



# **Customer Information Handbook**

## **A review of good practices**

**Ref: E06-CPR-04-03**  
**6 December 2006**

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## 1 Executive summary

In the framework of the opening of residential electricity and natural gas markets for all European countries from 1 July 2007, ERGEG carried out a survey on Pre-Contractual Information (PCI).

This survey mainly aims at putting forward good practices in terms of pre-contractual customer information in the countries that have already opened their residential market to competition. This review of good practices, based on ERGEG's in-depth knowledge and experience of the market, has produced a handbook that provides energy regulators with a set of tools in the field of customer information. Indeed, regulators are expected to contribute to the strengthening of customers' position in the liberalised market. The publication of this report will also present to stakeholders good practices from regulators across the EU.

The main results of the survey are the following:

Three categories of good practices and recommendations can be identified:

- 1 - Customer information service units
- 2 - PCI materials providing general information
- 3 - PCI materials providing specific information on suppliers

### 1 - Customer information service units

In addition to information from service providers, most of the sample countries offer a non-commercial customer information service, either managed by the regulator or one that is the result of a joint initiative by regulators, consumer ombudsmen, consumer associations and so forth. These customer information service units can be reached by phone, e-mail, mail or fax. They all offer pre-contractual information through websites. All customer information service units are non-profit organisations.

Some ratios are provided at the end of the survey to aid towards the shaping of future customer information service units. These ratios are concerned with the amount of contacts received and replies given to customers from customer information service units run by regulators or consumer ombudsmen in the sample countries. Indeed, all sample countries dedicate resources to customer information. However, the ratios demonstrate that the dedicated amount varies substantially.

### 2 - PCI materials providing general information

This second category of PCI materials provide customers with general information on the procedures in relation to the choice of an energy supplier, on bill components and on fees that can be applied to particular types of consumers.

The following materials are recommended as good practices by sample countries:

- consumer guides and fact sheets
- FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)
- leaflets accompanying incumbent suppliers' or DSOs' bills
- multi-channel advertising campaigns by regulators
- information notices designed by regulators and delivered by suppliers prior to contract subscription

### 3 – PCI materials providing specific information on suppliers

This third category of PCI materials provide customers with nominative information relative to the nature of services offered by active suppliers: prices, duration of contracts and quality of service.

The following materials are recommended as good practices by sample countries:

- - lists of suppliers
- - price comparators
- - statistics on complaints received and quality of service delivered by service providers

## 2 Introduction

Year 2007 is an important year for the internal market in the European Union. According to the European electricity (2003/54/EC) and gas (2003/55/EC) directives, all member states should have opened their electricity and gas markets latest by July 1 to competition.

In the framework of the Customer Protection Task Force (CPR TF), a survey on pre-contractual customer information was on the EREGG 2006 agenda. The experience and the good practices in those countries that have opened their residential markets could benefit those that will open their residential markets by July 1, 2007.

Pre-contractual information may be defined as general information provided to energy end-users prior to contractual arrangement with a service provider (Distribution System Operator - DSO - and/or a supplier).

The objectives of this survey are the following:

- a review of the pre-contractual information available in the EREGG countries that have opened their residential energy market to competition as of 31 December 2005;
- a set of recommendations relative to pre-contractual information in these countries.

The findings that constitute a handbook on customer information are published in the present document.

Firstly, the report puts forward a mapping of the different sample countries on the basis of the way they handle pre-contractual information and requests of information from energy end-users.

Secondly, the report focuses on good practices in terms of pre-contractual information available in the sample countries.

Ultimately, the report dwells on the quantitative aspects of pre-contractual information by giving evaluations of the number of contacts relative to energy end-users and proceeded by each sample country.

### 3 Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample of the survey

The countries within the EU/EEA that have opened their electricity and/or natural gas residential markets as of December 31, 2005 to competition were the basis of this survey.

Thus, the CPR TF requested the inputs from the energy regulators of the following countries:

- Austria
- Belgium (Flanders)
- Denmark
- Finland
- Germany
- Ireland
- Italy
- The Netherlands
- Norway
- Spain
- Sweden
- The UK

All countries sent either complete or partial answers. Therefore, the response rate is very high and ERGEG members shall be thanked for their helpful contribution.

Answers from Italy refer only to gas, since the electricity market for residential customers is not open yet. Answers from Sweden, Finland and Norway refer only to electricity, since the gas market for residential customers is also not open yet.

#### 3.2 Collection of inputs for the report: 2 questionnaires

In order to collect the data that would serve as inputs in the report, 2 questionnaires were developed:

- a qualitative questionnaire (E06-CPR-03-03)
- a quantitative questionnaire (E06-CPR-03-04)

##### Qualitative questionnaire

The qualitative questionnaire aimed at collecting good practices and recommendations relative to pre-contractual information. This questionnaire was to be filled by the energy regulators.

Sample countries were asked to describe 5 pre-contractual information practices available in their country that they would like to recommend to the other ERGEG countries.

Each description had to include:

- the pre-contractual information content (e.g.: price comparator, FAQ, consumer guide and so forth)
- the pre-contractual information emitter(s) (e.g.: the energy regulator, a consumer association, journalists, DSOs and so forth )

- the pre-contractual information channel(s) (e.g.: web, mail, telephone, radio, outlets)
- a set of scanned images or screen shots of the given pre-contractual material in order to make the description more lively.

All contributions of sample countries are not described completely. To illustrate the scope of PCI tools, a representative sample is presented in this survey.

*A synthesis of the contributions is presented below in section 3.2 "Good practices and recommendations relative to pre-contractual information (PCI) materials in sample countries".*

#### Quantitative questionnaire

The quantitative questionnaire aimed at collecting data relative to the pre-contractual information contacts received or delivered by the energy regulator to energy end-users. This questionnaire was to be filled by the energy regulator except if another authority seemed better placed to do it.

In the UK, Energywatch answered this questionnaire instead of Ofgem (British energy regulator).

In Sweden, the Consumer Electricity Advice Bureau answered this questionnaire instead of EMI (Swedish energy regulator).

In the 10 other sample countries, the energy regulators answered the questionnaire.

This questionnaire enabled the collection of national data relative to the following items:

- number of energy end-users
- number of employees in the customer unit in charge of the information and requests of energy end-users
- number of contacts received by the customer service unit from energy end-users (incoming contacts)
- number of contacts delivered by the customer service unit to energy end-users (outgoing contacts)
- channels and tools used to receive or deliver pre-contractual information to energy end-users

*A synthesis of the contributions is presented below in section 3.3 "Quantitative aspects and communication channels".*

## 4 Results of the survey

### 4.1 ERGEG members and the way they handle information and requests of energy end-users

Each ERGEG member has a specific way of dealing with information and requests from energy end-users.

Nevertheless, some countries resort to the same kinds of organisations, as shown in graph 1:

Graph 1: Main organisations dealing with non-commercial information/requests of energy end-users in sample countries

Organis. Country	Authorities						Consumer associations	TSOs and DSOs	Branch organisations
	Energy regulators	Public consumer ombudsmen <sup>1</sup>	Ministries of Economy or Industry/ Energy	Regional authorities	Competition authorities	Consumer authorities			
Austria	X						X		X
Belgium (Flanders)	X		X	X					
Denmark	X	X					X	X	X
Finland	X					X			
Germany	X						X		
Ireland	X						X		
Italy	X		X						
Norway	X	X	X		X		X		
Spain	X		X	X	X		X		
Sweden	X	X	X			X	X		X
Netherlands	X	X	X		X		X		
The UK	X	X					X		

### 4.2 Good practices and recommendations relative to pre-contractual information (PCI) materials in sample countries

Three categories of good practices and recommendations can be identified throughout the data collected in the qualitative questionnaire:

- PCI materials providing **general information**
- PCI materials providing **specific information on suppliers**
- Other interesting initiatives carried out to promote PCI

<sup>1</sup> **Ombudsman.** Public organisation which receives, investigates and facilitates the resolution of complaints involving consumers and service providers. The 'customer ombudsman' term may also be used to name the internal mediation service of a service provider.



#### 4.2.1 PCI materials providing general information

This first category of PCI materials encompasses materials aiming at improving energy end-users' knowledge on open markets. These materials provide consumers with general and practical information in relation with the selection of an energy supplier.

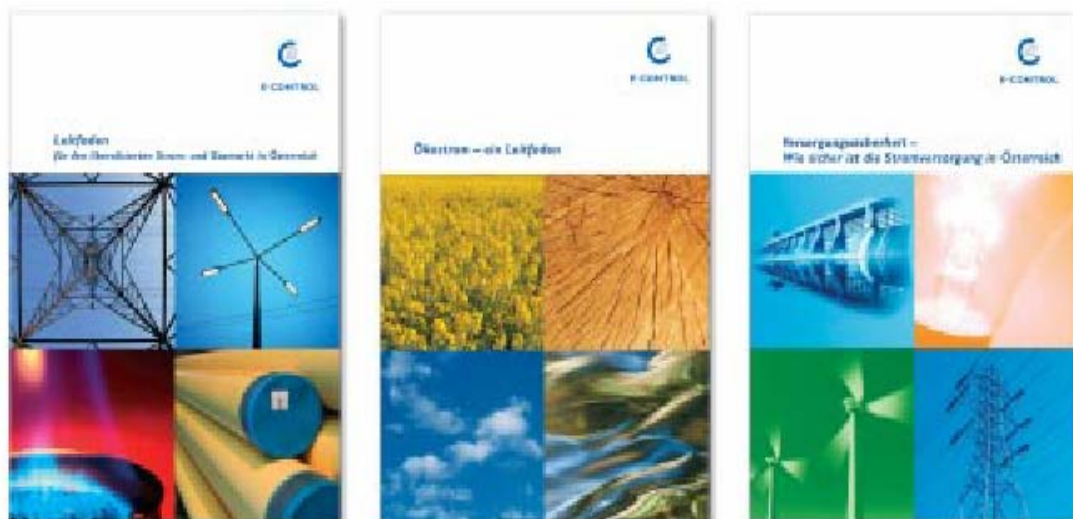
##### a) Consumer guides and fact sheets

In most sample countries, these materials are issued by regulators, consumer ombudsmen and consumer associations. They are available on-line (website pages or specific documents to be downloaded) and in the form of brochures, leaflets or fact sheets on particular issues such as “what to do with your energy when moving in”, “how to switch supplier” or “how to save money with your energy”.

