

CEER's International Activities: Core Strategy and Objectives

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INFORMATION PAGE

Abstract

This document (C12-ISG-25-03) sets out CEER's strategy in terms of its international cooperation efforts with fellow regulators and regional regulatory associations worldwide. It focuses on the main objectives of our international dialogue and illustrates some of the activities we are engaged in that contribute to these goals.

Target audience

Energy suppliers, traders, gas/electricity customers, gas/electricity industry, consumer representative groups, network operators, Member States, academics and other interested parties.

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European energy regulators have performed regulatory exchanges with international counterparts for over a decade

1 Introduction

The Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) is the association of Europe's national electricity and gas regulators. Through CEER, the European energy regulators cooperate and exchange best practices with the key objective to facilitate the creation of a single, competitive and sustainable European energy market.

Since the establishment of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) in March 2011, energy regulators have put in place a complementary approach to energy regulation: while ACER supports the integration of national energy markets, advises EU institutions on cross-border energy infrastructure issues and monitors the internal energy market, CEER covers a wider range of regulatory issues in addition to the support it gives to ACER. Hence, CEER still remains the main tool for developing strategies and advice on customer-related issues and promoting international cooperation with regulatory authorities from around the world.

In recent years, regulatory cooperation has experienced a significant boost through the creation of the International Confederation of Energy Regulators (ICER). ICER brings together regulatory associations from around the globe committed to raising public awareness and improving policy-makers' understanding of energy regulatory matters bearing the regulatory impact on socio-economic, environmental and market issues in mind. CEER is not only an active member of ICER but also chairs the association.

Against this background, CEER adopted a new membership policy in 2012 that allows regulatory authorities from EFTA and EU accession countries to join CEER as observers. This policy approach represents an important step towards increased regional cooperation beyond the EU's borders.

CEER works with its international contacts in a spirit of mutual respect and is eager to learn from the experience of fellow regulators and related authorities as well as providing its own experience and assistance to interested counterparts worldwide, to the extent that we have regulatory resources available.

This paper sets out CEER's core strategy and objectives in terms of its international cooperation efforts with fellow regulators and regional regulatory associations.

2 Core Strategy and Objectives

CEER's international strategy is based on the following three core objectives:

- 1) Exchange experience and best regulatory practices with regulators and regional regulatory associations around the world;
- 2) Provide regulatory advice and assistance beyond EU borders if requested and within our resources; and
- 3) Raise awareness of independent and accountable energy regulatory practices at international level.

2.1 Exchange best regulatory practices with regulators and regional regulatory associations around the world

CEER has gathered more than 10 years of experience with respect to electricity and gas market liberalisation and has worked towards regional market integration since its creation. Throughout this process, CEER and regulators from outside the EU have been contacting each other in order to discuss questions of specific interest and exchange best regulatory practice. A series of continuous dialogues with individual regulators as well as regulatory associations from third countries emerged and has proven to be beneficial to both CEER and the other regulators involved.

CEER intends to strengthen further its exchanges and to develop joint projects with its geographic neighbours with a view to facilitating the development of consistent regulatory approaches and, where possible, contributing to the harmonisation of regulatory practices across EU borders. Furthermore, the promotion of contacts in key areas in the European neighbourhood, i.e. in the Western Balkans, in the Eastern Partnership countries and in the Southern Mediterranean countries, improves European regulators' understanding of specific regional circumstances in the immediate surroundings of the EU internal energy market.

In addition to welcoming regulators from EU candidate countries as observers, CEER notably looks forward to continuing joint activities and to deepening working relations with the Energy Community Regulatory Board (ECRB) in areas of cooperation beyond those linked to ACER tasks and duties.

CEER also encourages the exchange of good regulatory practices and supports EU-funded regulatory cooperation programmes with Southern Mediterranean and Eastern European regulators through enhanced contacts with the Association of Mediterranean Energy Regulators (MEDREG) and with the regulatory authorities from the Eastern Partnership countries. In addition, CEER cooperates with the Energy Regulators Regional Association (ERRA), among others, in exchanging information on respective regulatory practices in order to enhance mutual understanding.

