



Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

2015/2323(INI)

12.4.2016

OPINION

of the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

for the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy

on Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers
(2015/2323(INI))

Rapporteur: Kaja Kallas

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection calls on the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

1. Welcomes the Commission Communication ‘Delivering a New Deal for Energy Consumers’¹; agrees with the Commission that the barriers preventing consumers from managing their consumption properly and reducing their energy costs must be broken down;
2. Believes that the Energy Union² should have the interests of citizens at its core;
3. Is deeply concerned that five years after the transposition date of the third energy package, its aim of providing a truly competitive and consumer-friendly retail market has not yet been realised, that the liberalisation and integration of the retail energy markets, as well as unbundling of system operators in some Member States, are still not complete, resulting in insufficient competition, cases of abuses of dominant positions, lack of transparency and less choice of suppliers and services;
4. Urges the Commission to take concrete action to better link wholesale and retail energy markets, so as to better reflect falling wholesale costs in retail prices and to achieve a gradual phasing-out of regulated prices, and to promote responsible consumer behaviour, by encouraging Member States to seek other means to prevent energy poverty; recalls that prices set by the market benefit consumers; calls for network fees to be designed in a way that enables reasonable recovery of costs and does not impede energy efficiency measures;
5. Calls for the full implementation of the third energy package, including the right to change suppliers free of charge and better information to consumers about their rights, and for further measures to make switching between providers easier and faster, including a shortened switching period and effective and secure data portability in order to prevent the lock-in of consumers;
6. Highlights the role that collective switching schemes and campaigns, if independent and inclusive, can play in helping consumers find a better deal, reaching those who are less engaged and the most vulnerable households;
7. Calls on the Commission to ensure the implementation of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive³ and for better cooperation between national authorities of Member States investigating such practices; welcomes the Commission’s intention to consider incorporating laws specifically concerning energy into the Annex to the Regulation on

¹ COM(2015)339 final.

² Commission Communication of 25 February 2015 on A Framework Strategy for a Resilient Energy Union with a Forward-Looking Climate Change Policy, COM(2015)080 final.

³ Directive 2005/29/EC of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Directives 84/450/EEC, 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, OJ L 149, 11.6.2005, p. 22–39.

8. Stresses the importance of access to real-time information on energy mix and consumption, as well as related costs, in order for consumers to have greater control over their consumption and efficient energy use and to increase transparency and competition in the energy market; calls therefore for the rapid deployment of ICT, e.g. mobile applications, online platforms, data hubs and smart meters, within a clear framework on data protection, security, and access to data for all market participants, thereby ensuring that consumers retain control over their data; calls, in addition, on the Commission to monitor the implementation of Recommendation 2012/148/EU of 9 March 2012 on preparations for the roll-out of smart metering systems⁵ and to ensure that less digitally engaged consumers are not left behind;
9. Calls on the Commission to take further action to improve the frequency of energy bills and the associated meter readings, and their clarity, comparability, and transparency as regards types of energy sources, consumption, price structure and the processing of enquiries and complaints; calls for European Union guidelines on independent, up-to-date and easy-to-use price comparison tools, in particular to improve transparency, reliability, and competition between all market players and to make it accessible and easier for consumers to compare offers including types of contracts, prices and types of energy sources; calls also for access for all consumers to at least one price comparison tool for energy services; believes that taxes and fees unrelated to energy should not be included in energy bills; underlines that a clear average price per kWh, including all relevant fees and taxes, is needed to allow consumers to correctly compare their current rate to other possible offers by their current or other energy companies;
10. Strongly believes that all energy providers' websites and digital invoicing should be fully accessible to persons with disabilities and meet the relevant requirements of European Standard EN 301 549;
11. Believes that a key objective of the review of the electricity market design should be to ensure sufficient investment in electricity markets and affordable prices and to give consumers more choices and better control over their participation in a fully functioning and efficient energy market, in particular through dynamic price contracts and the removal of barriers to self-generation; calls for simple market access and electricity balancing responsibility for prosumers, fair distribution of costs and benefits, and a high level of consumer protection.

⁴ Regulation (EC) 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws, OJ L 364, 9.12.2004, p. 1-11.

⁵ OJ L 73, 13.3.2012, p. 9–22.

RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

Date adopted	15.3.2016
Result of final vote	+: 32 -: 2 0: 0
Members present for the final vote	Carlos Coelho, Sergio Gaetano Cofferati, Lara Comi, Anna Maria Corazza Bildt, Daniel Dalton, Pascal Durand, Vicky Ford, Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz, Maria Grapini, Robert Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Liisa Jaakonsaari, Antonio López-Istúriz White, Marlene Mizzi, Eva Paunova, Marcus Pretzell, Virginie Rozière, Christel Schaldemose, Andreas Schwab, Olga Sehnalová, Ivan Štefanec, Catherine Stihler, Mylène Troszczynski, Anneleen Van Bossuyt, Marco Zullo
Substitutes present for the final vote	Lucy Anderson, Biljana Borzan, Birgit Collin-Langen, Edward Czesak, Kaja Kallas, Julia Reda, Dariusz Rosati, Kerstin Westphal
Substitutes under Rule 200(2) present for the final vote	Petras Auštrevičius, Jane Collins