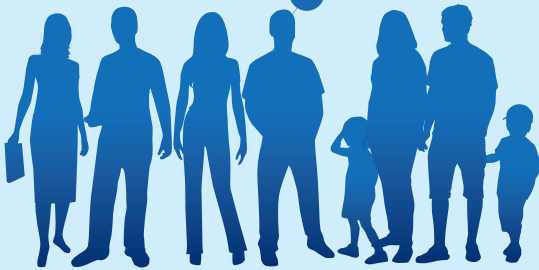




European
Commission



European energy **CONSUMERS'** **RIGHTS**

What you gain as an energy consumer
from European legislation

**Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union.**

**Freephone number (*):
00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11**

(*) The information given is free, as are most calls (though some operators, phone boxes or hotels may charge you).

More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://europa.eu>).

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Besides the general consumer rights guaranteed in EU legislation⁽¹⁾, the EU has defined since the opening of the energy supply market a set of rights that all EU citizens enjoy as energy consumers. The aim is to help you, amongst other things, to get a better deal, and to track and manage your energy use.

Your rights as an energy consumer have to be clearly set out in the national laws of your country and must reflect provisions in EU legislation⁽²⁾. On that basis, the national legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

⁽¹⁾ Consumer legislation: Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on consumer rights. Council Directive 93/13/EEC on unfair terms in consumer contracts; Directive 2005/29/EC on unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices.

⁽²⁾ Energy legislation: Directive 2009/72/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in electricity and Directive 2009/73/EC concerning common rules for the internal market in gas. Directive 2012/27/EU on energy efficiency and Directive 2010/31/EU on the energy performance of buildings. Directive 2010/30/EU concerning the indication by labelling and standard product information of the consumption of energy and other resources by energy-related products. Directive 2009/28/EC on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources and amending and subsequently repealing Directives 2001/77/EC and 2003/30/EC.

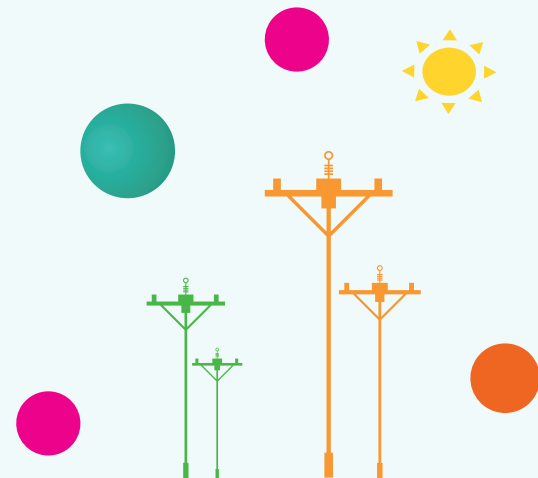
1. An electricity connection

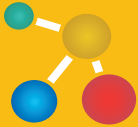


National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... have your home connected to the local electricity network and be supplied with electricity.

You have the right to have **your home connected** to the local electricity network and be supplied with electricity. The connection is done by the network operator designated to operate the energy infrastructure in your local area (each local network has only one designated operator). Terms, conditions and tariffs for this connection are supervised by the national regulatory authority in your country. This body also has to monitor that the local network operator ensures proper functioning of the local infrastructure.





2. A choice of supplier

National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... choose your supplier and enter into a contract with any EU electricity and/or gas supplier offering services to you.

Although you cannot decide the designation of the network operator in your area, you are free to choose your energy supplier from the full **range of EU suppliers** offering their services in your area. The network operator cannot itself offer energy supplies. Where the network operator is part of a larger company which does offer energy supplies, the network operator must have a separate visual identity in order not to create confusion with the part of the company offering the supplies. You can choose a supplier of electricity and/or gas registered in another Member State, provided that the supplier offers services also in your area and agrees a contract with you.



3. An easy and rapid switch of supplier



National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... change your electricity and/or gas supplier in an easy and quick way, without extra charges.



If you decide to **change your supplier** of electricity or gas, you will not be charged for the change. The network operator in your area must make the change within 3 weeks, provided you respect the terms and conditions of the original contract (e.g. notice period, agreed minimum duration of the contract). Suppliers of electricity and/or gas are not allowed to impose disproportionate obligations that would prevent you from switching. No later than 6 weeks after you switch, you will receive the final closure account from your previous supplier.



4. Clear contract information and the right of withdrawal

National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... receive clear information on your energy contract before signing, and advance notice if any changes are made to the contract, with the possibility to end the contract if you do not accept the new conditions. You also have the right to withdraw from a new contract within 14 days if the contract was concluded outside the supplier's business premises or by distance means of communication (such as Internet or telephone).

