

## Drivers of Vulnerability Table - Instruments and Practices

These two documents result from the discussions of the Vulnerable Consumer Working Group during 2012-13. The main aim of the table and the instruments and practices document is to (i) assist those Member States that have not yet defined the concept of vulnerable customers, and (ii) to assist Member States develop policy - where it is needed - to ensure vulnerable customers are supported in the best possible way. The two documents complement the positions taken in both the Commission Communication "Making the Internal Energy Work"<sup>1</sup> (2012) and the Price Transparency Working Group Report<sup>2</sup> (2012), which Member State authorities should also refer to.

The documents cover some of the main elements that may drive and exacerbate consumer vulnerability, including energy poverty, and provide examples of Member State instruments and practices in place. Energy poverty is intrinsically addressed as the Working Group has concentrated on vulnerable customers in the energy sector. Some of the drivers of vulnerability will not be relevant in some Member States, bearing in mind diverse national circumstances. The documents have been prepared for guidance purposes only, however, all Member State authorities may consider the drivers, instruments and practice suggestions to establish which might be applicable at a national level. This may require a review of existing policy measures and an assessment of future policy measure development. It is recommended that the instruments and examples of practices in place are not implemented in isolation, but rather used to ensure a holistic approach to policy development. It is also recognised that vulnerability is not a static state and consumer status may change depending on health, employment and other factors, thereby requiring continuous effort by the authorities to ensure those that need support are receiving it.

In the interests of ongoing improvement, suggestions for further changes to the documents by Member State authorities and other parties are most welcome.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas\\_electricity/internal\\_market\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/internal_market_en.htm)

<sup>2</sup>

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas\\_electricity/doc/forum\\_citizen\\_energy/2012111314\\_citizen\\_forum\\_meeting\\_working\\_group\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/doc/forum_citizen_energy/2012111314_citizen_forum_meeting_working_group_report.pdf)