In parallel, CEER promotes the sharing of experience through bilateral exchanges with other regulators and regional regulatory associations, including the Federal Tariff Service of Russia, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC - USA) and the Association of Ibero-American Energy Regulators (ARIAE - Latin America). CEER intends to maintain and deepen these important relationships. The format of yearly roundtables has proven to be an effective tool to learn from other regulatory associations and their way of work as well as their most pressing issues. Through dialogue we discover that many of the challenges we face in our respective markets are very similar. This allows us to exchange practical experience of how to address them.

Finally, CEER's active membership in ICER is a permanent pillar in CEER's global work. Here, CEER particularly looks forward to sharing views and understanding on regulatory matters of global concern.

2.2 Provide regulatory advice and assistance beyond EU borders

Given the extensive experience of our members, CEER has been approached regularly by regulators/regulatory associations from third countries for specific advice. CEER is keen on providing assistance whenever requested. So far, CEER has mostly provided its advice through EU-funded assistance projects such as 'TAIEX' and 'Twinning'. A number of regulators in the CEER community have meanwhile gained significant experience with such projects and efforts in this respect are increasing.

CEER has furthermore demonstrated its engagement in providing regulatory advice to EU institutions. An important example in this context is the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue. CEER remains open to any form of cooperation with EU institutions and organisations as well as with international energy and financial organisations.

Finally, several regulatory authorities have been active in supporting institution-building in emerging markets, notably in Africa. This is an experience with significant potential in the context of EU development assistance objectives and activities. CEER therefore remains willing to provide assistance on specific regulatory questions to regulators or other authorities from third countries, in a variety of formats.

2.3 Raise awareness of independent and accountable energy regulatory practices at international level

Thus far, CEER has mainly focused its external activities on establishing bilateral relations with its counterparts in the EU neighbourhood and other regulatory associations worldwide. By doing this, CEER has established a wide network in the regulatory field. Given its international dimension, CEER, however, also aims at increasing its visibility beyond the purely regulatory and European neighbourhood and is therefore determined to participate in the wider global energy discourse.

With this in mind, CEER intends to promote dialogue with regulatory authorities from large emerging economies. Improving mutual understanding of the challenges faced by our respective markets and corresponding regulatory responses can contribute to global energy security and climate change goals.

Furthermore, contacts and joint activities with the regulators from developing economies including the African Forum for Utility Regulators (AFUR) shall be promoted.

By having a presence at important international energy summits and initiatives as well as by participating in discussions related to the most pressing issues and challenges of today's energy world, CEER finally intends to increase awareness of energy regulatory issues and approaches in a wider forum.

Annex 1 – CEER

The Council of European Energy Regulators (CEER) is the voice of Europe's national regulators of electricity and gas at EU and international level. Through CEER, a not-for-profit association, the national regulators cooperate and exchange best practice. A key objective of CEER is to facilitate the creation of a single, competitive, efficient and sustainable EU internal energy market that works in the public interest.

CEER works closely with (and supports) the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER).

ACER, which has its seat in Ljubljana, is an EU Agency with its own staff and resources. CEER, based in Brussels, deals with many complementary (and not overlapping) issues to ACER's work such as international issues, smart grids, sustainability and customer issues.

The work of CEER is structured according to a number of working groups and task forces, composed of staff members of the national energy regulatory authorities, and supported by the CEER Secretariat.

This report was prepared by the International Strategy Group.

Annex 2 – List of abbreviations

Term	Definition
ACER	Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators
AFUR	African Forum for Utility Regulators
ARIAE	Asociación Iberoamericana de entidades reguladoras de la energía
CEER	Council of European Energy Regulators
ECRB	Energy Community Regulatory Board
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
ERRA	Regulators Regional Association
EU	European Union
FTS	Federal Tariff Service
ICER	International Confederation of Energy Regulators
MEDREG	Mediterranean Regulators
NARUC	National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange