Access to energy data – barriers, solutions and recommendations
Report from the Stakeholders' Workshop on 20 March 2019

With smart meters being rolled out in Europe, valuable data is generated that can benefit all energy market participants: consumers, network operators, DSOs, TSOs, suppliers and new energy service providers. For this to happen, the data needs to be accessed in an efficient, non-discriminatory way and free of charge for all authorized energy market participants.

ESMIG and EER organized a [workshop](#) on access to energy data to discuss where we are in terms of regulation, what are the current market barriers that new energy service providers are facing, what are some best practices from European countries and what are some potential solutions to overcome these barriers.

Anna Colucci, Head of Unit Retail Markets, DG ENER, European Commission, highlighted the Clean Energy Package measures that address this issue: clear provisions for ensuring easy and non-discriminatory access to data and interoperability of the data and the processes that go with this data. She emphasized the timeliness of the workshop, since the output of the discussions can be used in the preparation of the Implementing Acts following the Clean Energy Package.

> "Access to data is and will remain key to well-functioning markets, and in particular retail markets", says Anna Colucci, Head of Unit Retail Markets, DG ENER, European Commission

Cristina Martinez, Deputy Head of Unit Smart Living and Mobility, DG Connect, spoke about the Free Flow of Data Package entering into force in May that aims to enable new services based on data. There is still work in progress on achieving cross-border standards and aligned data formats, with the SAREF ontology[1] being a step forward in this direction.

> **ESMIG** @ESMIG_EU
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> Cristina Martinez @DSMeu mentions what is missing from achieving the digital single market, #IoE and #freeflowofdata : cross-border standards and aligned data formats #EUenergydata
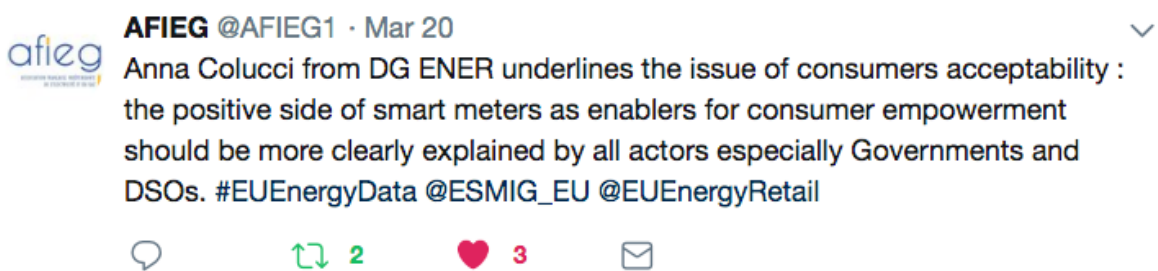
Session 1: Reality Check

Access to near real-time consumption data is important for empowering consumers by giving them a timely feedback of their energy consumption, for balancing the network and for enabling flexibility.

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[1] [Study on ensuring interoperability for enabling Demand Side Flexibility – DG-Connect project - Smart 2016/0082](#)

The session brought representatives from France, Spain and Germany to present the challenges they are facing in accessing consumption data. Here are the main barriers that exist today:

1. **Regulatory barriers.** The current regulatory environment is not yet suited for an efficient introduction of energy/flexibility management. For example, in some countries there are delays in the access of consumption data by retailers of up to a week. Moreover, in self-consumption facilities retailers receive the consumption data but not the generation data. Therefore, retailers and other service providers cannot offer to consumers tailored services to enable actionable information. The current European and national data protection regulation should not be used as an excuse for not allowing access to consumption data: there are conditions when this access is allowed.

2. **Technical barriers.** Due to a lack of EU uniform guidelines, countries can opt for choosing their own data formats and develop their own requirements for data security and data availability. Moreover, systems are sometimes highly sophisticated and too expensive.

3. **Information barriers.** Consumers will not give consent to access their data if they are not well informed about the benefits of doing so. Sufficient information campaigns for consumers are lacking, which leads to a majority of consumers with smart meters installed refusing to share the real-time data with third parties. Therefore, the benefits cannot be realized.

