all actors. As in the current Strategy the consumer is in the centre of our regulation.

CEER aims to ensure that the energy transition is progressing efficiently and fairly moving to an integrated, flexible, sustainable and decarbonised energy system providing benefits to all European citizens and the economy as a whole.

**Annegret Groebel**

CEER PRESIDENT





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# Introduction

The European energy sector is in the midst of its largest ever transformation process, shaped by geopolitical, economic and technological shifts that redefine the way energy is produced, distributed and consumed.

The coming years will be marked by **accelerated decarbonisation, affordability concerns, digital transformation and increasing complexity in market governance**. These dynamics necessitate a robust and adaptive regulatory framework that ensures energy security, consumer protection and well-functioning markets.

The **energy crisis of 2022–2023** underscored the need for swift regulatory responses to market disruptions. To counter the price crisis, **emergency legislation** was rapidly enacted at both **EU and national levels**. This experience has reinforced the importance of **regulatory agility and coordination** in crisis situations, ensuring

that measures are both effective and proportionate while not losing sight of the need for predictability of regulatory actions. However, such responses can only be successful if solid groundwork – including coordination mechanisms and crisis preparedness – is established during non-crisis times. It is this prior preparation that enables regulators and policymakers to act quickly, decisively and responsibly when emergencies arise.

The scope of powers and duties exercised by or delegated to regulatory authorities continues to gradually expand, beyond the standard energy regulatory agenda. **Regulatory independence** remains a fundamental prerequisite for effective regulation based on the impartial





and objective assessment of the energy sector's needs. In light of recent developments, it has become more critical than ever. Equally, we highly value the significant added benefit of close **collaboration between NRAs**, as effective cooperation and sharing of experience strengthen regulatory consistency, enhance market oversight and foster best practices across jurisdictions, contributing to the development of the European internal energy market which has proven its value to consumers and businesses in the last twenty years.

The **2024 Electricity Market Design** and the **Gas Decarbonisation Packages** strengthened consumer protection provisions and measures to enhance the functioning of the internal energy market. They are also geared at enabling and accelerating the energy transition. Against this backdrop, a **consumer-centric energy system** is fundamental to understanding and responding to consumers' needs, including, in particular, affordability throughout this process. Furthermore, the success of the **energy transition and the achievement of an efficient and decarbonised energy system** depend on active and engaged consumers. At the same time, an increasing share of intermittent renewable energy sources requires adequate measures to ensure **system security**. The energy system must be designed to serve consumers and businesses efficiently, balancing affordability and accessibility while addressing the need **for efficient grid investments**. Efficient costs must be allocated fairly between **all market participants**, including decentralised generation, to ensure competitiveness

and affordability. Regulatory frameworks should reflect this interdependence, **fostering consumer engagement in well-functioning markets and an integrated energy system**. Ensuring that consumer rights and protection are safeguarded and adapted as markets evolve is a vital priority for regulators, as underlined by the ASPIRE principles in CEER and BEUC's 2030 Vision for Energy Consumers.

Achieving a balanced energy system requires a regulatory approach that simultaneously fosters **competitiveness**, ensures **sustainability** and safeguards **security of supply**. These three pillars are interconnected, with each influencing the **stability** and **affordability** of the energy transition and the protection of Europe's energy citizens leaving no one behind. Regulators must create conditions and provide incentives that encourage efficient investment in clean technologies while maintaining a level playing field for market participants and preventing excessive costs for consumers. As key decision makers of the energy transition, regulators should be aware of the growing risk of public backlash against certain decarbonisation measures such as resistance to infrastructure projects or the high upfront costs. In this regard energy regulators should work on regulatory measures and engage with citizens and stakeholders in transparent communication to maintain public trust and ensure acceptance. Strengthening cross-border cooperation and market integration are essential to **strengthening resilience** in an increasingly **interconnected** energy landscape.





### 1.1. Megatrends driving the energy transition

The European energy landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. In this dynamic environment, regulatory frameworks must not only keep pace but also provide stability, certainty and a clear direction for the future.

Several **megatrends are shaping the future of the European energy sector**, each presenting both opportunities and challenges for regulators. From the increasing importance of energy security and supply chain resilience to the rapid digitalisation of markets and the growing role of consumers, these trends both drive and define the future energy system. At the same time, Europe's ambitious climate goals, shifting global economic dynamics and governance complexities demand a strategic and forward-looking regulatory approach. In parallel, energy has become a key pillar

of the EU's broader economic competitiveness agenda – as highlighted in the Draghi Report<sup>1</sup> and the Clean Industrial Deal<sup>2</sup> – where affordable, secure and sustainable energy is essential for Europe's industrial strength and long-term prosperity.