These documents are most of the time concise and resort to terms easy to understand for end-users. Some of the sample countries point out that these documents have to be illustrated with pictures in order to enhance their liveliness.

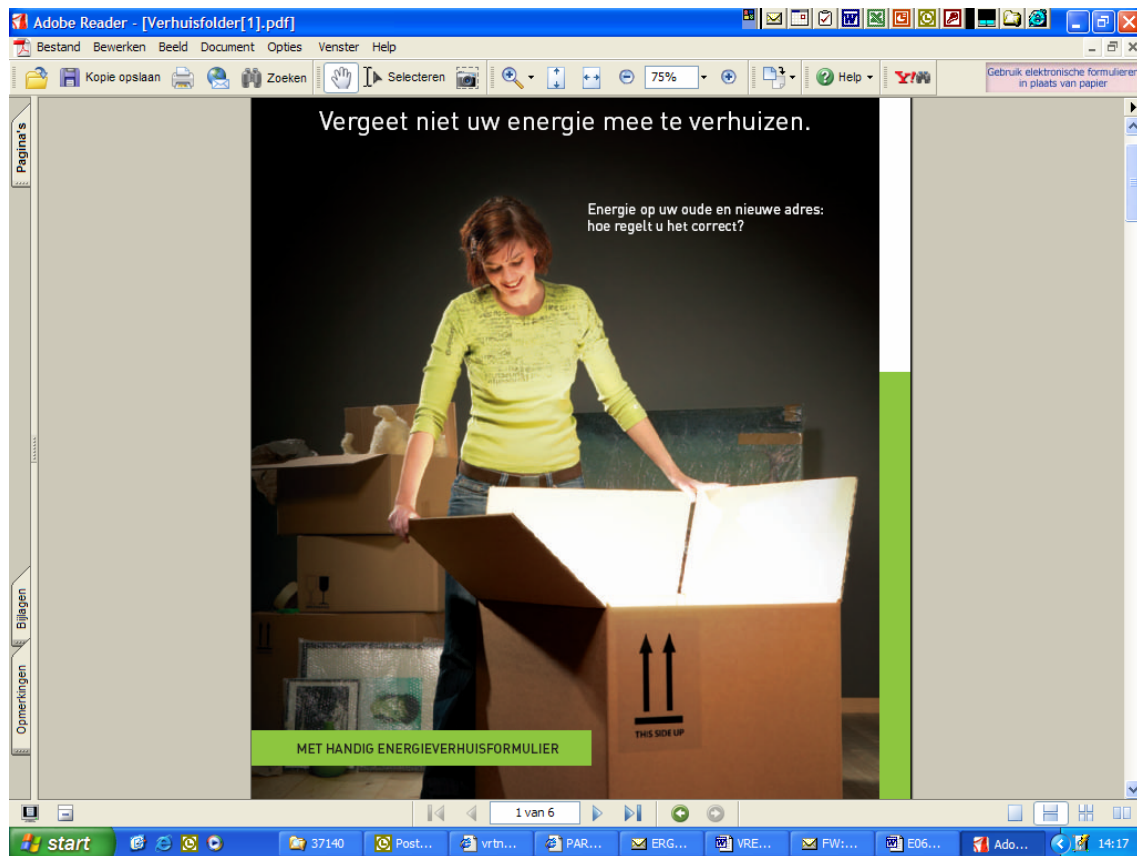
**In Austria**, since the beginning of the market opening, Energie-Control has published five different brochures. In these brochures Energie-Control describes in simple words what has changed since the electricity and gas market have been opened to competition. In cooperation with the “Verein für Konsumenteninformation” (customer association) Energie-Control has published a special customer brochure. In this brochure it is described, how easy it is to switch the supplier. These brochures were sent to many public authorities and consumer associations. On request from customers, these brochures are also sent per mail to them for free.

Graph 2: Brochures relative to customer information (E-Control)



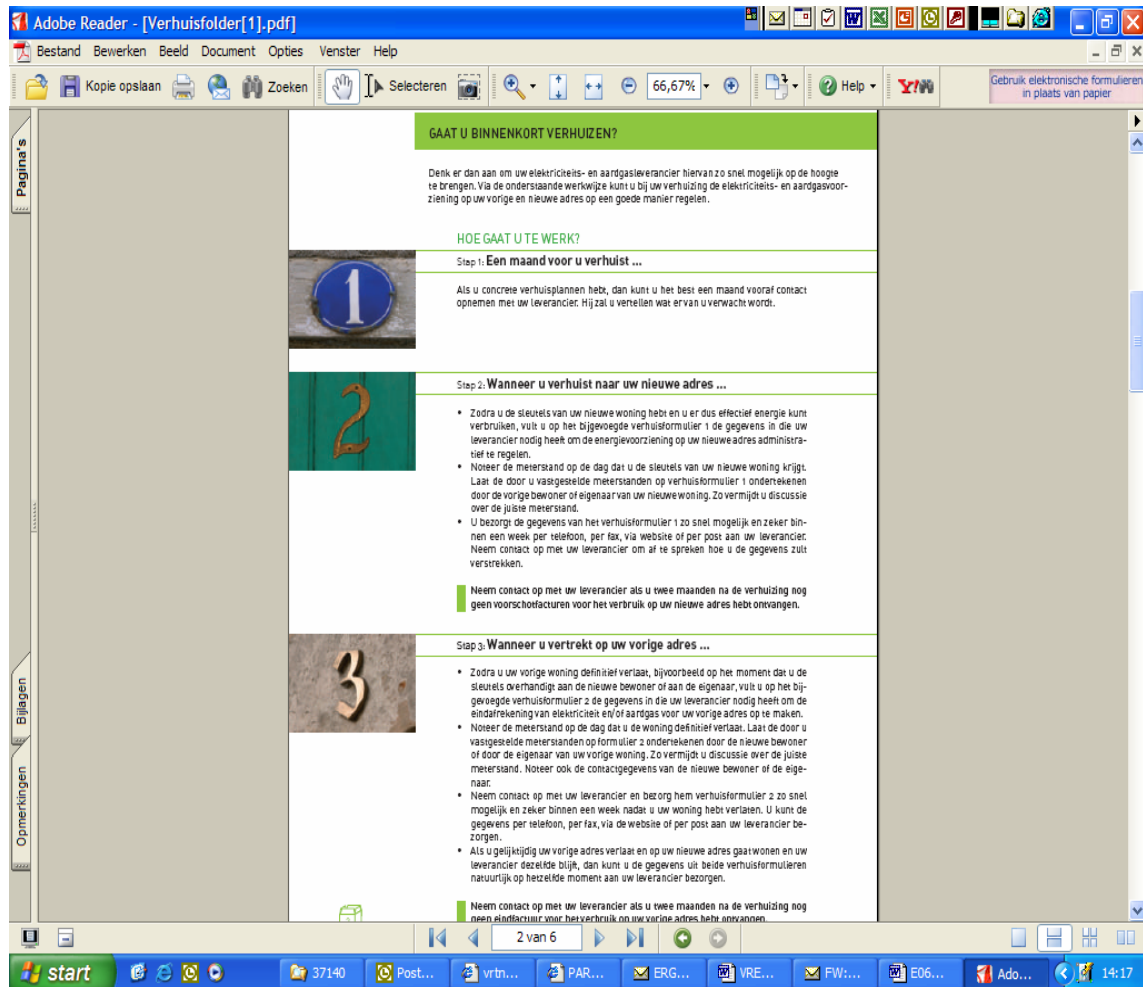
In Belgium (Flanders), a brochure on what to do when moving “Don’t forget to move your energy” was issued by the Flemish regulator. Indeed, VREG received a lot of questions and complaints from consumers relevant to moving from one residence to another and what to do with the energy supplier. This brochure delivers practical information.

Graph 3: Front-page of the brochure “Don’t forget to move your energy” by VREG



This brochure has a step-by-step approach and gives information about what to do when a customer moves (e.g. informing supplier of the move, informing the supplier of the meter index on the day of the move).

Graph 4: Step-by-step guidance in the “Don’t forget to move your energy” brochure by VREG



There is also a small “move-quiz” on the VREG website. A few general questions are asked about the steps a customer has to take in order to “move” his energy supply to his new residence. When the wrong answer is given, the right answer is explained to the visitor.

Graph 5: Move-quiz by VREG



**In Finland**, a guidebook for consumers "How to compete electricity retailers" was issued by Energy Market Authority (EMA). This guidebook includes information about the issues related to the request for offers from electricity suppliers and to switching supplier. The guidebook is made for those end-users who do not have Internet or who do not have the skills to use it (elderly consumers especially).

The content of the guidebook is not complicated and the layout is very simple. Some of the information is shown in pictures. This makes the guidebook easy to read and understand. The publication includes information on different elements of electricity supply and also some examples how to calculate and compare the prices of different electricity retailers.

The guidebook also includes an example of the electricity invoice. The most important information is pointed out by colours and underlining. The consumer is also informed on how to find the amounts of consumed electricity.

One of the most relevant sections of this publication concerns the request for proposals and the supplier's switch. The guidebook clarifies how to contact the retailers and what to

do with the old and new electricity contracts. These processes are clarified through phase-by-phase pictures.

