

## 4<sup>th</sup> Joint CEER-ECRB Customer Workshop

24 October 2016, 10:30-17:00

Energy Community premises – Am Hof 4, 1010 Vienna/Austria

### WORKSTATION 2

#### Commercial barriers

**Programme:** Commercial practices and routines of current suppliers, DSOs and other market actors may be designed in a way that they – deliberately or not – hinder alternative suppliers, new competitors and consumers alike to fully reap the benefits of liberalized energy retail markets in Europe. Existing practices such as bundling energy offers with other products, one-off rebates, loyalty programs, or charging consumers fees for terminating an existing contract, may be among the most prominent commercial barriers to consumer switching despite complying with national laws. Other examples may concern commercial practices and product design with a view to prosuming (e.g. combined supply and feed-in contracts), energy efficiency (selling products and expertise at favorable prices to own consumers) and demand response (e.g. special service arrangements only “big” suppliers have the manpower to offer). Although not necessarily against the law, these commercial barriers exist due to the different market power of energy service companies. The workstation then aims at exploring which commercial barriers need further (regulatory) attention without running the danger of overregulating European energy retail markets.

#### Testimonials:

- What are current commercial practices in your country which may be seen as threatening high(er) levels of consumer activity?
- How are contemporary energy products designed?
- How do (established) energy service companies secure their customer base (marketing strategies, offer design, other practices)?

#### Discussion:

- Which practices seem acceptable and which may need further (regulatory) attention?
- How to make sure that new energy service companies/new products stand a fair chance on the market?
- What role do regulators have in assessing and commenting commercial practices?