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Energy Union needs consumers to succeed

As the European Commission gears up to present its Energy Union plans on Wednesday, The European Consumer Organisation reiterates that its success will depend largely on how effectively it manages to get consumers on-board.

Its goal is closer cooperation among EU countries on energy issues and comprises measures to connect Europe's energy markets, reduce dependence on energy imports and boost energy efficiency.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) commented:

"We welcome this initiative. Finally we have a broad strategy to build a true European energy market. But let's be realistic, it will require consumer engagement to succeed."

"Regulators are making efforts to ensure network stability and prevent electricity supply disruption. But with more consumers now producing their own electricity, efforts which only focus on the needs of big commercial suppliers will fail to adequately respond to such challenges."

"If Europe wants to reduce its dependence on energy imports, it must start with the consumer. Fuel efficient cars and energy efficient buildings are no-brainers if the EU is serious about reducing its huge importation costs."

"Most consumers' primary concerns are to have fair and affordable energy prices. In most cases, the energy market does not deliver these basic needs. Building an Energy Union is an ambitious idea, but policymakers shouldn't lose sight of the fact that fair prices and simple offers need to be delivered first."

The Energy Union plan is expected to propose numerous actions directly affecting consumers' daily lives:

- Update the energy market design to boost choice and facilitate switching between energy suppliers.
- Make cars more fuel efficient and cheaper to run by setting post-2020 CO₂ targets.
- Review the EU's Ecodesign and Energy Labelling laws on the energy-efficiency of consumer products.
- Facilitate development of renewable energy. This requires a commitment that consumers who produce their own energy benefit from reliable rules and guarantees on their investments.

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