CEER's strategy must respond proactively to these megatrends, ensuring that regulatory frameworks are fit for purpose while enabling innovation, fostering competition and promoting consumer interests.

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1 Draghi Report "The future of European competitiveness", published on 9th September 2024.

2 Communication "The Clean Industrial Deal: A joint roadmap to competitiveness and decarbonisation", COM (2025) 85\_final, published on 26th February 2025.

The seven following key trends highlight the critical areas that will shape regulatory priorities in the coming years:



#### **Aggravation of the energy and resource situation**

Global supply chain disruptions, price volatility and the need for energy security have reinforced the urgency of diversifying supply sources and enhancing system resilience.

#### **Increasing value of the individual**



Consumers are playing a more active role in energy markets, whether through self-consumption, demand response, or community-based energy initiatives. Regulators must facilitate individualised services while ensuring that all can benefit and that the system functions properly.



#### **Digitalisation, AI, and technological change**

The rapid adoption of AI, smart grids and digital platforms is transforming market operations and consumer engagement. This requires a regulatory approach that integrates innovation with consumer rights and data protection.



#### **Climate change and climate action**

The path to carbon neutrality by 2050 remains a key objective, demanding a strategic mix of renewable deployment, energy efficiency and infrastructure investments.



#### **Geopolitical upheavals and power shifts**

Energy security has become a top priority, renewing Europe's commitment to reducing dependency on external energy supplies and reinforcing regional cooperation.



#### **Governance challenges and innovations**

The increasing complexity of the energy sector calls for balanced governance, ensuring that national regulatory frameworks are aligned with EU-wide objectives while maintaining flexibility for Member States.



#### **Global price disparities and competitiveness**

Europe's energy sector must remain competitive while transitioning to a sustainable model. Striking the right balance between affordability, investment attractiveness and decarbonisation is essential.



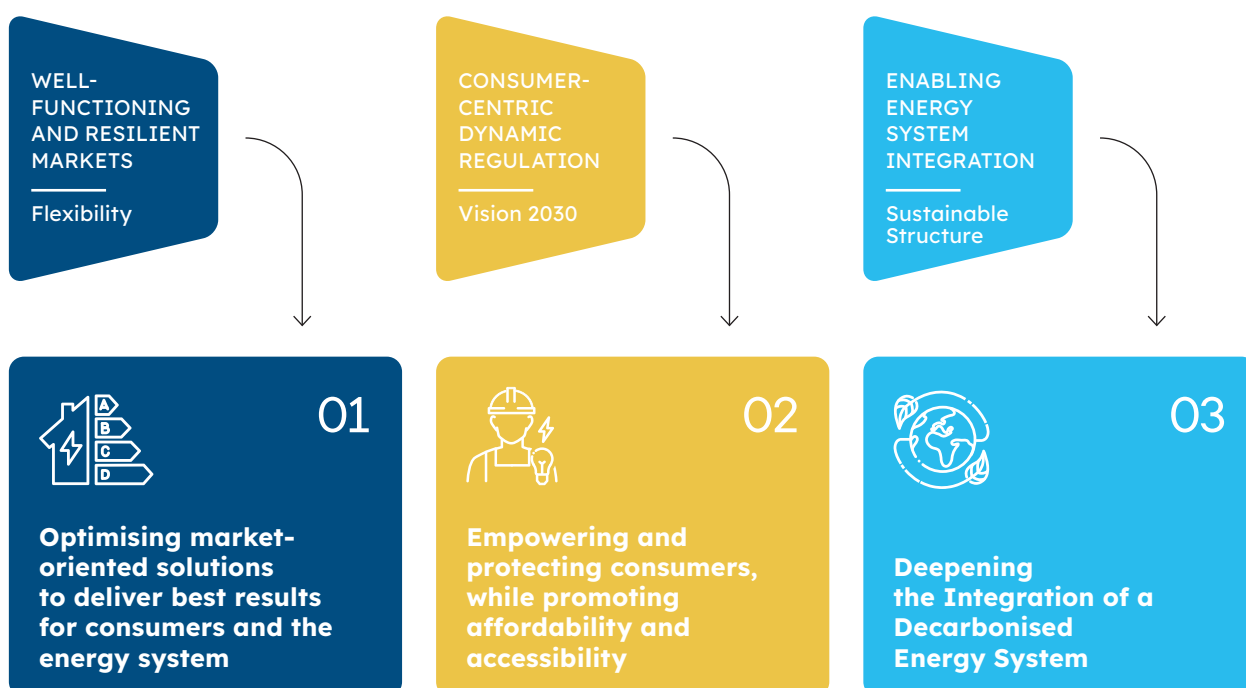
## 1.2. Building on CEER's 2022–2025 Strategy