Your **contract** with your supplier of electricity and/or gas must include details from which you can see:

- the name and address of the supplier;
- the type of supply or service, its quality and starting date;
- the type of maintenance service offered;
- how to obtain information on tariffs and maintenance charges;
- how long the contract is for, conditions for renewal, withdrawal, or termination;
- what compensation or refund you have a right to if the supplier does not meet their obligations;
- what to do in case of a complaint and how disputes are settled.



Your supplier must provide you with this information before you sign the contract. The contract must be clear and understandable and avoid non-contractual barriers (e.g. excessive documentation).

If you concluded the contract for supply of electricity and/or gas outside the supplier's premises (for example at your home or your workplace) or via other distance means of communication (such as Internet or telephone), you still have the possibility to withdraw from it (e.g. if you change your mind) within 14 days from its conclusion.

If your contract permits the supplier of electricity and/or gas to vary the energy prices, the contract should state in a sufficiently clear manner for what reasons and according to what method the prices may be changed. Your supplier has to inform you of any intention to introduce changes to the contract or prices. Price increases must be communicated in a transparent and comprehensible manner. You are free to end the contract if you do not accept the new conditions or the price increases decided by the supplier.



5. Accurate information on your consumption and billing based on it

National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... have access to accurate information on your consumption of electricity and/or gas in order to regulate your energy consumption, and be billed based on actual consumption.

Information on your actual use of energy must be sent to you frequently enough to enable you to regulate how much energy you use. You are entitled to have at your disposal your consumption data at no additional cost. You may instruct the supplier to give access to this data to other electricity and/or gas suppliers and you cannot be charged for this service.

If you have a smart meter, you have the right to an easy and free-of-charge access to detailed historical information on your own energy consumption (for every day, week, month and year) under your present supply contract for at least the 2 previous years. You also have the right to access cumulative data on your consumption for at least the previous 3 years or since the start of your current supply contract, if that is shorter.

You have the right to be provided with a competitively priced accurate individual meter for electricity and/or gas (as well as district heating/cooling and hot water) when a new connection is made in a new building or when a building undergoes major renovation. For other cases the right to a competitively priced accurate individual meter applies unless technical or financial obstacles have been identified at national level.



6. Information on how to use energy more efficiently and on the benefits of using energy from renewable sources

National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... be properly informed on the benefits of using equipment and vehicles using renewable energy and be properly informed on how much energy you use and how to use energy more efficiently.

Your energy bills, contracts, transactions and receipts should — unless your national authorities determine it inappropriate — set out clearly:

- the current actual prices and how much energy you have used;
- a comparison with how much you used in the same period during the previous year;
- details of who you may contact to find out how to save energy, for example consumer organisations, energy agencies or similar bodies, including website addresses and, wherever possible and useful, comparisons with similar types of customers.



When you buy appliances (such as fridges, freezers, washing machines, tumble driers, dishwashers, electric ovens, TVs, lamps and air conditioners), you have the right to be informed on how much energy these appliances use and choose more efficient products. Shops have to display the **EU energy label** as well as a product description with detailed information on the performance of the product.

When you consider placing or changing an installation producing electricity or heating/cooling from renewable energy sources, you have the right to receive information from the equipment supplier or designated national authority on the benefits, costs and energy efficiency of such equipment.

Your electricity supplier must provide you with information on the mix of its energy sources (renewables, nuclear, etc.) and its environmental impact. This information must be presented in an easy and comparable manner.



7. Specific consumer protection measures, if you are a 'vulnerable' customer



National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... receive adequate safeguards, if you are defined as a 'vulnerable customer' by relevant national rules.

Member States have to define the **concept of vulnerable customers** in their national legislation and ensure there are adequate measures in place to protect vulnerable customers. Member States have some flexibility to define vulnerable customers according to their own particular situation but they must ensure that rights of vulnerable customers are enforced and that identified energy poverty is addressed by appropriate measures.



8. Easy resolution of complaints and disputes

National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... file a complaint with your gas or electricity supplier and, in the event your complaint is not managed to your satisfaction, send your complaint to an independent body for an inexpensive, prompt and fair out-of-court settlement.