Graph 6: Pages dedicated to an explanation of the different bill components in the guidebook "How to compete electricity retailers?" by EMA

**Esimerkkilaskelmia**

**Pientalo tai kerrostaloluoneisto, sähkön kulutus vuodessa 5 000 kWh**  
 Asuin- tai kerrostalossa, jossa on sähkökuus ja kulutat sähköä keskimäärin 5 000 kilowattituntia (kWh) vuodessa. Nykyinen sähköenergian perusmaksu on 2,40 euroa kuukaudessa. Yhdestä kWh:sta maksat kulutusmaksu 4,40 senttiä.

**Maksat sähköenergiasta:**  
 12 kk x 2,40 euroa/kk + 5 000 kWh x 4,40 senttiä/kWh  
 = 28,80 + 220 = 248,80 euroa/vuosi

**Yhtiö 1 tarjoaa** sinulle yhtä kilowattituntia yleissähköä 3,83 senttiä ja pyytää 12 euroa vuositasaisesta perusmaksusta.  
 12 euroa/vuosi + 5 000 kWh x 3,83 senttiä/kWh  
 = 12 + 191,50 = 203,50 euroa/vuosi  
 Säästösi on 45,30 euroa vuodessa.

**Yhtiö 2 tarjoaa** sinulle vielä edullisempaa kulutusmaksua eli 3,74 senttiä kilowattitunnilla.  
 Yhtiön perusmaksu on 40 euroa vuodessa.  
 40 euroa/vuosi + 5 000 kWh x 3,74 senttiä/kWh  
 = 40 + 187 = 227 euroa/vuosi  
 Säästösi on nyt vain 21,80 euroa vuodessa.

**Sähkölämmittimen pientalo, sähkön kulutus vuodessa 20 000 kWh**  
 Asuin- tai kerrostalossa, jossa sähkön kulutus on 20 000 kWh vuodessa. Siltä päiväsiähköt on 8 000 kWh ja yösiähköt 12 000 kWh. Nykyinen sähköenergian perusmaksu on 42 euroa vuodessa, päiväenergian kulutusmaksu on 4,70 senttiä/kWh ja yöenergian kulutusmaksu 3,10 senttiä/kWh.

**Maksat sähköenergiasta:**  
 42 euroa/vuosi + 8 000 kWh x 4,70 senttiä/kWh + 12 000 kWh x 3,10 senttiä/kWh  
 = 42 + 376 + 372 = 790 euroa/vuosi

**Yhtiö 1 tarjoaa** aikasähköä hintaan 2 euroa/kk (perusmaksu) ja 4,6 senttiä/kWh (päiväenergia) ja 3,0 senttiä/kWh (yöenergia).  
 2 euroa/kk x 12 kk + 8 000 kWh x 4,6 senttiä/kWh + 12 000 kWh x 3,0 senttiä/kWh  
 = 24 + 368 + 360 = 752 euroa/vuosi  
 Valitsemalla sähkönyyjiä säästät 98 euroa vuodessa.

4

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**SÄHKÖYHTIÖ OY**

Maja Mekäläinen  
 Energiakatu 4 A 2  
 00210 SÄHKÖLÄ

**LASKUERITTELY** 03.09.2004  
 Sopimusnumero 123456  
 Asiakasnro 789101  
 Asiakas Maja Mekäläinen  
 Käyttöpaikan numero 45678  
 Käyttöpaikka Energiakatu 4 A 2  
 00210 SÄHKÖLÄ

Tuote Yleissähkö

Arvokäsitöksen perusteena oleva vuosimäärä 5 000 kWh

**SEURAAVAN 12 KUUKAUDEN ARVIOMAKSUT**

Sähköenergia Yleissähkö	perusmaksu	01.10.2004-30.09.2005	2,40 eurkk	28,80
kulutusmaksu	01.10.2004-30.09.2005	5 000 kWh	4,40 ctkWh	220,00
<b>Sähköenergia yhteensä</b>				<b>248,80</b>

**Sähkönsiirto Yleissiirto**

perusmaksu	01.10.2004-30.09.2005	1,68 eurkk	20,16	
kulutusmaksu	01.10.2004-30.09.2005	5 000 kWh	3,06 ctkWh	153,00
sähköverot (1 kookki)	01.10.2004-30.09.2005	5 000 kWh	0,906460 ctkWh	45,32
<b>Sähkönsiirto yhteensä</b>				<b>218,48</b>

**ARVIOMAKSUT YHTEENSÄ VUODESSA** 467,28

Hinnat sisältävät arvonlisäveron.  
 Tässä esimerkkilaskussa punaisella alustettuja tietoja tarvitsit sähkönyyjiä kilpailuttamassa.

*Handwritten calculation:*  

$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \text{ } 2 \\ \times 3,74 \\ \hline 187,0000 \\ + 40 \\ \hline \text{SÄHKÖENERGIÄ 227 EUROA} \\ \text{YHTEENSÄ} \end{array}$$

5

In Sweden, the Energy Markets Inspectorate drafts and makes information sheets available for customers. The information sheets can be found on the homepage of the Inspectorate or can be sent to customers. The Inspectorate is producing new information sheets about relevant customer issues such as "how to make a gas/electricity supplier switch", "connection and fees" and "network tariffs". Furthermore, the homepage of the Inspectorate provides general information about the electricity market.

Graph 7: Example of an information sheet by Energy Markets Inspectorate



### Byte av gashandlare

Om du vill byta naturgashandlare tar du kontakt med en ny handlare och kommer överens om ett avtal. Tänk dock på att du inte kan byta under löpande avtals-tid. När ni slutat avtal skickar den nya gashandlaren en ansökan om bytet till nätföretaget. Detta ska göras senast en månad i förväg och bytet får endast ske den första dagen i en kalendermånad. Syftet med ansökan är att informera nätföretaget om när leveransstart ska ske och vilken anläggning som det gäller. Nätföretaget är sedan skyldigt att bekräfta bytet inom fem vardagar från mottagandet, både till den nya handlaren och till den gamla. Handlarbytet är inte genomfört förrän nätföretag har bekräftat bytet.

### MER INFORMATION

#### Svenska Gasföreningen

Branschorganisation som företräder naturgasintressenter inom områdena teknik, säkerhet och energipolitik.  
[Läs mer på www.gasforeningen.se.](http://www.gasforeningen.se)

#### Energimarknadsinspektionen

Energimarknadsinspektionen vid Statens energimyndighet är tillsynsmyndighet för den svenska el- och naturgasmarknaden. Energimyndigheten ser till att överföring av naturgas bedrivs effektivt och till skäliga priser. Vidare bereder myndigheten tillstånd, s.k. koncession, för att bygga naturgasledningar och lager samt att bedriva överföring av gas.  
[Läs mer på www.stem.se.](http://www.stem.se)

#### Energirådgivaren och konsumentvägledning

Den kommunala energirådgivaren och konsumentvägledningen når du via växel i din hemkommun. Rådgivningen vänder sig till allmänheten, små- och medelstora företag och organisationer.

**In the United-Kingdom**, a registered charity that provides help and advice to people aged 60 and over (Age Concern) publishes specific fact sheets aimed at those over 60 and provides helpful advice about energy efficiency and saving money on energy bills. It also provides a number of contact details for other organisations that can provide advice on switching supplier, such as Energywatch (UK's consumer ombudsman).

The fact sheets include guidance on energy efficiency, grants and schemes available to customers over 60 through government and energy suppliers, saving money by switching supplier and details of other organisations to contact for advice on switching supplier.

## b) Frequently Asked Questions

Most of the regulators deliver a list of the most frequently asked questions on their website to help customers find the relevant information.

In Germany, the BNetzA delivers a wide range of FAQ on the following topics: energy contracts, switching options, price components, universal supplier.

Graph 8: list of FAQs on the BnetzA website

The screenshot shows the website of the Bundesnetzagentur (BNetzA). The navigation menu includes 'Die Bundesnetzagentur', 'Verbraucher', 'Presse', 'Sachgebiete', and 'Einheitliche Informationsstelle'. The 'Verbraucher' link is circled in red and labeled 'Entry point for the customer'. Below the navigation, the page title is 'Verbraucherservice im Bereich Elektrizität/Gas'. The main content area contains a list of links: 'Informationen zu häufig gestellten Fragen' (labeled 'FAQ'), 'Informationen zum besonderen Missbrauchsverfahren', 'Glossar' (labeled 'Glossary'), 'Links', and 'Kontakt zum Verbraucherservice Elektrizität und Gas'. A red box highlights the 'FAQ' and 'Glossary' links. The footer shows the breadcrumb 'Sachgebiete > Elektrizität/Gas > Verbraucherservice Elektrizität/Gas' and the date 'Letzte Aktualisierung: 19.07.2005'.

In Italy, AEEG publishes a list of FAQs on gas market opening, supplier switching procedures and customer's rights and guarantees.

In Norway, NVE provides customers with a Questions & Answers section in the regulator's electricity market web page.

Graph 9: Questions & Answers relative to procedures (NVE website)



**Alt du trenger å vite om STRØM OG ENERGI**

Velkommen til NVEs forbrukersider!  
Svært mange synes det er vanskelig å forstå hvordan kraftmarkedet fungerer, og det blir ikke lettere siden det er flere ulike myndighetsorganer som regulerer forhold i kraftmarkedet. Her får du en oversikt over hvem som gjør hva og svarene på de vanligste spørsmålene du har omkring strøm og kraftmarkedet.

**Dette får du svar på**

- Berørte etater
- Elektrisitet i hjemmet
- Energisparing og miljø
- Kraftmarkedet
- Nettleie
- Strømvtaler
- Strøbrudd

**Kraftmarkedet**

- Hva er grønne sertifikater?
- Hvor kommer den strømmen jeg bruker fra?
- Hvorfor er det ikke begrensninger på hvor mye kraftprodusentene kan tappe magasinene?
- Har Norge behov for import av strøm fra utlandet?

