

ACER's Communication Policy

January 2024

Introduction

The EU Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) takes seriously the need to be a transparent and open organisation. Accordingly, our communications and outreach broadly seek to inform, listen to and engage in respectful relationships with our stakeholders.

ACER in the wider EU energy context

Europe's commitment to become the first continent to be "carbon neutral" by 2050, as set by the European Green Deal, requires a profound transformation across all levels of society and the economy, including the energy sector. Ultimately, ACER is working alongside many others to have well-functioning EU energy markets that safeguard reliable, affordable and (in future) clean energy for all Europeans.

Our role as an EU Agency is to foster a fully integrated and well-functioning European energy market, where electricity and gas are traded and supplied to the highest integrity and transparency standards. The benefits of EU energy market integration to Member States include enhanced security of supply, reduced volatility of prices, and ability to meet increased flexibility and balancing needs, while consumers benefit from wider choice, fair prices and greater protection.

To this end, ACER works closely with the European institutions, national governments as well as market players and their industry representative bodies at EU level. We also talk to academia, thinktanks and civil society for a broader perspective. This helps us to get the insights and opinions of those with an interest in or who are impacted by our work.

Purpose of this ACER communication policy

This ACER communication policy helps create a shared view of communication as a strategic tool and an important means of achieving the goals of our mandate. It sets out;

- why the Agency communicates;
- the general principles that guide our communication;
- our overarching approach to stakeholder engagement; and
- roles and responsibilities and who does what.

Why ACER should communicate

Everything ACER does is part of a greater goal to transform the European energy system to clean energy for future generations. This is the context in which we, as an EU Agency, work. Our perspective is European. We act independently and in the public interest. As a public institution, we have both an obligation to communicate and interest in doing so well. By being clear in our communication we build awareness of the Agency's work and how it fits into the wider EU energy and climate goals. This underpins our legitimacy. Whether we are talking to energy experts, national governments or different policy makers we should be clear about our regulatory mandate, our objectives and what we stand for.

Laws

- Under the ACER [regulation](#), we are required to publish certain official documents and are afforded discretion to carry out our own communication initiatives. We, therefore, provide a range of products and services on the ACER website (our main communications channel and the hub of our digital presence) which help our communication goals.
- ACER is subject, among others, to the laws and regulations that apply to the protection of personal data, and to the principle of public access to official records (whilst respecting confidentiality).
- When engaging with our content, please bear in mind our [copyright policy and disclaimers](#).

General Principles

We are guided by 7 communication principles (as illustrated in Figure 1).

Figure 1: ACER's seven communication principles



- We are **strategic** and **audience-focused** in our communications. *Strategic* means we focus on the priorities as defined in our Work Programme and work with our members (the national energy regulatory authorities) to drive forward EU energy market integration, playing a pivotal role in the challenges of the EU's energy transition while keeping security and affordability at the forefront. *Audience-focused* means that we apply an audience-first approach and tailor our communication to the needs of the audience.
- We provide **impartial** and **evidence-based information**. Being *impartial* means that we are not under any specific influence in the work that we do or the decisions that we adopt and are neutral and impartial in our advisory role as an EU Agency vis-à-vis the political level. *Evidence-based* means we use data to inform our decision-making.

- We are committed to **transparency** and providing **accessible, timely** information. *Transparency* means we strive to be open to views, and open with information and data provided it does not concern ongoing deliberations and is not required by law to be confidential. It also means that across our work we provide opportunities for interested parties to input to our work in different ways (e.g. consultations, events etc). *Accessible* means, among other things, that we use language that is simple and clear and we provide (free) access to our decisions, publications, public consultations, data and events. *Timely* means that we deliver communications in a timeframe that is best to optimise its impact.

Communication Style

When communicating, ACER is conscious of its style. Our goal is to provide a user-friendly experience for those engaging with our content. In general, we strive to ensure:

- The language is clear and accessible to all.
- The communications material and tone are tailored to suit the channel and audience.
- The information is delivered objectively and impartially.
- The frequency and detail of communication does not overwhelm, and hyperlinks are provided to relevant documents.
- Data is shared in different formats (e.g. dynamic charts, infographics etc.) to make it accessible, understandable and useful for audiences.
- More digital communications. We do not print our publications. We use digital tools and virtual meetings to facilitate broader access and to decrease our carbon footprint.

