

# Dialoguing with stakeholders, learning from their feedback

**Our long-term business success depends to a large degree on our ability to understand and address our stakeholders' expectations. Equally important is helping our customers, our employees, policymakers, and other stakeholders to understand our business activities and their role in propelling the energy transition. This helps us earn stakeholders' trust and maintain our good reputation. Moreover, dialogue helps us identify stakeholders' concerns early and address them whenever we can as we expand our distribution grids, invest in digital infrastructure, and launch new businesses. Our discussions with policymakers are important for us as well: to make large, long-term investments in infrastructure and new energy solutions for customers, we need a stable policy and regulatory environment. This framework should support the energy transition, in particular the integration and use of renewables and other efficient, climate-friendly technologies. In some cases, this will require amendments to the existing framework, amendments that we believe are essential for the energy transition's success. Although the energy transition enjoys broad public support in many European countries, transparent and constructive discussion is still necessary to achieve a reasonable balance between ambitious climate protection and the interests of stakeholders who are adversely affected by it.**

## Our approach

We continually seek opportunities to dialogue with our stakeholders, understand their viewpoints, and talk to them transparently about our business. It's part of our daily work at the local, national, and European level. Stakeholder management is a core process of our corporate governance. We factor in the short- and long-term impacts our business has on stakeholders. The type of dialogue we choose varies by stakeholder and issue. It ranges from information campaigns and discussion forums with trade associations and NGOs to face-to-face discussions and public advocacy.

We actively participate in the policy debates on the issues that affect us – through lobbying, media interviews with our executives, and their appearances as public speakers. In addition, policymakers and regulators frequently invite us to provide our technical and energy expertise as part of their

decision-making processes. We also offer our expertise voluntarily. These types of advocacy are important because the energy sector is significantly influenced by policy and regulatory decisions. We take part in discussions on energy, environmental, and climate policy in a variety of other forums as well. For example, we're a member of the steering committee of Agora, a German think tank. Agora brings together policymakers, energy industry leaders, and renowned researchers to discuss issues relating to the energy transition.

All of our lobbying activities and dialogue formats comply with national and European laws and guidelines for the representation of corporate interests and responsible lobbying.

A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest in our company. Below is an overview of our main stakeholders, their significance for us, and their expectations of us. [[→ GRI 102-42/43](#)]

Stakeholder groups [→ GRI 102-40/44]

Significance	Stakeholder	Expectations
Our customers' purchasing decisions determine our success.	Customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A secure energy supply at reasonable prices</li> <li>An active role in propelling the energy transformation in Europe</li> <li>Support for self-generation and energy efficiency</li> </ul>
Our employees' performance is crucial to our success.	Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A safe, interesting, and inclusive work environment</li> <li>Fair pay and equal opportunity</li> </ul>
Our investors' capital is essential for the successful development of our company.	Shareholders and investors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparent information about how we manage chances and risks</li> <li>Information about our potential value growth</li> </ul>
We procure the services of numerous suppliers and subcontractors.	Suppliers and business partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fair terms and conditions</li> <li>Mutually beneficial collaboration</li> </ul>
The transformation of Europe's energy system can succeed only if it is actively shaped and supported by people as consumers and citizens.	Communities and regions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency about planned measures</li> <li>Active participation at the municipal level</li> </ul>
Our business activities are strongly influenced by social needs and developments and the political decisions based on them.	Policymakers, society and the general public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparent decision-making, fair treatment of customers, and innovative, forward-looking customer solutions</li> <li>A reliable, economical and environmentally-friendly energy supply</li> <li>Compliance with laws and regulations</li> </ul>
We see universities and social institutions as important cooperative partners. Non-governmental organisations provide us with valuable information on public expectations.	Non-governmental organisations and sustainability experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transparency</li> <li>Accountability</li> </ul>

Organisation and responsibilities

Corporate headquarters defines our position and talking points on issues that affect the E.ON Group as a whole and establishes the framework for our activities to engage stakeholders. The Corporate Communications & Political Affairs division at corporate headquarters is responsible for our communications with policymakers in Brussels and Berlin. Our regional units, which are best able to assess the needs and conditions in their sales or service territory, conduct our stakeholder dialogue on the local and regional level. Corporate headquarters provides advice on the design and implementation of stakeholder engagement projects. Depending on the topic, these projects may involve a variety of divisions and departments.

