How consumer organisations can help people get a better energy deal.
BEUC members’ collective switching campaigns

What is collective switching?

- This is when a large number of consumers join forces to move energy suppliers for better, cheaper offers.

The process is often led or facilitated by a consumer organisation. Usually, the organiser approaches different energy companies asking them for a better deal for the consumers who have signed up to the campaign.

Collective switching campaigns demonstrate that there are ways for European consumers to play a role in rebalancing energy retail markets and thereby be more powerful when bargaining with energy suppliers.

However, these campaigns should be seen to provide consumers with a better deal, but are not a long term solution to market complexity.

Why is it good for consumers?

- It helps consumers get a better deal for energy supply and engage more directly in the energy market.

- It provides clear insight on consumers’ perception of the market and their main concerns.

- It improves competition by enabling smaller providers to overcome entry barriers and increase their customer base.

- In many cases, suppliers need to agree to certain rules such as no unfair contract terms or penalties for early termination.

What do we ask the EU for?

- To facilitate the exchange of best practices for collective energy switching campaigns and provide the necessary support.

- Member States and energy regulators should remove regulatory and bureaucratic barriers when implementing the “Clean Energy for All Europeans” package to facilitate collective switching campaigns.

- To provide consumers with objective, reliable information on the available market offers and the possibility to compare them by independent comparison tools.

- To ensure the switching process is smooth and fast and consumers are timely informed and have a continuous service. In the near future consumers should be able to switch in 24 hours.

- Establish specific rules on the renewal and termination of contracts. Switching suppliers should be smooth, fast and consumers should not be penalised by unjustifiable termination fees.

Campaigns organised by BEUC members, all independent national consumer groups, helped strengthen energy customers’ interests in many European countries. A number of these consumer organisations organised several campaigns throughout the years. Until today, almost 6 million consumers have signed up and around 1,400,000 households have switched.

The total savings made by those who switched are estimated at €301.6 million. However, these campaigns prompted some energy companies to adjust their offers. Overall savings can be reasonably expected to be even higher.