The upcoming strategic period builds on the foundations laid by **CEER's 2022–2025 Strategy: Empowering Consumers for the Energy Transition**, which set out three key regulatory priorities: system integration, consumer-centric dynamic regulation and ensuring well-functioning and resilient markets. These priorities responded to the need for a more flexible and interconnected energy system, recognising that consumers (must) play an increasingly active role in the energy transition and that markets must evolve to reflect new business models and technological innovations.

As we move forward, these principles continue to be essential, and they provide stability in the regulatory framework while allowing responding to new challenges with agile regulation. The strategic priorities established for 2022–2025 retain their strong relevance, forming a solid foundation for the future. CEER's strategy for the next four years therefore focuses on further developing and ensuring the continuity and delivery of these objectives, while also reflecting new trends and challenges. Both the evolving energy landscape and

geopolitical developments demand an even greater emphasis on resilience and decarbonisation, as well as affordability and accessibility. The lessons learned from the energy crisis of recent years highlight the importance of strengthening energy security and ensuring that the transition is socially inclusive. This requires a flexible and integrated energy system as well as well-functioning markets supported by robust and responsive regulation.

The regulatory framework must now deepen its facilitation of system integration, consumer empowerment in well-functioning markets to actively fostering **efficient investments in decarbonised infrastructure and user benefits**. The present 2026–2029 Strategy thus **extends** CEER's holistic approach, reinforcing resilience and affordability for the benefit of all users – residential as well as industrial –, through **full implementation** of existing and upcoming frameworks. **NRA independence and collaboration** are key pillars, alongside sustainability, security of supply and consumer empowerment, to meeting **CEER's 2026–2029 regulatory priorities for ensuring regulatory stability and citizen engagement amidst change to reach the decarbonisation goals efficiently**.



# Cornerstones for Regulatory Cooperation: CEER's Vision and Mission

CEER is an opinion leader on EU energy regulation. It works to attain its members' common EU goals, in particular by placing regulatory expertise where it delivers the greatest benefit.

As an association of independent regulators, CEER achieves this with **professionalism, objectivity, and trust, as well as collaboration** among its members. CEER leads with a clear vision, further building its reputation for reliability and excellence in the energy sector.

In response to the challenges outlined above, **CEER builds on its core values** — independence, transparency and evidence-based decision-making — to advocate for a regulatory framework that supports market resilience and consumer empowerment. As highlighted in CEER's reaction to the Draghi Report, Europe's energy future requires **striking the right balance between decarbonisation, affordability and competitiveness**.<sup>1</sup>

Building on previous strategic priorities, CEER believes that strengthening **regulatory stability** is key to addressing unexpected challenges that emerged during the energy crises and were further exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It is also essential for coping with future challenges driven by geopolitical and global trade developments.

By continuously adapting to new challenges while maintaining a long-term perspective, CEER remains committed to **ensuring that Europe's energy transition is effective, fair and resilient - delivering affordable and sustainable energy for all in a flexible and integrated energy system with well-functioning markets**.

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<sup>1</sup> CEER views on the „Future of European Competitiveness Report“ (Draghi Report), published Dec. 2024.

## Our vision

CEER envisions a decarbonised European energy system grounded on robust regulatory and market frameworks that empower and protect energy citizens and ensure efficient investment.



## Our mission

To ensure competitive and consumer-oriented energy markets, cooperation among national regulators to support the harmonised implementation is key to empower consumers through transparency, engagement and innovation driving the energy transition.



# Prerequisites for Delivering a Resilient and Consumer-oriented Energy Future

CEER's 2026-2029 strategic priorities are intrinsically intertwined with the full implementation of agreed frameworks and with regulatory independence and collaboration. These fundamentals are essential for reinforcing regulatory effectiveness, ensuring investment certainty, security of supply and safeguarding consumer interests.