The discussion following these presentations brought out an important learning: more often than not, the roll-out of smart meters is not carried out with sufficient involvement of consumers and retailers. This is the main reason behind all the barriers that exist and has a significant impact on how the benefits of the roll-out are reaped across the market participants, with consumers being the least favored ones. Regulators should ensure that the process is not dominated by one or a limited set of market parties.

> **AFIEG** @AFIEG1 · Mar 20
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> Anna Colucci from DG ENER underlines the issue of consumers acceptability : the positive side of smart meters as enablers for consumer empowerment should be more clearly explained by all actors especially Governments and DSOs. #EUEnergyData @ESMIG_EU @EUEnergyRetail
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Session 2: From problem to solution

In this session representatives from Sweden and the UK shared their experience on the roll-out process of smart meters in their countries and highlighted some lessons learnt and best practice examples. Also, we looked at a future electricity sector that is decentralized and prosumer-led and discussed the technologies with the highest impact in the foreseeable future: Internet of Things (IoT), Distributed Ledger Technologies ("Blockchain") and Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Here are some of the most important best practices that were presented:

- defining processes and procedures for sharing measurement data with all authorized energy market participants. In case of deficiencies, it helps if the regulatory authority is imposing sanctions.
- the roll-out being retail-led
- putting the consumers at the center and designing the roll-out with their benefits in mind
- having a central and neutral energy data hub to distribute the data from the meter
- having a neutral body in charge of communication and information campaigns to consumers
- offering consumers attractive display options along with the smart meter so that they can better monitor their consumption.

Standardization is crucial for any approved industry player to have easy access to metering data. Overly-engineered systems result in higher costs and possible delays in implementation; we should therefore strive for a reasonable balance between security, costs and time to implement.

Another important aspect to mention is the interoperability of the data exchange and the processes that go with it. A new report from Smart Grid Task Force's EG1 Working Group on Electricity and Gas Data Format and Procedures will propose solutions for achieving this and will be used for the drafting of the Implementing Act following the Clean Energy package.

Key recommendations

Based on the presentations and the open discussion, several recommendations for secondary legislation were put forward:

1. Cooperation between all relevant market parties including retailers is key in achieving an efficient, non-discriminatory and free of charge access to data.

2. Smart meters are not smart if they are not correctly and timely read by the metering operator and allowed to generate data for all market participants.
3. Information campaigns to consumers are essential for them to understand the benefits and implications of allowing the meter to generate data and sharing that data with new energy service providers.
4. The data characteristics (granularity, type of data, response times, etc.) and recommended data format for accessing historic consumption data should be defined on a European level.
5. The "emerging services" (download my data and "share my data") Use Cases identified by Expert Group 1 of the Smart Grid Task Force should have priority because it concerns simple and easy to implement or adaptable processes, where interoperability is key for the development of new services based on that data.
6. A standard data format for the real-time data should be provided by the local interface on the meter and the implementation of this interface by the member states should be monitored.

About the organisers

ESMIG is the European voice of smart energy solution providers. Our members are European companies that provide products, information technology and services for multi-commodity metering, display and management of energy consumption and production at consumer premises. We work closely with EU policy makers and other EU associations to make Europe's energy and water systems cleaner, reliable, more efficient and the European consumer informed, empowered, engaged.
www.esmig.eu @ESMIG_EU

European Energy Retailers is the voice of Independent Energy & Solution Providers in EU-wide policy discussions. For achieving well-functioning retail energy markets, new suppliers and service providers must be able to enter and compete in the market on equal terms. EER actively engages with the EU Institutions and EU member state governments, regulators as well as other European stakeholders in order to promote effective competition, energy sector compliance with decarbonisation goals, the integration of energy markets, and empowerment of customers. The Association was founded in 2017 by national associations from France (AFIEG), Germany (bne), Italy (AIGET), Spain (ACIE) and Sweden (Oberoende Elhandlare).
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