In addition, our distribution system operators and some of our customer-solution businesses have employees whose role is to engage in dialogue with the municipalities in their service territory.

Guidelines and policies

Our Communications & Political Affairs Policy includes guidance for Group stakeholder management. It defines the principles, roles, and tasks of our stakeholder management, which includes sustainability management. It applies to our relations with all stakeholder groups inside and outside E.ON with the exception of the capital market, which is served by our Investor Relations department. In addition, our Code of Conduct contains a chapter entitled, "Creating sustainable relationships," which defines our ethical standards for donations and sponsorships and for anti-corruption. The code categorically rules out donations to political parties, candidates, and incumbents.

We've been registered in the EU Transparency Register since 2011. The register contains a list of the organisations and individuals who engage in lobbying at EU institutions as well as the annual financial budget of each organisation. It also includes a code of conduct defining principles for ethical and transparent lobbying. By registering we pledge to abide by this code.

Specific actions

Our regional units conduct numerous dialogue forums and information events. For example, the board members of three of our distribution system operators in Germany (Avacon, E.DIS, and Hansewerk, Bayernwerk) meet annually with municipal shareholders and representatives to discuss grid expansion, landscape preservation, the latest advances in smart grids, and other issues. We take the viewpoints, interests, and concerns of the people who live near our assets very seriously. Their feedback helps us to ensure

a reliable energy supply and promote the energy transition while having the least-possible impact on people, communities, and the environment. In addition, we periodically invite outside stakeholders to attend meetings of our → [Sustainability Council](#) in order to hear what they think about our sustainability activities.

We engage individual stakeholder groups in different ways. For example, our → [Customer Immersion programme](#) brings our senior managers and employees into direct contact with residential and business customers in a variety of formats, including small-group discussions and online chats. We use periodic corporate governance road shows held in Europe's major financial centres to meet face-to-face with investors and analysts to discuss corporate governance, climate protection, and other sustainability issues. We engage our → [employees](#) in a wide variety of formats and programmes.

We also use social media. Our tweets and Facebook posts reach policymakers, the media, trade associations, academic institutions, and members of the general public across Europe and around the world. We have a total of over 682,000 followers on the two channels, a number that has grown steadily over time. We also use Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn.  
[→ [GRI 102-43/44](#), → [GRI 103-2](#)]

We're a member of a variety of industry networks and trade associations in individual countries and at the European level. They provide a useful forum for sharing information about climate protection, customer needs, and industry trends and for representing shared interests to policymakers and regulators. Examples of our memberships include:

- German Federal Association of Energy and Water Industries (BDEW); through the BDEW we're also represented in two European trade associations, Eurelectric and Eurogas.
- German Industry Initiative for Energy Efficiency (Deutsche Unternehmensinitiative Energieeffizienz, or DENEFF): a multi-industry network of companies and organisations dedicated to enhancing energy efficiency.
- Bitkom: an industry initiative for the digital economy, which we joined in October 2018; through it we're also represented in the Federal Association of German Industry (Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie) and its European umbrella organisation, BusinessEurope.
- E.ON executives have sat on the Economic Councils of both the CDU and SPD, two of Germany's major political parties.

- Smart Energy Demand Coalition (SEDC) and European Distribution System Operators for Smart Grids (EDSO for Smart Grids): European associations promoting smart grids and the digitalisation of the energy sector.
- Energy UK: a British trade association for energy.
- Swedenergy: a private association of companies involved in the production, sale, and trading of electricity in Sweden.
- Romanian Federation of Associations of Energy Utilities: a federation of energy suppliers in Romania.
- World Green Building Council (WorldBGC's Europe network): a partnership to accelerate the shift toward a sustainable built environment in Europe.