## 3.1. Delivering on agreed frameworks:

### › Prioritising the effective implementation of current frameworks before introducing new legislation:

Before introducing new legislation, CEER emphasises the need to prioritise the effective implementation of agreed legislation, ensuring that agreed measures deliver their intended impact. This does not mean putting all further development on hold until everything has been fully implemented. Rather, it means giving adopted measures a chance to work before revising them or devising new ones for the same purpose.

### › Promoting future market concepts:

Emphasising CEER's role to promote and explain forward-looking market designs and regulatory tools that foster innovation, enhance flexibility and encourage consumer participation.

### › Establishing clear, stable, and predictable regulatory environments:

Fostering investment certainty, which is essential to unlock long-term investments in innovative, low-carbon technologies and infrastructure. CEER promotes regulatory predictability and transparency to ensure that frameworks support decarbonisation goals, enable efficient integration of renewable energy sources and encourage system-wide efficiency, flexibility and resilience.



### 3.2. Securing NRA independence and enhancing NRA cooperation:

› **Maintaining regulatory independence as an enabler for solid regulatory decision-making:**

CEER reaffirms the importance of strong and independent energy regulators that play a pivotal role in the energy transition by providing expert advice and decisions free from partial and private interests. This independence is essential to ensuring the sustainable and affordable development of a flexible energy system, as well as to securing fair prices and conditions for consumers and other market players in well-functioning markets.

› **Strengthening governance through coordination:**

CEER advocates for balanced governance structures that respect national circumstances while fostering robust EU-wide and international collaboration. This approach ensures tailored solutions that align with overarching European goals.

› **Empowering and supporting NRAs in fulfilling their duties and enabling NRAs to tackle common challenges effectively:**

CEER supports NRAs in implementing existing and upcoming rules and tools, offering a platform to exchange, share information and compare international systems and frameworks, using the organisation to convey messages and advocate robust regulatory outcomes. Equally, CEER supports and promotes the global initiative among energy regulators to advance the role and representation of women in the energy sector (Women in Energy).

**These guiding elements  
are prerequisites for delivering  
CEER's 2026-2029  
strategic priorities.**



# CEER's 2026–2029 Strategic Priorities

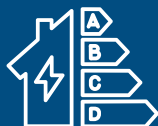
The CEER 2026–2029 Strategy: “Ensuring regulatory stability and citizen engagement amidst change to reach the decarbonisation goals efficiently” draws from a careful assessment of megatrends affecting our energy system, society and economy, and builds on the three regulatory priorities identified in our 2022–2025 Strategy.

Energy regulators deliver tangible benefits for the energy sector as a whole and consumers in particular. They do so through effective and foreseeable regulation and market-based solutions, and by allocating costs fairly, following well-established regulatory costing methods. These principles allow at the same time for addressing key challenges such as security of supply, decarbonisation and the path to net-zero.

The CEER Strategy Priorities for 2026–2029 build on the continued relevance of the three key regulatory priorities established in our 2022–2025 strategy: system integration, consumer-centric dynamic regulation and ensuring well-functioning and resilient markets. These

core issues will continue to be essential to realising our common goals for sustainable and well-functioning markets that work in the interest of all users – consumers as well as businesses. The fact that these priorities remain central demonstrates that the previous strategy was well-designed, and that the regulatory framework provides a solid and stable foundation. However, as the energy landscape evolves, so must the regulatory approach — adapting these already established priorities to address emerging challenges and opportunities, and ensure their continued effectiveness in a changing environment. This also includes continuous monitoring of market developments to ensure the regulatory measures have an impact and are targeted precisely.





01

## Optimising market-oriented solutions to deliver best results for consumers and the energy system

Functioning energy markets are essential for achieving Europe's climate and energy objectives in a way that is both efficient and socially balanced. Regulators must continue to support and defend well-designed markets that drive competitiveness, ensure efficient allocation of costs and deliver value for consumers and businesses — even when facing pressure to shift costs in ways that may undermine long-term effectiveness. The experience from recent energy crises has shown that markets worked, provided that agreed rules are implemented and strengthened to reflect changing conditions.

At the same time, delivering security of supply, system resilience and flexibility has become more critical than ever. These goals require clear price signals to incentivise efficient use of existing infrastructure and efficient investment in new infrastructure as well as coordinated approaches to grid expansion and system operation – particularly in a context of rising shares of renewable and decentralised generation.

