



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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CONSOM 100**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations
No. Cion prop.: xxx

Subject: An Energy Policy for Consumers
= Draft Council conclusions

Delegations will find attached draft Council conclusions on the above subject, as prepared by the Presidency, to be considered at the meeting of the Energy Working Party on 9 November 2010.

Temporary numbering of paragraphs is provided in order to facilitate the discussions; the numbering will be removed in the final document.

Draft Council Conclusions on “An Energy Policy for Consumers”

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. RECALLING the debate devoted to the subject of consumer-related aspects of the European energy policy at the occasion of the informal Council of energy Ministers, held on 6-7 September 2010 in Brussels, which benefited from the contributions of several key stakeholders;
2. RECALLING that the year 2010 is the 'European Year for combating poverty and social exclusion';
3. WELCOMING the Commission Staff Working Paper “An Energy Policy for Consumers” as called for by the participants at the informal meeting of Energy Ministers in September, as well as the Commission Staff working document “The functioning of the retail electricity markets for consumers in the European Union”¹;
4. RECALLING that many provisions in EU legislation and initiatives at EU level, mainly in the area of energy but also in areas such as consumer rights, contribute directly or indirectly to improving consumer welfare;
5. RECALLING that such provisions and initiatives include notably: energy efficiency for household appliances, transport and buildings; feedback on consumption through smart metering and frequent billing; the European Energy Consumer Checklist; more market transparency and price competition; the obligation of Member States to define vulnerable energy consumers; and high standards of public service obligations and consumer protection including for instance the choice of energy supplier and strong regulatory oversight;

¹ Both docs. are expected by 12 November

IN LIGHT OF THE ABOVE, THE COUNCIL

6. STRESSES the need for a correct and timely implementation of the existing legislation, in particular the internal energy market legislation.
7. UNDERLINES that the European energy policy should be aimed at ensuring secure, safe and sustainable energy supplies to all businesses and households in the EU at affordable prices, which would contribute to the welfare, in the largest sense, of Europe's citizens today and tomorrow;
8. WELCOMES the strengthening of the EU's work in the energy efficiency area bearing consumers' interests in mind, with a specific focus on providing correct and transparent information as to change the behaviour of consumers towards energy savings. Furthermore welfare policies should include measures promoting energy efficiency.
9. STRESSES the importance of the introduction of new technologies, inter alia in the field of smart metering, energy efficiency, energy saving and micro-generation of renewable energy, and of having them properly introduced and explained to consumers.
10. STRESSES the need to properly train, educate and inform energy consumers, so as to make them aware of their rights, their energy use, the choices available to them and the way to reduce their consumption, by using existing and future instruments.
11. UNDERLINES that government, industry and citizens each have a responsibility and role to play in the joint effort to make energy policy more consumer friendly;

FURTHERMORE THE COUNCIL

12. CALLS upon Member States to implement in a timely and correct manner the provisions of the Third Energy Package, in particular with respect to transparency, supplier switching and defining the concept of vulnerable customers, and taking appropriate measures to protect and empower final consumers, as well as putting in place an independent mechanism such as an energy ombudsman or a consumer body in order to ensure efficient and effective treatment of complaints and out-of-court dispute settlements.
13. INVITES the Commission to continue its examination and analysis of all aspects related to consumer rights and the vulnerable customers, and of energy policy measures aimed directly at consumers, including those that address the vulnerable ones, with a view to including the lessons learned in these areas in future initiatives whenever relevant;
14. CALLS ON Member States to take due account of the work of the Citizens' Energy Forum and the European Consumer Consultative Group (ECCG) on Energy, in particular when designing policy measures aimed at protecting the vulnerable customers and empowering consumers generally;
15. CALLS on the Commission to strengthen the role of the Citizens' Energy Forum, and keep adapting its agenda to current market issues;
16. INVITES the Commission to put in place a European network of national and independent energy ombudsmen to coordinate common messages on alternative dispute resolution, to exchange best practices across the Union and to identify synergies;
17. INVITES the Commission, in its regular reports on the functioning of the energy market, to pay particular attention to consumer-related issues and to assess the progress in making the energy policy more beneficial to consumers;