



HOW NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS CAN HELP CONSUMERS PLAY THEIR PART IN GETTING THROUGH THE ENERGY CRISIS



Consumers are facing unprecedented increases in energy bills, putting household budgets under big pressure. Here are 10 ways that national governments should help consumers through the crisis.

PROTECTING CONSUMERS IMMEDIATELY



1

Cut all taxes, charges and levies not directly related to energy production from bills. Too often governments use energy bills as a tax collection form in disguise (e.g. in Belgium, street lighting is paid through consumers' electricity bills). This is a quick win to help soften the blow of bill increases.



2

Let consumers pay their bills by instalments to make it easier for them to keep up with payments and **ban disconnections**. **Consumers are not responsible for this** energy crisis, and they should not be made to pay for it by having their energy cut off if they cannot keep up with astronomically high bills.



3

Provide vouchers but also additional support to consumers, particularly vulnerable ones. While energy vouchers are welcome, they're often not enough or come far too late to make a difference. More targeted support is also needed to help consumers e.g., to switch to energy efficient products.

HELPING CONSUMERS TO SAVE ENERGY SHORT-TERM

4



Public authorities should organise collective purchase campaigns e.g., to get good deals from energy suppliers or to bulk buy energy efficient products like LED lightbulbs (which are 90% more efficient than incandescent bulbs) and make them available to less affluent consumers at a cheap price.

5



Train workers (e.g. health/social professionals) to advise consumers on how to cut their heating bills. Reducing room temperature by just 1 degree, for example, can cut heating consumption by 7% with little compromise on comfort.

6



Roll out communications campaigns reaching consumers through the channels they use (e.g. social media, newspapers, TV, etc.) to make them aware of easy ways to save energy, such as switching to LED light bulbs.

7



Ensure funding for projects by organisations advising consumers on energy efficiency measures. For instance, consumer organisations that provide independent advice e.g. on consumer rights, and energy consumption behaviour/efficiency measures.

HELPING CONSUMERS TO SAVE ENERGY LONG-TERM



8

Cut the red tape involved in installing rooftop solar panels and home renovations e.g. building regulations preventing it or long permitting processes to get connected to the grid or to install roof insulation. This will help consumers to reduce their bills and have more stable energy prices.



9

Train installers so that consumers can shift to heat pumps (*the cheapest green heating solution*) or install solar panels. This will allow consumers to make significant energy savings and play an active role in the green transition.



10

Set up one-stop shops to advise consumers on investments in energy efficiency. 75% of Europe's buildings are still inefficient. Renovated homes will allow consumers to halve their heating consumption and drastically cut their energy bills.



Co-funded by the European Union



May 2022
BEUC-X-2022-046