Regulators play a key role in explaining the real trade-offs, making complexity more transparent and helping ensure that market-based solutions remain credible and effective. The principles remain valid. The task ahead is to ensure they work in practice – by implementing the market frameworks designed to meet the challenges of the energy transition, user interests, and Europe's broader ambition for a sustainable, competitive, flexible and secure energy system. It is important to provide

regulatory incentives for all market participants to adapt their behaviour to meet the new challenges.



### Emphasising the importance of market mechanisms

CEER supports competitive frameworks that drive innovation, improve efficiency (competitiveness, and efficient cost allocation between industry and consumers) and deliver benefits to consumers and businesses by sending efficient price signals providing incentives for flexibility.



### Optimising existing infrastructure:

CEER advocates for making the most of existing infrastructure as a cost-effective and timely way to support the energy transition. By promoting regulatory frameworks that enable more efficient use of current assets – such as grids, interconnectors and storage – CEER supports faster decarbonisation while reducing the financial burden on consumers. Optimising infrastructure is essential to ensuring security of supply and delivering climate goals efficiently.



### Incentivising efficient investment in grid expansion:

CEER advocates for incentives to ensure efficient investment in grid expansion in a cost-effective (by overcoming the CAPEX bias) and timely way to support the energy transition. By promoting regulatory frameworks that enable efficient investment in new infrastructure as well as by the increasing investment in flexibility such as storage of flexibility – CEER supports faster decarbonisation while reducing the financial burden on consumers. Optimising grid expansion by coordinated approaches, and improved planning processes, as well as by speeding up permitting, is essential to ensuring security of supply and delivering climate goals efficiently.

1 In the previous strategy: Ensuring open, well-functioning and resilient markets.



02

## Empowering and protecting consumers, while promoting affordability and accessibility<sup>2</sup>

Consumer protection and empowerment remain at the core of energy policies. The electricity market reform adopted in 2024 responds to long-standing concerns by requiring more predictable pricing and better reflection of cheaper renewable sources. It broadens contract options – including fixed and dynamic pricing – and improves transparency before signing. It also introduces protection measures such as suppliers of last resort, safeguards against disconnection for vulnerable or energy-poor consumers and more opportunities for energy sharing and participation in the energy transition.

In parallel, the Electricity Market Design and the Gas Decarbonisation Packages have strengthened requirements on suppliers and retail market functioning.

Decarbonisation goals and the rapid growth of decentralised renewable energy resources have crystallised the importance of demand-side flexibility and active consumer participation. The crisis further underscored the value of self-sufficiency and the resilience of energy supply, while demonstrating that self-consumption can help protect consumers from volatile market prices.

Meanwhile, gas consumers rights have been reinforced in the recast Gas Directive. For instance, its articles on ‘General rules for the organisation of the market’ ensure that all customers are free to choose their supplier of natural gas or hydrogen and that Member States can

introduce public pricing interventions for vulnerable or energy-poor consumers. At the same time, groundwork is laid to prepare for the phase-out of natural gas and the protection of consumers in that process.

Regulators recognise the importance of ensuring that not all consumers can – or will – engage with the energy market in the same way. Tailored advice, diverse options and targeted support are therefore essential to ensure that vulnerable and energy-poor consumers are not left behind in the energy transition.



### **Empowering and protecting consumers:**

- CEER reaffirms that all six core ASPIRE principles set out in the CEER-BEUC 2030 Vision for Energy Consumers – Affordability, Simplicity, Protection, Inclusiveness, Reliability and Empowerment – remain highly relevant and will continue to guide regulatory work. In addition to these well-established principles, the energy crisis has highlighted accessibility as another key aspect that must be taken into account to ensure no consumer is left behind.
- CEER is committed to empowering consumers by ensuring they have the tools, information and support necessary to make informed decisions in an evolving energy market. This includes advocating for transparent pricing, consumer rights and the opportunities to actively participate in energy markets – particularly through demand-side flexibility and innovative energy services. CEER supports mechanisms that enable consumers to benefit from the energy transition, such as access to renewable energy sources and smart technologies, while also mitigating potential risks.
- Affordability and accessibility must remain at the heart of the energy transition for both consumers and industry. CEER emphasises the importance of designing policies that keep energy affordable

<sup>2</sup> In the previous strategy: Consumer-centric dynamic regulation.





and accessible for all. CEER advocates for fair pricing mechanisms that foster flexibility and efficiency, without undermining consumers' ability to manage their energy expenditure.