[Les mer >](#)

**Nettleie**

- Hva er nettleie?
- Hvor finner jeg oversikt over priser på strøm og nettleie?
- Hvilke regler gjelder mellom meg og nettselskapet mitt?
- Er nettselskapenes inntekter regulert?

[Les mer >](#)

**Strøbrudd**

- Hvilke regler gjelder ved linjerydding?
- Hvilke regler gjelder for avstander til bygninger og lignende?
- Hvilke regler gjelder for leveringskvalitet og leveringssikkerhet?

[Les mer >](#)

**Elektrisitet og hjemmet**

- Kan jeg bygge mitt eget strømmett?
- Hva gjør jeg når jeg skal ha strøm til et nytt hus?
- Hvem har ansvar for det elektriske anlegget i hjemmet?
- Hva har jeg lov til å gjøre selv?

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**Strømvtaler**

- Hva betyr "målepunkt ID"?
- Hvor ofte kan man lese av strømmåleren?
- Har jeg noen plikt til å lese av strømmåleren?
- Kan jeg skifte kraftleverandør når jeg bor i et borettslag eller liknende som har fellesmåling?

[Les mer >](#)

**Energisparing og miljø**

- Hva kan jeg gjøre for å redusere strømforbruket?
- Hvordan kan jeg beregne om jeg har for høyt strømforbruk?
- Hvilke alternativer finnes til strøm?
- Hvilken energi er billigst å bruke?

[Les mer >](#)

### c) Leaflets accompanying incumbent suppliers' or DSOs' bills

In some countries, regulators imposed incumbent suppliers or DSOs to disseminate a leaflet with information on market opening and on customer's right to switch supplier.

For example, in **Spain**, incumbent suppliers were obliged by the regulatory authority, CNE, to disseminate, at the opening of the energy markets, a leaflet together with the energy bill. 26.000.000 leaflets have been issued through this communication channel. These postal deliveries turned out to be the cheapest, fastest and most efficient way of supplying information to consumers.



Graph 10: leaflet with information on market opening by CNE

**d) Multi-channel advertising campaigns by regulators**

In order to reach a maximum number of energy end-users with an optimal efficiency, some sample countries have resorted to multi-channel advertising campaigns.

**In Spain**, the CNE together with the Ministry of Industry, launched in 2003 an advertising campaign on TV, radio, press and billboards in order to inform consumers about their options regarding the energy supply.

Graph 11: Advertisement in written press by CNE and Spanish Ministry of Industry

Graph 12: Advertisement on tramways by CNE and Spanish Ministry of Industry



**In Belgium (Flanders)**, an advertising campaign was developed by the regulatory agency, VREG through complementary channels: a TV spot with general information was broadcasted on the Flemish regional channels in December 2004 and 2005, and a general radio spot about the liberalisation for household customers was broadcasted in July 2003.

#### **e) Information notices delivered by suppliers prior to contract subscription**

**In Italy**, a notice describes in plain language consumers rights and suppliers' obligations defined in the gas commercial code of conduct issued by the regulatory agency, AEEG. The notice covers rules on salespersons' behaviour, mandatory information and documents that must be provided to the customers before the subscription of a new contract, transparency of price and supply conditions and cooling-off periods.

A final check list helps the customer to verify the correctness of the suppliers' marketing activity. Suppliers must provide a copy of this notice to potential customers when offering a free market supply contract together with a copy of the proposed contract and other information material. AEEG has drafted the text of the notice while suppliers are free to include their own graphics.

Graph 12B: Information notice defined by AEEG that suppliers must give to final customers before the subscription of a new gas supply contract (graphics by suppliers are admitted)



*Autorità per l'energia elettrica e il gas*

**Nota informativa  
per i clienti finali del gas**

## **IL CODICE DI CONDOTTA COMMERCIALE PER LA VENDITA DI GAS NATURALE**

Dal 1 gennaio 2003 tutti i clienti del servizio gas sono liberi di scegliere la società di vendita di gas naturale e il contratto di fornitura che meglio risponde alle proprie esigenze.

**Per garantire che i clienti dispongano degli elementi necessari per poter scegliere l'offerta più conveniente sulla base di informazioni chiare, attendibili e confrontabili, l'Autorità per l'energia elettrica e il gas ha emanato un Codice di condotta commerciale che impone a tutte le società di vendita di gas naturale precise regole di comportamento.**

### ***1. Trasparenza delle proposte contrattuali***

**Chiunque entri in contatto con un cliente per proporgli un nuovo contratto deve sempre:**

- identificarsi, specificare la società di vendita per cui opera e fornire i recapiti attraverso i quali può essere contattata
- offrire sempre al cliente la possibilità di sottoscrivere un contratto alle condizioni e al prezzo di riferimento stabilito dall'Autorità per l'energia elettrica e il gas
- fornire al cliente informazioni dettagliate sul contratto proposto
- specificare i tempi necessari e gli eventuali costi da sostenere per l'avvio del servizio
- indicare le condizioni che limitano la possibilità di aderire all'offerta contrattuale proposta

**Se il cliente viene contattato per telefono,** il venditore deve indicare come ottenere le informazioni in forma scritta.

### ***2. Il contratto***

**Il contratto deve indicare l'identità e l'indirizzo della società di vendita e deve contenere almeno le seguenti clausole:**

- tutte le prestazioni che saranno fornite al cliente
- la data di avvio del servizio e la durata del contratto

*CONTINUE ->*

## 4.2.2 PCI materials providing specific information on suppliers

This second category of PCI materials aims at giving energy end-users specific information on suppliers in order to facilitate the choice of supplier.

### a) Lists of energy suppliers

In most sample countries (Belgium – Flanders, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden), regulators, consumer ombudsmen, consumer associations and branch organisations provide lists of suppliers.

**In Belgium (Flanders)**, the VREG website contains four lists of suppliers: one for residential customers, one for local authorities, one for small companies and one for large companies.

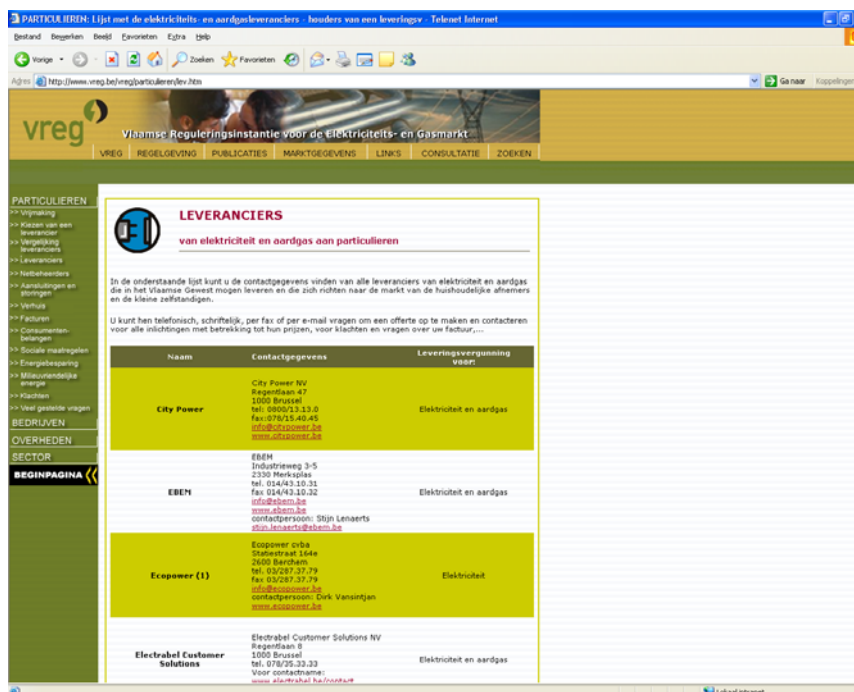
All licensed suppliers are asked to keep VREG informed about the types of consumers they target.

The information provided about the suppliers covers:

- names of the suppliers (alphabetically)
- contact address (post address, telephone, fax, e-mail, contact person/unit) and their website address
- type of energy supplied (electricity, gas or both).

The list is to be found on the website of VREG. It can also be obtained by writing, faxing or calling VREG. In this case, it is a document with a listed overview of suppliers.

Graph 13: list of suppliers for domestic customers by VREG



Naam	Contactgegevens	Leveringsvergunning naam
<b>City Power</b>	City Power NV Regendaan 47 1050 Brussel tel: 020/21.12.0 fax: 070/15.40.45 info@citypower.be www.citypower.be	Elektriciteit en aardgas
<b>EBEM</b>	EBEM Industrieweg 3-5 2330 Merksplas tel: 014/43.10.31 fax: 014/43.10.32 info@ebem.be www.ebem.be contactpersoon: Stijn Lenaerts stijn.lenaerts@ebem.be	Elektriciteit en aardgas
<b>Ecopower (1)</b>	Ecopower cvba Stadestraat 144 2600 Barchem tel: 03/287.37.79 fax: 03/287.37.79 info@ecopower.be contactpersoon: Dirk Vansintjan dirk.vansintjan@ecopower.be	Elektriciteit
<b>Electrabel Customer Solutions</b>	Electrabel Customer Solutions NV Regendaan 8 1050 Brussel tel: 070/25.33.33 Voor contactname: www.electrabel.be/voorname	Elektriciteit en aardgas

In **Denmark**, the Association of Danish Energy Companies provides a list of the suppliers present in the country.

