

## European Energy Retailers (EER) – Press Release

### New European Network for more competition and innovation in energy markets

Brussels, 21. June 2017

Energy associations in four EU Member States have formed a new network aiming at enhancing cross-border competition in energy markets and achieving fair market conditions for new entrants offering energy and service-related solutions: **European Energy Retailers (EER)**. In its founding declaration the network calls for effective unbundling and harmonization of market rules.

Transitioning to a cleaner and more decentralized energy system is not only contributing to the EU's climate goals, but also creates new opportunities for innovative business models in EU Member States, thereby supporting further economic growth in the EU. "Especially new and grid-independent suppliers often still have to overcome substantial barriers, while at the same time cross-border competition is proceeding rather slowly," said Massimo Bello, President of the Italian Association of Energy Traders & Suppliers (AIGET). Hence, EER is aiming at establishing a common voice for independent energy and solution providers' interests in Brussels.

According to EER members, a major obstacle to an effective level-playing field in competition consists in insufficient separation between competitive and regulated business areas in the energy market. Incumbent energy companies can still prevent competition and monopolize strategically important business areas. Robert Busch, CEO of the German Association of Energy Market Innovators (bne) stated: "We need a clear separation of regulated and competitive business activities. Using the energy infrastructure as well as access to data and market information has to be based on comprehensible and transparent procedures and conditions."

Energy markets in the EU are changing. Security of supply no longer exclusively is provided by central power stations, but also needs to be provided by storage, demand response and prosumers. However, in order to enable those sources and new actors to participate in the markets on equal footing, the framework conditions need to be changed. EER members strongly advocate for implementing discrimination-free access for all technologies and market players to the balancing markets.

20 years after liberalization, the energy market situation in individual EU Member States is still quite diverse and different: while supplier switching procedures in Germany work rather smoothly, those procedures are still a hurdle for new entrants in Spain. In addition, some EU Member States still have regulated energy retail prices.

Jointly the EER founders are advocating for an effective level-playing field in competition in order to guarantee a well-functioning energy market and benefit the customer – also on cross-border basis. "Although it is possible in many business areas to offer cross-border services in the EU, this is not really the case yet in the energy sector," said Alejandro García, Secretary General of the Spanish Association of Independent Retailers (ACIE). EER is advocating for of a common European retailer "passport": if a retailer is registered and authorized in one Member State, he should be able to

provide energy and services to customers in all European Member States. Customers may benefit from greater choice and decreasing prices due to stronger competition.

Over the next couple of months EER aims to participate actively in the debate around the proposed clean energy package and offer its experience to decision-makers. Many of the legislative proposals provided by the European Commission are already steps in the right direction. Johan Öhnell, President of the Swedish Independent Electricity Retailers said: "With our work we aim to create more active customers, foster effective competition and support the goal of achieving a truly integrated Energy Union."

#### **Founding Members:**

- **ACIE: Asociación de Comercializadores Independientes de Energía / Association of Independent Retailers (<http://acie.org.es/>)**

ACIE was founded in 1999 to represent the interests of independent energy suppliers in Spain within the framework of the liberalization of the electricity sector. Since 2012 it also represents independent suppliers' interests within the natural gas businesses. Currently it is composed by 11 energy suppliers, representing around 9% of the electricity supplied in Spain and 4% of natural gas supply.

- **AIGET: Associazione Italiana di Grossisti di Energia e Trader / Italian Association of Energy Traders & Suppliers (<http://www.aiget.it/>)**

Started in 2000, with the beginning of the liberalization of the Italian energy markets, AIGET represents and promotes the interests of the Italian and foreign entrants in the supply, trading & shipping of electricity, natural gas and related services & certificates. The main aims of the association are promoting competition, transparency and liquidity in the Italian energy markets and supporting the development and standardization of tradable energy products and contracts, including energy & weather derivatives.

- **bne: Bundesverband Neue Energiewirtschaft e.V. / Association of Energy Market Innovators (<http://www.bne-online.de/en/about-us>)**

bne represents the interests of grid-independent energy suppliers and energy service companies in Germany. Unlike suppliers with a connected grid, bne-members are free of monopoly interests: They are committed to fair competition and a diverse energy market.

- **Oberoende Elhandlare / Independent Electricity Retailers (<http://oberoendeelhandlare.se/>)**

Oberoende Elhandlare is a Swedish organization for retailers who actively hedge and trade, as well as for energy brokers who hedge on behalf of retailers, producers and end-users. The members are independent of the vertically integrated oligopoly firms that dominate the electricity market. The organization aims to safeguard the free market and create better conditions for competition, both at national, Nordic and European levels.