- CEER also works to ensure that vulnerable and energy-poor consumers are protected through targeted policies tailored to their specific needs. This includes mechanisms that shield them from unfair pricing and provide support in adapting to new market realities. CEER actively promotes inclusiveness in energy markets, ensuring that no consumer is left behind in the transition towards a decarbonised, competitive energy system.



#### **Monitoring the emergence of new actors and services:**

The monitoring of the emergence of new actors and services is a key element of CEER's role in adapting market rules to ensure that consumer protection is maintained. As new market participants and digital services emerge, CEER focuses on ensuring that they operate within a framework that prioritises the protection of consumers. This includes monitoring new business models, ensuring their compliance with consumer protection rules, and adapting market structures to reflect changing market dynamics. CEER also places emphasis on local markets and distribution network issues, making sure that retail markets function effectively and that the benefits of the transition reach all consumers fairly.



03

### Deepening the integration of a decarbonised energy system<sup>3</sup>

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and the 2022 energy price crisis marked a turning point for European gas markets. Security of supply was upheld, but the crisis triggered major shifts – notably the reversal of gas flows, with Russian pipeline imports replaced by LNG and supplies from the west. This opens Europe to the global market, reducing old but also bringing new dependencies and vulnerabilities amid growing international competition.

Natural gas demand is declining, driven by electrification and climate goals. At the same time, the integration of low-carbon and renewable gases like biomethane and hydrogen is gaining momentum, raising new questions about infrastructure, market design and cost recovery. Gas will remain essential for system flexibility and security, even as its overall role shrinks. The transition challenges traditional business models and demands stronger integration between gas and electricity markets. Low-carbon gases add further complexity. For instance, using waste for biomethane supports circular economy goals but creates regulatory overlaps beyond traditional energy oversight. Green hydrogen adds complexity in gas-power sector links, and broader energy systems now interface more closely with water, transport and mobility sectors.

This transition will unfold gradually, calling for flexible, adaptive regulation. At the same time, the energy sector faces growing politicisation and regulators must act with clarity and resilience amid competing pressures on affordability, sustainability and security.

3 In the previous strategy: Enabling energy system integration.



#### Supporting security of supply and market resilience

CEER contributes to ensuring secure, flexible, and resilient energy markets that can adapt to changing supply patterns. In the wake of reduced Russian pipeline imports, CEER supports market mechanisms that enhance LNG integration, storage use and cross-border cooperation.



#### Facilitating decarbonisation and gas-power system integration

CEER promotes the efficient integration of low-carbon and renewable gases, such as biomethane and hydrogen, into existing networks. It also supports regulatory frameworks that enable closer coordination between the gas and electricity sectors to enhance flexibility and support the energy transition.



#### Encouraging efficient infrastructure use and future-proof investment

CEER advocates for infrastructure planning and cost-recovery models that reflect declining natural gas demand and the evolving role of gas. This includes facilitating repurposing of assets and avoiding unnecessary investments in fossil-based infrastructure.



#### Promoting regulatory clarity and innovation

CEER works to clarify regulatory responsibilities across sectors where energy systems increasingly overlap with waste, transport and mobility. It supports innovation-friendly approaches that account for sector coupling and new actors in the energy landscape.



## About CEER

**The Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) is the voice of Europe's national energy regulators. CEER's members and observers comprise 38 national energy regulatory authorities (NRAs) from across Europe.**

CEER is legally established as a not-for-profit association under Belgian law, with a small Secretariat based in Brussels to assist the organisation.

CEER supports its NRA members/observers in their responsibilities, sharing experience and developing regulatory capacity and best practices. It does so by facilitating expert working group meetings, hosting workshops and events, supporting the development and publication of regulatory papers, and through an in-house Training Academy. Through CEER, European NRAs cooperate and develop common position papers, advice and forward-thinking recommendations to improve the electricity and gas markets for the benefit of consumers and businesses.

In terms of policy, CEER actively promotes an investment friendly, harmonised regulatory environment and the consistent application of existing EU legislation. A key objective of CEER is to facilitate the creation of a single, competitive, efficient and sustainable Internal Energy Market in Europe that works in the consumer interest.

Specifically, CEER deals with a range of energy regulatory issues including wholesale and retail markets; consumer issues; distribution networks; smart grids; flexibility; sustainability; and international cooperation.



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