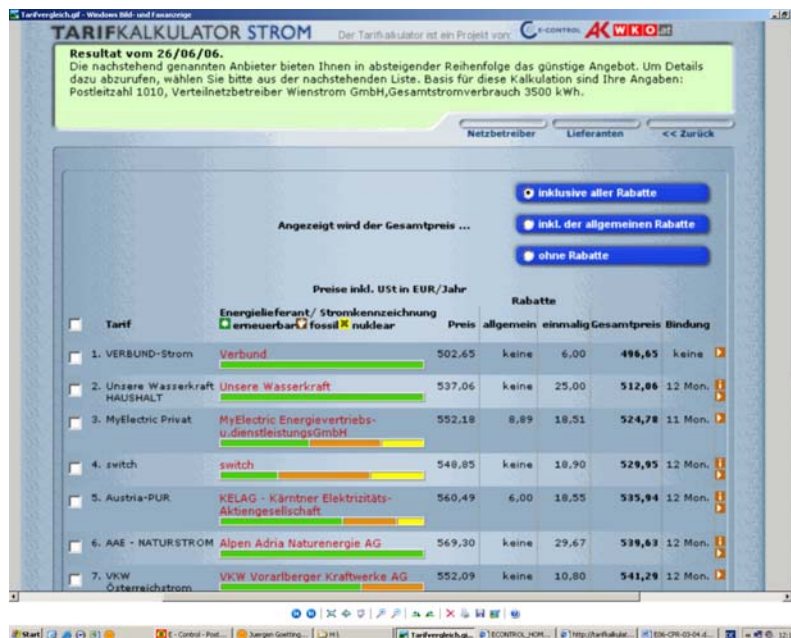
## b) Price comparators

These services, available in most of the countries, offer a free price comparison service. They are provided by the regulator and also, in some countries (Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Germany, Norway, Sweden, and the UK) by consumer organisations/agencies, competition authorities or private websites. Some comparators concentrate on the price aspect, others also include criteria like the duration of the contract, the variability of prices, the greenness of the electricity and so forth.

The main channel giving access to this service is the Internet. In **Austria, Belgium and the UK** the price comparison service can also be obtained by calling the regulator.

In **Austria**, E-Control offers a tariff calculator on its website. The tariff calculator calculates the best prices for individual consumption per individual area (postal code) and shows a list with all suppliers, who provide customers in this area.

Graph 14: Tariff calculator by E-Control



**In Belgium (Flanders)**, the VREG website provides a price comparison service, on the basis of the energy use and some other specific information (consumption of electricity and gas in the previous year). Prices are provided by suppliers to VREG and are updated on a monthly basis. The comparison service is the most visited page of the VREG website. It can also be obtained by writing, faxing or telephoning VREG.

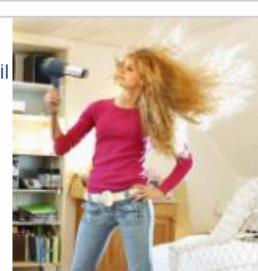
**In Denmark**, DERA, the Danish regulatory agency, emphasizes the importance of available price information and the possibility of price comparison before choosing a new supplier. DERA has set rules, which state that electricity and gas companies shall publish their prices and terms on their web-sites and that companies shall report their prices to selected consumer price calculators. There are two consumer price calculators: one on natural gas, run by the system operator, and one on electricity, run by the Association of Danish Energy Companies.

Graph 15: Homepage of electricity price calculator by the Association of Danish Energy Companies

#### Elpristavlen

Elpristavlen sammenligner priser for den fri el. Her kan du søge efter den billigste elleverandør. Samtidig kan du få vist priser på fri el, abonnementer, transport af el og en samlet pris pr. kilowattime, som inkluderer offentlige forpligtelser og afgifter til staten.

Elpristavlen er målrettet mindre forbrugere - husstande og mindre virksomheder med et årsforbrug op til 100.000 kilowattimer om året.



**In Finland**, the price comparison service for electricity end-users is available on the web site of the Finnish Energy Market Authority. The Energy Market Authority administers the service while the price data and service product information are given by the electricity retailers. The online service was launched on 3 February 2006. This service offers a real time opportunity for customers to compare the prices of electricity retailers in the area selected by the end-user. The end-user may choose between different electricity supply and metering services (products). It is also possible for the end-user to choose between different contract types e.g. fixed or open-ended contracts.

Following the above-mentioned selections, the customer may start the search and a list of retailers will be shown on the web site. The list gives specific information of each retailer's services. This information includes the name of retailer, the name of electricity product, the annual price (€/ year), the average price (cent / kWh) and the origin of the produced electricity. In addition, the price comparison service includes general information of quotations and consumption of electricity. By choosing the selected icon the information will be shown on the web site.

During five months of operation, the users have run over 450.000 comparative searches through the service (Finland has about 3 million electricity end-users).

Graph 16: Homepage of price comparison service by EMA



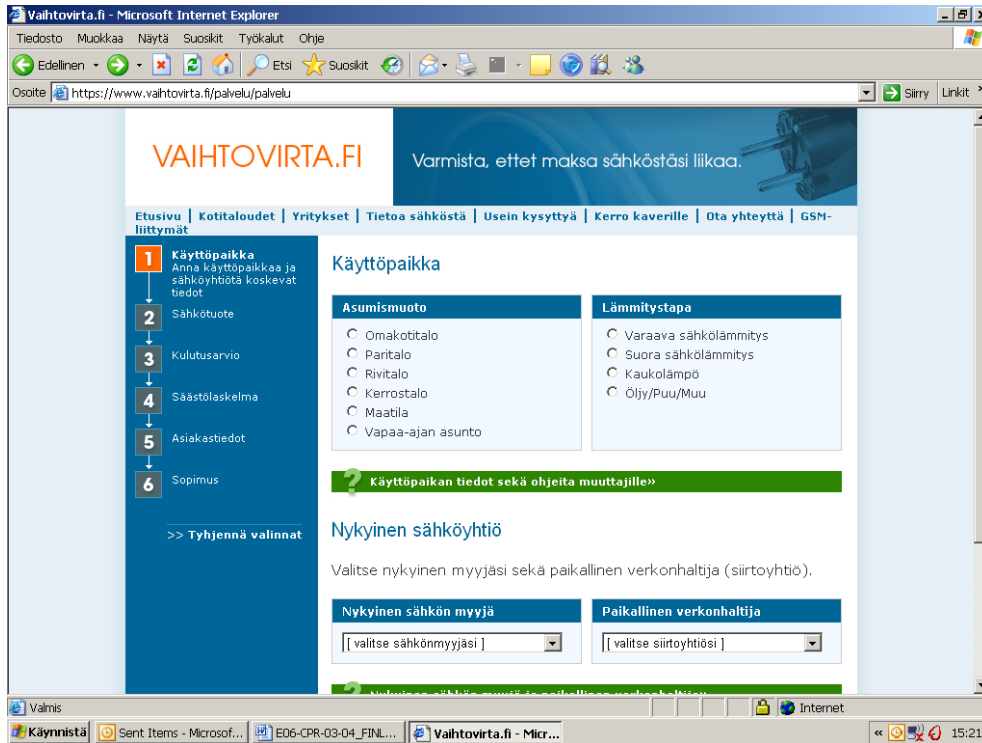
Moreover, **in Finland**, an on-line market place is offered by [Vaihtovirta.fi](http://Vaihtovirta.fi), which is an independent service provider whose services are open to all electricity users. The retailers may make offers through the service and the customers may also empower the [Vaihtovirta.fi](http://Vaihtovirta.fi) to make their electricity retail contract with the chosen retailer. The benefit of this service for customers is that they are able to ask for commercial offers from many retailers at the same place.

The web site includes detailed information about the facts customers should know before entering into a new electricity contract. These facts are:

- the name of the present retailer,
- the name of the DSO,
- the type of the electricity service product,
- the annual consumption of the electricity.

It also offers general information customers need to know with relation to the supplier switching process. Finally, the web site service includes a private link to customers' on-line banking services. This guarantees the customers' privacy protection and data security. The contracting service is available only to those customers who have a personal PIN code and password for their own banking services.

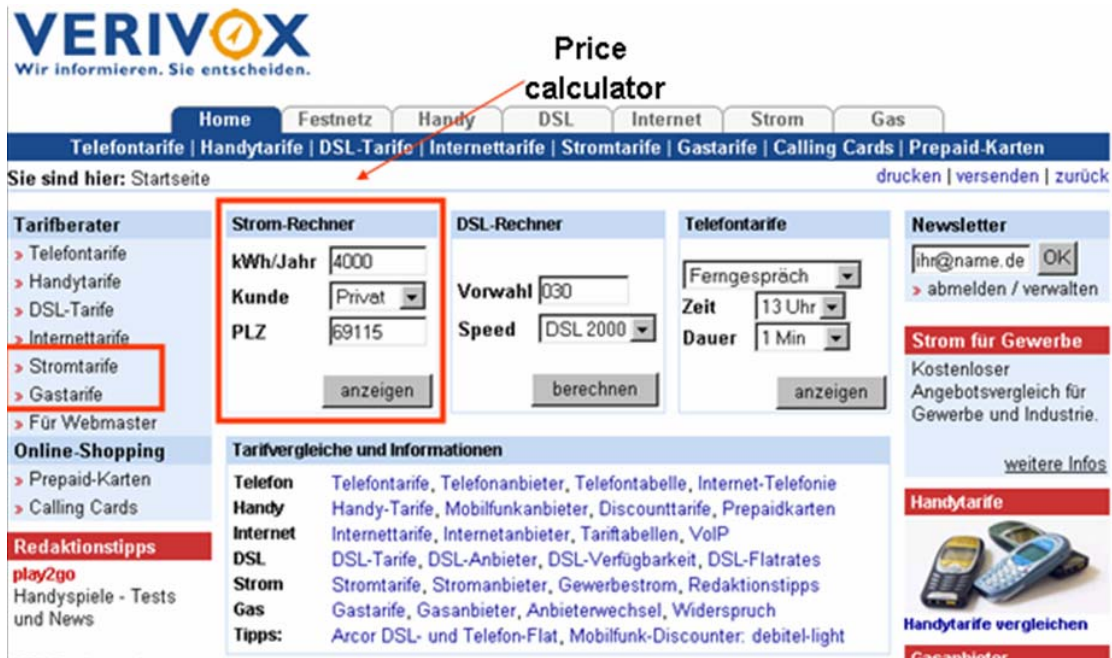
Graph 17: On-line market place by Vaihtovirta



In Germany, a private website named “Verivox” offers a web based database, which enables each customer to identify the most economical suppliers for his region and for his consumption level. The database is very easy to use. A customer only needs to fill out the average yearly consumption level in kWh per year and the postal code. The database then compiles a list of available suppliers for the chosen region with information on the yearly costs, the name of the tariff, the working price in ct per kWh and the basic price in EUR per year. It is usually possible to directly download an application form for a new energy supply contract. The price calculator is offered free of charge.



