

10th meeting of the Citizens' Energy Forum

Dublin, 20-21 September 2018

Conclusions

On the Clean Energy for All Europeans package

The Forum:

- Stresses that in the on-going negotiations the European Institutions should keep focus on what is pledged in the “Clean Energy for All Europeans” package – empowered citizens at the centre of the energy transition. In particular, the Forum requires that the European Parliament and the Council ensure that the overarching issue of energy poverty is adequately addressed in Europe.
- Welcomes the adoption of the legislative proposals on energy efficiency, renewable energy sources and governance of the Energy Union under the “Clean Energy for All Europeans” package, that aim at fostering an efficient and transforming energy sector that provides citizens with competitive and cleaner energy.

On the New Deal for Consumers

The Forum:

- Welcomes the progress towards the adoption of the "New Deal for Consumers" package proposals on improved public and private enforcement, modernisation and clarification of consumer rights. It underlines the importance that all European consumers should fully benefit from their rights and that the EU consumer protection rules are modernised in line with market developments, especially of the digital economy, new business models and bundled products.
- Calls on the European Parliament as well as on the Council to swiftly advance on the remaining work on the legislative proposals that will empower consumers to make better choices on all markets through improved transparency, better protection and by benefitting more effectively from their rights, including through collective representative redress.
- Stresses that all European consumers should have a wide choice of European and national enforcement tools, including alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that are appropriate to the specific needs of consumers. These mechanisms should call for mandatory participation of the different players in the energy sector. Consumers must not be prevented from benefitting from them independently of the service provided or the damage suffered.
- Calls for effective implementation and enforcement of current horizontal and sectorial consumer protection rules in the energy sector as next steps to ensure a better-functioning energy market and enable citizens to be active players in the energy transition.

On future-proofed retail energy markets for consumers

The Forum:

- Calls for avoiding deepening the divide between well informed and active consumers, and the passive or vulnerable who risk staying behind, taking into account the large variety of models and ways to deliver energy via digital and technology based innovative solutions.
- Stresses the need for greater regulatory oversight and cooperation amongst regulators for new models and solutions, such as dynamic pricing and bundled offers, which often are cross-sectorial in nature.
- Highlights the importance of enabling consumers to exercise control over the services that they use.
- Underlines the necessity of increased awareness amongst market actors, inter alia by using better data, on the different types of consumers, including their preferences, consumption patterns particularly for prosumers.
- Calls upon all stakeholders to ensure that engagement with energy citizens takes into account, including by using insights from behavioural science, their different needs and life circumstances.
- Highlights the need to avoid cross-subsidisation between different groups of consumers that can exacerbate energy poverty.

On new models for consumer engagement

The Forum:

- Points to the value of involving and giving guidance to citizens in the energy market and the importance of grass-root initiatives, such as citizen energy communities, as key complements to the legislative framework in pursuing the energy transition.
- Highlights that the energy transition requires joint reflections on the design of network tariffs and procurement processes in order to empower citizens to drive the transition while ensuring that everyone pays their fair share. It invites CEER to work with the Commission, consumer representatives and other relevant market actors to come forward for the next Forum with a reflection and best practices on the topic of network tariffs to be developed on the basis of the work done by CEER until now.
- Highlights the key importance of easy, transparent and non-discriminatory access to data for market participants to fulfil their tasks whilst ensuring full protection of consumers' personal data. It recalls the need notably for developing EU-wide interoperability principles and transparent procedures for safely sharing and protecting the data. The Forum calls upon EU institutions and providers of energy products and services to come forward with proposals for addressing cyber security in the system.
- Calls for a more in-depth analysis and discussion on to what extent and by which means digitalisation can bring benefits to consumers, including through cross-sectorial synergies.

On energy start-ups and new value for consumers and citizens

The Forum:

- Welcomes the role and recognises the value of start-up energy companies in bringing innovation and increased competition to retail energy markets through new products, services and customer models that allow citizens to engage with the market and their energy consumption in environmentally sustainable and cost efficient ways. Stresses that these solutions should be made available and be taken up Europe-wide.
- Recognises the importance that a liberalised and well functioning market with free price formation has for creating an environment where energy start-ups are able to establish themselves and grow.
- Calls for ensuring that undue regulatory and administrative barriers are removed to enable new business models to emerge and spread at European level.
- Underlines that new offers such as dynamic price contracts should be included in price comparison tools.
- Highlights the need to find the right balance between on one side the ownership by consumers of all data related to their consumption and on the other side the necessity to provide data to innovative companies to create tailored offers, thereby further enhancing the market dynamics that support innovative services.
- Calls on effective market oversight of new energy products in order to ensure a consistent application of consumer advice and protection equivalent to that of traditional energy products.