

# **Actions against energy vulnerability & towards delivering warmer & healthier homes for European consumers**

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**What is vulnerability?**

**What causes it?**

**Who is vulnerable?**

**Why is energy relevant in this discussion?**

# EU Legislation

- Legal obligations in the Third Package
  - Member States to protect final customers and to ensure adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable customers
  - Member States to define the concept of vulnerable customers, ensure that rights and obligations linked to vulnerable customers are applied
  - Member States to address energy poverty where identified
- London Forum 2011 conclusions

*"The Forum called upon the Member States to speed up the transposition, notably the definition of vulnerable customers. The Forum shared also the view that energy efficiency measures should play an active role in addressing the specific vulnerable consumers' needs."*

# Vulnerable Consumers WG

- Launched in March 2012, 4 meetings to date
- Membership
  - NRAs/CEER
  - Consumer associations + Ombudsmen
  - Industry
  - Academia
- Terms of Reference
  - Map aspects of vulnerability and measures addressing them
  - Provide recommendations for defining VCs
  - Highlight good practices

**Location: Brussels**  
**By when?: 6<sup>th</sup> Citizens'**  
**Energy Forum**

**Goal: reduce & prevent**

# State of play

- Interim report in 5th London Forum
  - Drivers and triggers of vulnerability
  - Being vulnerable is not a static concept
    - Not necessarily linked to means only!
    - More of a 'situation' that all of us can find ourselves into ...
    - Must take appropriate action according to the context
- Important role of energy efficiency to improve healthy homes
- Factors:** Quality of housing stock; tenancy; prepayment; climate

# What's the consumer angle?

- Energy efficiency is key to warmer & healthier homes
- It is not a 'one size fits all' approach
- Consumers need the right deals & good tools for their case
- Industry must deliver meaningful products and services
  - keep your customers happy to retain them 😊
  - engage with those customers in need, to avoid strong-hand regulation
- Public policy angle:
  - stimulate consumer-centred innovation in competitive energy markets
  - enable access to finance improvements of home energy efficiency
  - provide trusted, i.e. independent advice, to consumers and easy access to relevant info → some MSs are doing this already!

# SANCO Transparency Report: 10 recommendations

1. Smarter regulation & information provisions → it should be simple
2. Behavioural research → extend good practice to EU 27
3. Understanding what is on offer → clear presentation & focus on areas that matter to consumers
4. Presentation of information → total price or separate regulated from comp. price parts; align info in offer, contract & bill; plain language; avoid exaggeration of benefits; present a summary of rights/obligations together with contract
5. Technology & price comparison → verify accuracy & objectivity → trust mark
6. Action against vulnerability → ensure access to information
7. Consumer NGOs → inform on new activities: collective switching, joint purchases
8. Instruments → active enforcement & voluntary codes, competition, good practices
9. Coordination → public authorities to set up national permanent coordination structures dealing with cross-cutting issues
10. The European dimension → coordinate, take stock & share good practices

# Thank you

- Energy Transparency Report at:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas\\_electricity/doc/forum\\_citizen\\_energy/201211314\\_citizen\\_forum\\_meeting\\_working\\_group\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/gas_electricity/doc/forum_citizen_energy/201211314_citizen_forum_meeting_working_group_report.pdf)
- More info on energy and consumers:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/citizen/my\\_rights/energy\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/citizen/my_rights/energy_en.htm)

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