Graph 18: Price calculator by Verivox



In Sweden, the Swedish Consumer Agency is responsible for a tariff calculator which is available on the homepage of the agency. Customers can see with this calculator which electricity supplier is having the lowest price at that moment. When using the tariff calculator customers can indicate their consumption and see how much money will be saved if they switch to the supplier with the lowest price. It is voluntary for the suppliers to publish their prices in the calculator. However, most suppliers publish their prices since they want to be consulted by consumers.

Graph 19: Tariff calculator by the Swedish Consumer Agency



### **c) Statistics on complaints received and quality of service delivered**

In some sample countries, the regulator or the consumer ombudsman publishes indicators and ratios on the amount of complaints received from energy end-users. This data concerns service providers or presents indicators relative to service providers' quality of service.

**In the Netherlands**, a Scorecard was designed and implemented during a period in which both the regulator (DTe) and energy companies acknowledged that there was a real problem in handling administrative processes (timeliness, completeness). This was one year after the liberalisation of the retail market.

The Scorecard gives insight into suppliers' and DSOs' performance in execution of administrative billing processes (timeliness of switching, customer move out / move in, billing). Performance indicators were designed and implemented in good cooperation with suppliers (and DSOs). Each supplier (and DSO) with a significant number of customer contracts (/connections to the grid) has the obligation to submit monthly information about their performance.

The Scorecard is published on the regulator's (DTe) website quarterly and intends to provide consumers with information to assess their service providers and competitors. Although not many consumers may find their way directly to the regulator's website, there is "spin off" communication (press releases, etc.) that does find its way to consumers. A secondary effect is that "naming and shaming" appeals to a company's "pride" and stimulates service providers to try to outperform their competitors, or at least not perform below par. Service providers have shown a real drive to enhance their administrative performance as a result of the Scorecard. Timeliness of processes has improved and backlog has decreased.

Possible future enhancements include choosing more effective communication channels (e.g. popular consumer websites) and including more aspects of performance (customer complain handling, call centre performance, etc.). This will provide consumers with a more balanced view of companies' performance.

Reviewing administrative processes of service providers and comparing and publishing the results is part of the existing strategy from the Netherlands Competition Authority (NMa) to increase transparency in the energy market which is also important for consumers' faith in energy market.

Graph 20: Example of a scorecard published by DTe

Scorecard eerste kwartaal 2006  
 Prestatie gemeten over de maand december 2005

	LEVERANCIER	Cogen Heiloo B.V.		E.ON Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.		E.ON Energie Nederland B.V.	
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Prestatie-indicatoren Existentie																					
1.1	Percentage tijd verstoord voorbeschikt na verhuizing	95,0%	100,0%	73,0%	100,0%	99,3%	99,2%	81,9%	100,0%	95,3%	94,4%	99,0%	99,6%	24,0%	95,0%	94,0%	91,0%				
1.3	Percentage tijd verstoord afschakelingen na verhuizing	65,3%	99,6%	69,7%	57,0%	97,5%	95,0%	77,5%	100,0%	96,7%	81,6%	99,9%	90,7%	63,0%	69,8%	90,0%	88,6%				
2.1	Percentage tijd verstoord voorbeschikt na switchen	98,0%	100,0%	97,0%	99,9%	99,2%	99,9%	88,1%	100,0%	96,1%	70,3%	99,8%	99,0%	92,0%	92,0%	95,7%	100,0%	99,0%			
2.3	Percentage tijd verstoord afschakelingen na switchen	82,3%	98,0%	90,1%	82,0%	99,0%	97,2%	71,9%	99,8%	96,0%	81,6%	98,4%	17,4%	87,0%	63,2%	89,0%	82,1%				
3.1	Percentage tijd verstoord jaarrekeningen	73,0%	99,9%	98,1%	78,5%	98,9%	89,0%	98,8%	5,1%	n.v.t.	90,0%	99,9%	90,0%	95,0%	99,3%	100,0%	97,5%				
Prestatie-indicatoren Gas																					
1.1	Percentage tijd verstoord voorbeschikt na verhuizing	95,1%	99,9%	75,4%	100,0%	97,7%	98,3%	73,9%	100,0%	94,5%	80,6%	99,8%	99,1%	49,0%	88,4%	96,0%	91,1%				
1.3	Percentage tijd verstoord afschakelingen na verhuizing	49,2%	99,7%	70,8%	49,0%	99,9%	99,1%	90,8%	99,7%	96,9%	80,2%	99,9%	81,2%	n.a.	89,2%	93,0%	87,9%				
2.1	Percentage tijd verstoord voorbeschikt na switchen	99,0%	100,0%	99,4%	99,8%	97,2%	99,4%	99,2%	100,0%	100,0%	81,2%	99,9%	100,0%	96,0%	93,9%	98,0%	97,8%				
2.3	Percentage tijd verstoord afschakelingen na switchen	69,9%	99,4%	95,8%	49,0%	98,4%	90,7%	89,8%	98,8%	94,0%	82,7%	99,9%	17,3%	n.a.	94,8%	95,0%	89,4%				
3.1	Percentage tijd verstoord jaarrekeningen	91,0%	99,9%	98,8%	87,8%	99,0%	89,7%	99,9%	96,7%	n.v.t.	91,1%	99,9%	99,1%	n.a.	99,9%	100,0%	99,7%				

**Omerkingen bij de scorecard**

- De grafiek zijn percentages per leverancier opgenomen over de processen verhuizen, switchen en het opstellen van de jaarrekeningen. Voor elke prestatie-indicator is een gewogen gemiddelde berekend.
- De naam bij voor alle leveranciers is aangegeven op 100 %.
- De percentages van individuele leveranciers die op of boven het gemiddelde liggen, zijn zwart weergegeven en de percentages die onder het gemiddelde liggen zijn rood weergegeven.
- De leveranciers die rood zijn gemarkeerd hebben geen accountovernameverplichting vastgesteld bij de informatie die opgeleverd kan worden van de scorecard. Dit kan betekenen dat de betrouwbaarheid van deze gegevens niet gegarandeerd is.
- N.V. CHS Energie is licht oranje gemarkeerd omdat N.V. CHS Energie een accountovernameverplichting heeft vastgesteld. Dit kan betekenen dat de betrouwbaarheid van deze gegevens niet volledig gegarandeerd is.
- Brands Energielevering B.V. staat de jaarcijfers 2005 van al haar consumenten op 1 februari 2006, daaronder is de prestatie-indicator 3.1 niet van toepassing.
- OSGO Nederland B.V. heeft de prestatie-indicatoren Gas 1.3, 2.3 en 3.1 niet aangeleverd.

On the other hand, **in the Netherlands**, since the liberalisation of the Dutch electricity market for consumers, DTe has received numerous complaints about the quality of the complaint settlement process (CSP) of energy suppliers.

A bad quality of the CSP can have a negative effect on the trust of consumers in the benefits of the free market. Consumers are reluctant to change their energy supplier if they do not trust energy suppliers to handle problems regarding the switching process (e.g. incorrect and late billing) in a quick and correct manner. Furthermore the CSP is an important aspect of the quality of service, whereas the quality of service can be an important aspect in the consumers' choice of supplier.

For this reason, DTe investigated the quality of CSP of the ten largest energy suppliers representing 95% of the market. More than 2.000 consumers, who had filed a complaint against their energy supplier, were asked in a telephone interview to rate the following aspects of the CSP:

- Duration of the CSP
- Service delivered during CSP
- Accuracy delivered during CSP
- General satisfaction of the CSP

DTe has published the results on its website. Consumers can check the differences in quality of CSP of the ten largest suppliers. In 2006, DTe will repeat the investigation since the quality of the CSP of all these suppliers was insufficient.

Reviewing administrative processes of energy suppliers and DSOs and comparing and publishing the results is part of the Netherlands Competition Authority (NMa) strategy to increase transparency in the energy market which is also important for consumers' faith in energy market.

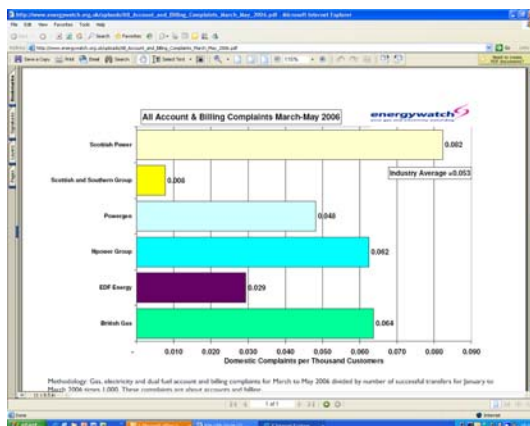
Graph 21: Results of the survey on CSP published by Dte



In the United-Kingdom, Energywatch (consumer watchdog) publishes on its website statistics that give an overview of all complaints and enquiries received. Complaint statistics give customers an indication of how good a supplier's service is. This allows customers to make an informed decision when they switch based on the level of service they can expect, rather than just basing their decision on price alone.