Stakeholder Engagement

We value input into our work from a broad range of sources. This helps inform our decisions and build trusts and confidence in the market. Hence, we actively engage with EU policy makers, energy representative bodies at EU level, and the entities we regulate in line with our strategic objectives. We consult and involve energy market players and stakeholders in matters affecting them. We strive to be clear about the level of influence that is possible on

any topic to ensure a shared understanding of the purpose of our engagement. We aim for a well-balanced representation of interests, prioritising interactions that bring the most value in helping us deliver on the goals set out in our [Work Programme](#). We offer several avenues for this, including:

- Public consultations;
- A variety of meetings and events such as webinars, workshops, expert groups, roundtables and conferences;
- An [online feedback tool on reports](#) published on our website;
- Our participation in select external events, see our [Speaking Request Form](#); and
- A range of channels where feedback can be given or queries raised such as our [REMIT query form](#), social media (LinkedIn, X and YouTube), and e-mail. See our [Contact Us](#) page for the relevant e-mail addresses.

To stay informed of our activities, we encourage interested parties to:

- subscribe to receive ACER's Latest News; and
- follow us on X, Facebook and LinkedIn.

We facilitate stakeholders input to our work by publishing forward our [events calendar](#) and our [consultation calendar](#). We also offer a free service to be [automatically alerted of new public consultations](#).

Press Relations

- The ACER press office deals with inquiries from media only. It is open Monday to Friday, from 09:00 and 17:30 CET.
- All media inquiries should be addressed to [press\(at\)acer.europa.eu](mailto:press@acer.europa.eu). Ensuring your query is addressed correctly will quicken our response time.
- We seek to provide a quick response, understanding the tight deadlines journalists work under and the need to have accurate information about ACER communicated to the public while it is relevant.

- If you are not a media representative, please contact us on [info\(at\)acer.europa.eu](mailto:info(at)acer.europa.eu)

It is also worthwhile to understand who engages with the press on behalf of ACER:

- **Una Shortall** is ACER's spokesperson and the first point of contact for press, dealing with their requests and setting up interviews. Ms. Shortall can be contacted at [Una.SHORTALL\(at\)acer.europa.eu](mailto:Una.SHORTALL(at)acer.europa.eu)
- **Christian Zinglensen**, ACER Director, is the Agency's legal representative and manages the day-to-day operations at ACER. Requests for quotes or interviews with from Mr. Zinglensen can be made via [press\(at\)acer.europa.eu](mailto:press(at)acer.europa.eu)
- ACER staff can always ask the ACER press office for advice and support in contacts with journalists.

Responsibilities

Communication is a shared responsibility. By being clear, open and respectful in our communication, we build our reputation and awareness of ACER and our mission.

- The ACER Director, in managing the day-to-day operations at ACER, sets the framework and providing the conditions for the communication work to function.
- ACER members (the national regulatory authorities) play a crucial role in the development of ACER policy at working group and Board of Regulators level and are encouraged to spread (at EU and national level) ACER external communication messages deriving from the outcome of the ACER Board of Regulators meetings.
- The ACER Strategy Delivery and Communications (SDC) team is responsible for driving and implementing all internal and external communication. It serves as the Press Office. It supports ACER's Departments in making messages relevant, understandable and attractive to the target audiences. For impactful communication on an ACER piece of work, the communications piece should start well before it reaches SDC. This is why ACER mainstreams communication as an integral part of the work of all staff.

- ACER Heads of Department and Team Leaders are responsible for communications (internal and external) within their areas of responsibility. The planning, implementation and design of communication efforts take place in close cooperation with the SDC team. Information communicated externally should normally be available to the relevant parties internally at the same time as the external communication.
- Every employee has the right to receive the information required to perform their work in the best possible way. Staff to have a responsibility to stay sufficiently informed to carry out a good job, including sharing information with managers and colleagues. Staff who embrace this culture of sharing and collaboration will want to continuously improve our communications to be more impactful and together promote the bigger picture of ACER's contribution to Europe's clean energy goals. Every employee is the face of ACER to the outside world. We encourage ACER staff to actively participate in the discussions on social media to reinforce ACER's institutional voice.