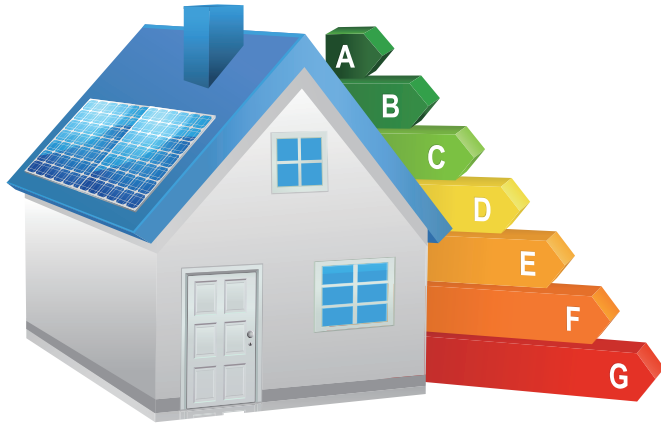
Your supplier of electricity and/or gas has to provide you with information on how to file a complaint. You can **file a complaint** with your gas or electricity supplier and you are entitled to expect a high standard of service in the way your supplier manages your complaint. This should provide you with a prompt dispute settlement and a reimbursement and/or compensation if warranted. In the event that your complaint is not managed to your satisfaction, you also have the right to send your complaint to an independent **body for out-of-court dispute settlement**, such as an energy ombudsman. These options do not limit your right to subsequently bring a case before a court.

9. An energy performance certificate for your home



National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... receive information about the energy efficiency of the property you wish to buy or rent.



You have the right to be informed about the energy performance of a property when looking to buy or rent. Before you sign a contract you should receive an **energy performance certificate**, explaining how the property rates in terms of energy efficiency. This certificate must also include recommendations on how to improve the energy efficiency of your home.



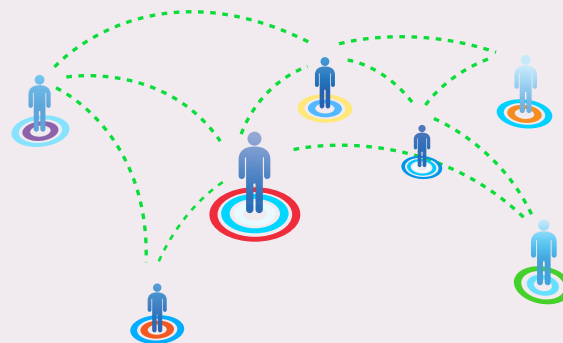
10. A national contact point for energy

National legislation must guarantee you the right to ...

... have a single contact point in your country where you can find more information on these rights.

You must have access, within your country, to a **single point of contact** from where you can obtain all the information you need concerning your energy rights, current legislation and how to deal effectively with any gas or electricity supplier dispute.

Your rights as an energy consumer in the EU have to be set out in the national laws of your country. **National regulatory authorities** have a duty to help ensure that consumer rights are respected, and that consumers are protected in line with EU law.



To find out more about your rights, please contact:

Single point of contact

Citizens Advice consumer service — United Kingdom

<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/energy>

Helpline: 08454 040506

Textphone: 18001 followed by
08454 040506

Welsh language helpline:
08454 040505

Welsh language textphone: 18001
followed by 08454 040505

Post Point 24

Town Hall

Walliscote Grove Road

Weston super Mare

North Somerset

BS23 1UJ

Commission for Energy Regulation — Energy customers — Ireland

<http://www.energycustomers.ie>

P.O. Box 11934

Dublin 24 — Ireland

Tel. +353 1890404404

Fax: +353 14000850

E-mail: energycustomers@cer.ie

National regulatory authority

Ofgem — Great Britain

<http://www.ofgem.gov.uk>

9 Millbank

London

SW1P 3GE

Tel. +44 2079017295

Fax: +44 2079017066

E-mail: consumeraffairs@ofgem.gov.uk

Commission for Energy Regulation — Ireland

<http://www.cer.ie>
The Exchange
Belgard Square North
Tallaght
Dublin 24 — Ireland
Tel. +353 14000800
Fax: +353 14000850
E-mail: info@cer.ie

Out-of-court dispute settlements mechanism

Ombudsman Services: Energy — United Kingdom

<http://www.ombudsman-services.org/energy.html>
PO Box 966
Warrington
WA4 9DF
Tel. 0330 4401624
Fax: 0330 4401625
Textphone: 0330 4401600

Commission for Energy Regulation — Energy customers — Ireland

<http://www.cer.ie/customer-care/complaints>
Complaint form available online
Energy Customers Team
Commission for Energy Regulation
P.O. Box 11934
Dublin 24 — Ireland
Tel. +353 1890404404
E-mail: customer-care@cer.ie

For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/consumer/rights_en.htm

For additional information on your consumer rights, please consult Your Europe (http://europa.eu/youreurope/citizens/index_en.htm) or the consumer associations in your country.

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