The complaint statistics show the number of complaints Energywatch has received for each supplier per 1,000 customers. Energywatch publishes the complaints statistics by complaint category, the three main categories being direct selling, transfers and account and billing. The example below shows account and billing complaints:

Graph 22: Statistics on account and billing complaints published by Energywatch



### 4.2.3 Other interesting initiatives to promote PCI

#### a) Non-commercial customer information service units

In addition to information from service providers, most sample countries offer a non-commercial customer information service, either managed by the regulator or one that is the result of a joint initiative by regulators, consumer ombudsmen and consumer associations. These customer information service units can be reached by phone, e-mail, mail or fax. They all offer pre-contractual information through websites. All customer information service units are non-profit organisations.

**In Spain (CNE)**, the call-centre can be reached through a charge-free phone number.

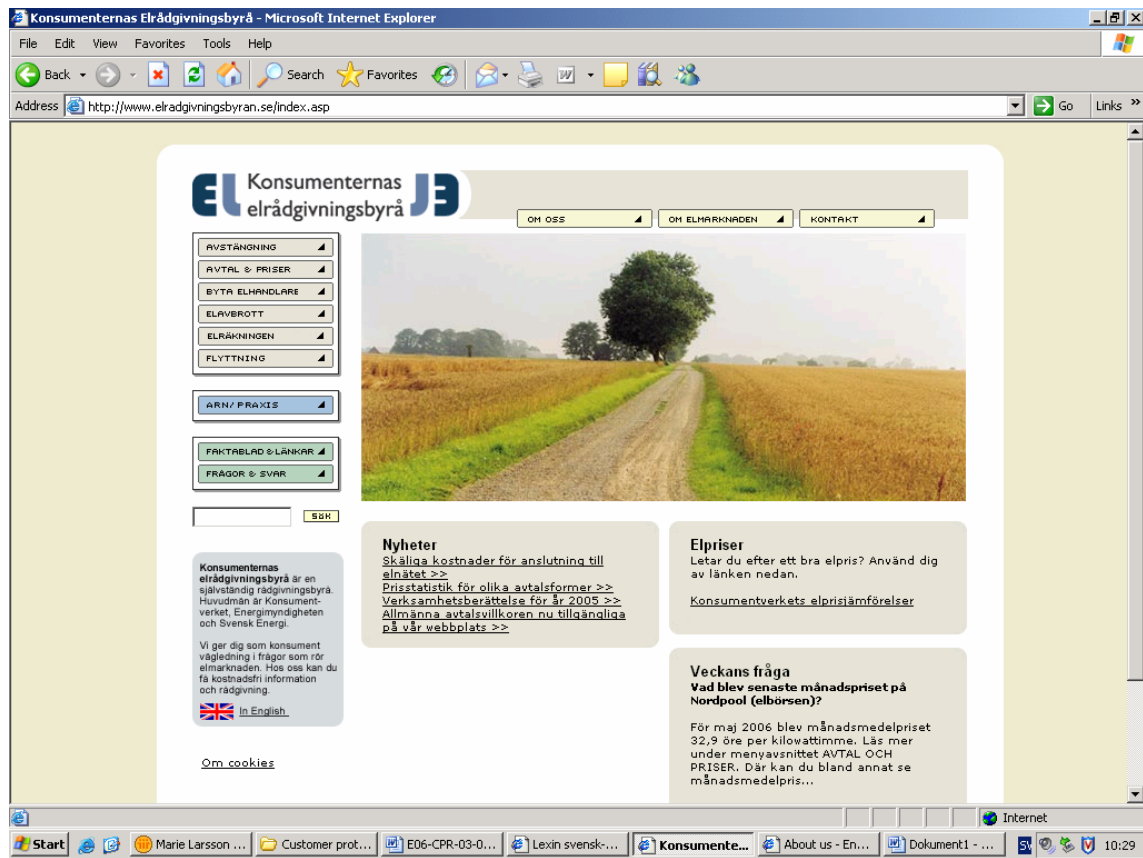
Graph 23: Web Page dedicated to consumer information by CNE



In a few countries, consumer ombudsmen have been created to handle energy customers' requests.

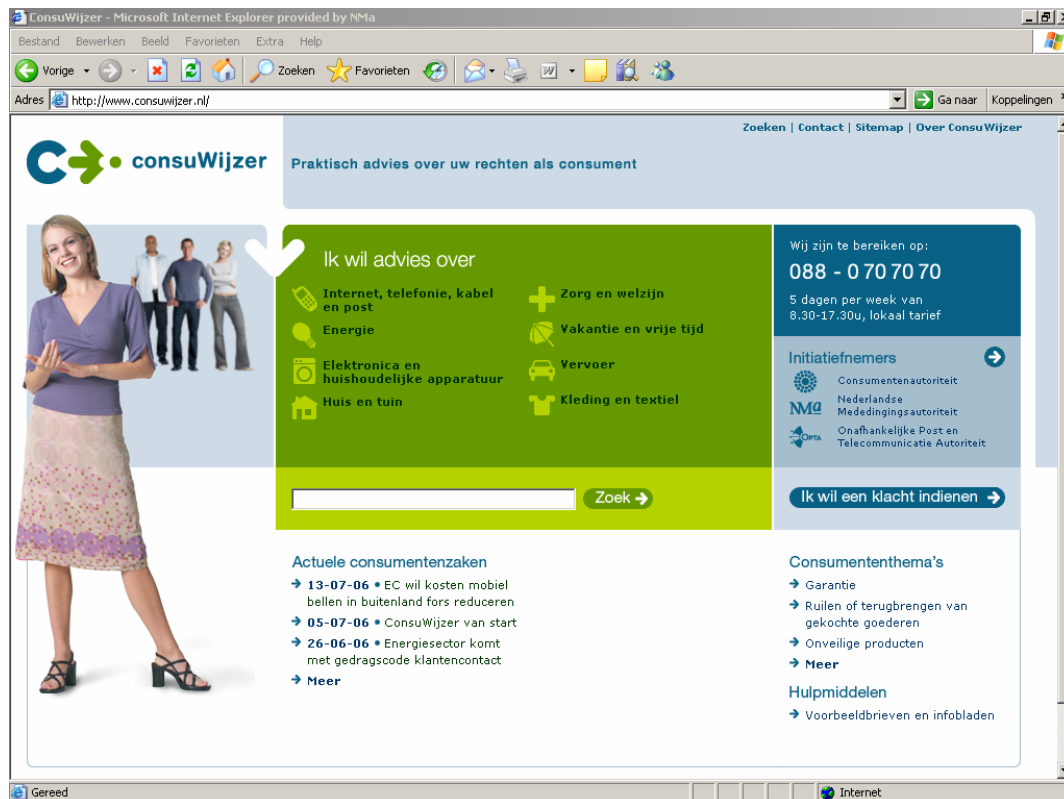
In Sweden, the Swedish Consumer Electricity Advice Bureau provides advice and guidance to consumers in various matters, concerning the electricity market. The Bureau is a joint-initiative by Energy Markets Inspectorate, the energy regulator, the Swedish Consumer Agency and Swedenergy, a trade association. Information and guidance are free of charge. Information and guidance are mostly given over the telephone, but it is also possible to contact the Bureau by sending a letter, fax or web mail.

Graph 24: Web Page dedicated to consumer guidance by the Swedish Consumer Electricity Advice Bureau



In the Netherlands, ConsuWijzer is a joint initiative of the Netherlands Competition Authority (including its energy regulator, DTe), the Independent Post and Telecom Authority (OPTA) and the Consumer Authority. It provides consumers with answers to frequently asked questions, tips, examples and addresses of relevant organisations such as the conciliation and arbitration boards. This service is available by telephone or upon the ConsuWijzer web site. It started in July 2006, and a media campaign to promote the service is to follow soon.

Graph 25: ConsuWijzer website homepage



ConsuWijzer - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by NMa

Bestand Bewerken Beeld Favorieten Extra Help

Vorige Zoeken Favorieten

Adres <http://www.consuwijzer.nl/> Ga naar Koppelingen

Zoeken | Contact | Sitemap | Over ConsuWijzer

**consuWijzer** Praktisch advies over uw rechten als consument

Wij zijn te bereiken op:  
**088 - 0 70 70 70**  
5 dagen per week van  
8.30-17.30u, lokaal tarief

Initiatiefnemers

- Consumentenautoriteit
- Nederlandse Mededingingsautoriteit
- Onafhankelijke Post en Telecommunicatie Autoriteit

Ik wil een klacht indienen

**Ik wil advies over**

- Internet, telefonie, kabel en post
- Energie
- Elektronica en huishoudelijke apparatuur
- Huis en tuin
- Zorg en welzijn
- Vakantie en vrije tijd
- Vervoer
- Kleding en textiel

Zoek

**Actuele consumentenzaken**

- 13-07-06 • EC wil kosten mobiel bellen in buitenland fors reduceren
- 05-07-06 • ConsuWijzer van start
- 26-06-06 • Energiesector komt met gedragscode klantencontact
- Meer

**Consumententema's**

- Garantie
- Ruilen of terugbrengen van gekochte goederen
- Onveilige producten
- Meer

**Hulpmiddelen**

- Voorbeeldbrieven en infobladen

Gereed Internet

In the UK, Energywatch is the independent gas and electricity watchdog for England, Wales and Scotland (Northern Ireland excluded). It was set up in November 2000 through the Utility Act to protect and promote the interests of all gas and electricity consumers. Energywatch provides free, impartial information and advice and addresses complaints on behalf of consumers who are experiencing difficulty in resolving problems directly with their energy companies. Services are delivered in partnership with a range of other caring organisations and advice-giving bodies.

