

**Contact: Sébastien Pant: +32 (0)2 789 24 01**  
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## **EU Parliament wants consumers to be part of energy transition to renewables**

The European Parliament committee for energy has voted to make it easier for consumers to produce and sell electricity made from renewable energy.

The committee supported the Commission's original proposal to give consumers the right to produce and consume their own energy, to be remunerated when they feed their electricity into the grid, and to remove the requirement for small solar energy installations to get a permit if they want to connect to the grid. The Parliament committee also voted to allow third parties to own solar power installations on the roofs of multi-storey buildings, which would allow tenants to benefit from them [1].

The committee also wants to forbid Member States from retroactively changing support schemes for renewable energy. Government support schemes have been essential to stimulate the production of electricity from renewable energy sources. But in some countries [2], the government took sudden decisions to cut support or tax solar generation. This meant consumers who had installed solar panels on their roofs suddenly found it would take much longer than initially thought to cover the costs of the installation and hampered further rollout of renewable installations.

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) said: "This is how to unlock the potential of an energy transition that is driven by consumers. Instead of always relying on the same old companies to supply us with energy, consumers can also be part of the solution and produce and consume energy locally.

"Installing solar panels has costs for consumers so it's very important they have reliable and stable information about when the investment is likely to pay off."

The same EU Parliament committee also voted this morning to increase the EU target for energy efficiency to 40% by 2030 compared to 2007. This is good news for consumers, including those in energy poverty, a phenomenon which plagues almost one in ten Europeans today [3]. This means Member States should continue with their energy efficiency schemes, such as home insulation or heating systems, after 2020.

Monique Goyens added:

"Efforts to cut energy consumption lead to lower bills and warmer and healthier homes. Increasing the energy efficiency target is good news for Europe's energy consumers."

**ENDS**

[1] As many as around 150 million Europeans, 30% of the population of the EU population in 2014, are tenants. Because blocks of flats usually have many owners, it becomes very complicated for tenants to make use of energy generated using solar panels on the roof. Third party ownership can make this much easier. More [here](#).

[2] Spain for example applied a tax on the generation of renewable energy. Bulgaria and the Czech Republic also made retroactive changes to their renewable support schemes.

[3] See European Commission, 'Energy poverty may affect nearly 11% of the EU population' (2015): <https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/news/energy-poverty-may-affect-nearly-11-eu-population>.