The "Energy Smart" campaign mentions on various materials a charge-free telephone number to receive free help and advice on being energy efficient. Another telephone number is available which informs consumers how to save money on gas and electricity bills.

Graph 26: "Energy Smart campaign" web page by Energywatch



energywatch: energy\_smart - Microsoft Internet Explorer

Address [http://www.energywatch.org.uk/help\\_and\\_advice/energysmart/index.asp](http://www.energywatch.org.uk/help_and_advice/energysmart/index.asp)

energywatch  
your gas and electricity watchdog

View Text Version  
View Site Map  
Ymweld yn Gymraeg

KEYWORD SEARCH  
Type keyword(s) and choose 'GO'

Home

Help and advice

- Billing Basics
- Energy Smart
- Best Deals
- Compare deals
- Free Services
- Make a complaint
- How we can help
- How to change supplier
- Complaints received
- Energy company contacts
- Gas / electricity safety
- Problems switching supplier
- Leaflets

Your questions

Publications

News & events

Campaigns

Contact us

About us

Useful contacts

Helping Business

Energy Smart

**Be Energy Smart - SAVE energy SAVE money!**

Since 2003 electricity prices have risen by around 30% and gas prices by a huge 40%. That means that the average household electricity bill has risen by £238 to £293 and the average household gas bill by £319 to £452!

Everyone can cut their bills by being Energy Smart - using less energy getting the best deal and paying by the cheapest method.

**Follow the tips below and you could save hundreds of pounds.**

**1. Compare your energy company for price...**

Someone who has never switched their energy supplier could save up to £100 by moving to a new company! You can check the most [up to date prices](#) on this website or call **0845 9060708** for a price comparison factsheet. You can also use [online price comparison websites](#) which make the process of comparing prices and switching even easier.

**2. Pay by the cheapest method...**

You don't even have to change company to save money. If you are paying by cheque every quarter you could save up to £67 by switching to direct debit and even more if you switch to an online account. For people who are on pre payment meters you could save up to £101 if you paid by direct debit.

**3. Take control of your heating...**

Is your heating on too high? The most important thing is to keep warm in winter, but turning your thermostat down by 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10%. And if you're going away for winter, leave the thermostat on a low setting to provide protection from freezing at minimum cost. You could save around £30 per year. Hot water doesn't need to be scalding. For most people, setting the cylinder thermostat at 60°C(140°F) is fine for bathing and washing.

**4. Get help!**

There are a range of grants available to help people make their homes more energy efficient and cut your fuel bills through draught proofing, cavity wall or loft insulation, radiator controls and other methods. To find out if you are eligible for any of these phone your local energy efficiency advice centre on **0800 512 012**. Also, look-out for any special offers from your energy company or local authority - you might receive information about these along with your bill.

**5. Plug up the gaps**

start

Microsoft Office ...

which.rtf (Read-Onl...

E06-CPR-03-04 (2)...

E06-CPR-03-04 (2)...

Internet Explorer

17:32



In some sample countries, consumer associations also offer call centres to handle requests from energy end-users.

**In Austria**, information is also provided to consumers through the network of an association for customer information, the "Verein für Konsumenteninformation" (VKI - not specialised in energy). The information is given by telephone, mail and e-mail.

Graph 27: Web page dedicated to energy by VKI

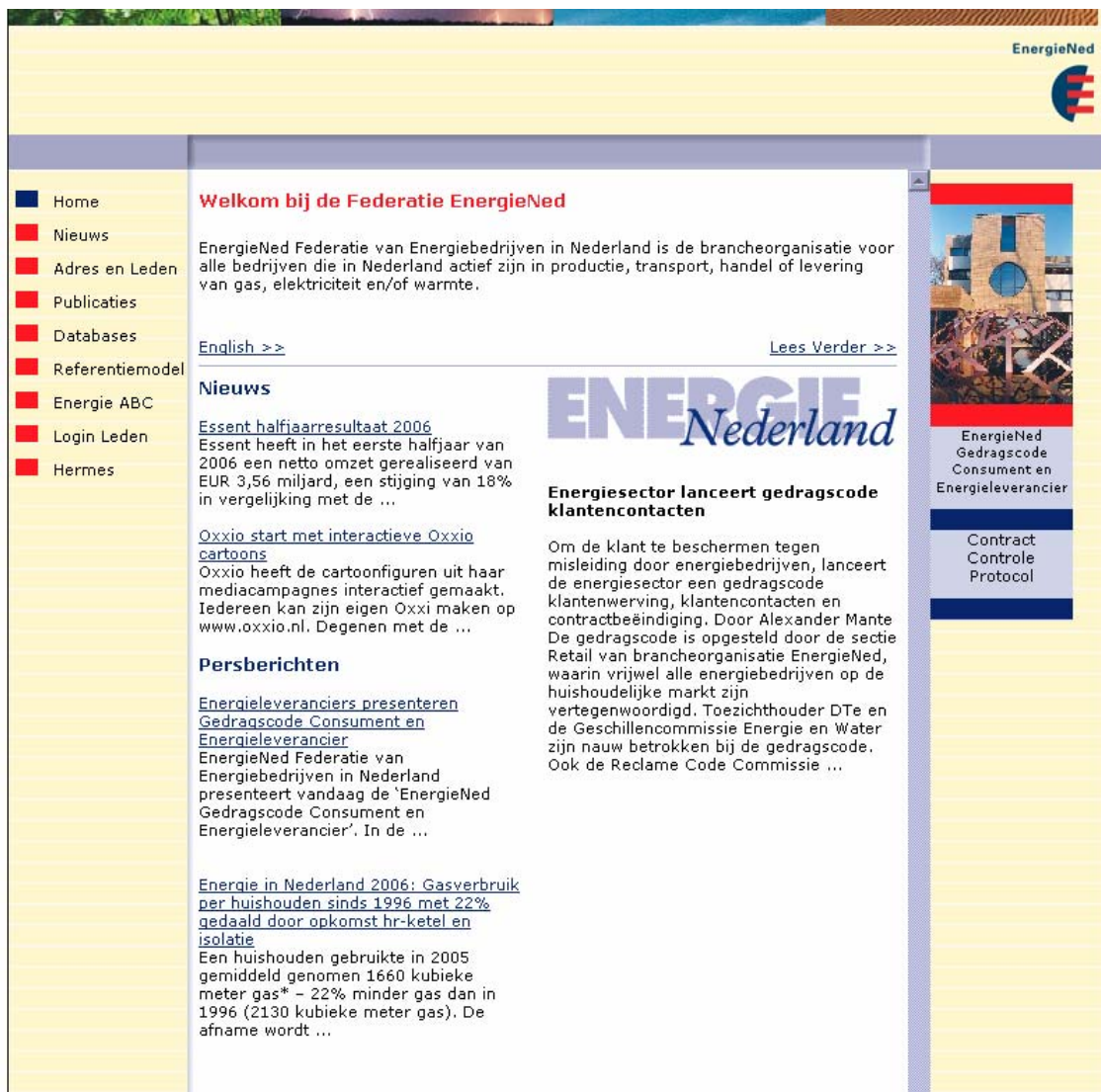


## b) Codes of conduct

In some sample countries, stakeholders in the energy sector put forward codes of conduct in order to better regulate the acquisition and retention of customers and prevent malpractices. In some other sample countries, such commitments are standard conditions of the energy supply licences.

**In the Netherlands**, the energy sector has responded positively to the recently published call by the Netherlands Competition Authority (NMA) to draw up a code of conduct for acquisition and customer retention. In the coming periods, the NMA will closely monitor whether the code of conduct contributes to ensuring that consumers are no longer the victims of misleading and unfair acquisition.

Graph 28: Code of good conduct sponsored by NMA



The screenshot shows the homepage of EnergieNed, a Dutch energy industry organization. The main content area features a large heading "ENERGIE Nederland" and a sub-heading "Energiesector lanceert gedragscode klantencontacten". The text below explains that the energy sector has launched a code of conduct to protect customers from misleading practices, covering customer acquisition, contact, and contract termination. It mentions that the code was established by the Retail section of the industry organization EnergieNed, with the support of the Dutch Competition Authority (NMA) and the Dutch Energy and Water Consumers Commission (Geschillencommissie Energie en Water). The code also references the Reclame Code Commissie.

On the left side, there is a navigation menu with the following items: Home, Nieuws, Adres en Leden, Publicaties, Databases, Referentiemodel, Energie ABC, Login Leden, and Hermes. Below the menu, there are several news items and press releases, including "Essent halfjaarresultaat 2006" and "Energieleveranciers presenteren Gedragscode Consument en Energieleverancier".

On the right side, there is a vertical banner for "EnergieNed Gedragscode Consument en Energieleverancier" and a "Contract Controle Protocol" button.

### 4.3 Quantitative aspects and communication channels

#### 4.3.1 Number of contacts proceeded by customer information service units

In addition to information from service providers, most of the sample countries offer a non-commercial customer information service, either managed by the regulator or one that is the result of a joint initiative by regulators, consumer ombudsmen, consumer associations and so forth. These customer information service units can be reached by phone, e-mail, mail or fax. They all offer pre-contractual information through websites. All customer information service units are non-profit organisations.

The data collected during the quantitative questionnaire has enabled the building of several ratios delivering information on the way sample countries handle the information and requests of energy end-users.

The ratios are the following:

- number of employees from the non-commercial customer information service unit per million of energy end-users
- number of annual in-coming telephone calls from energy end-users per million of energy end-users
- number of annual in-coming e-mails from energy end-users per million of energy end-users
- number of annual in-coming mails from energy end-users per million of energy end-users.

The ratios provided below seek to help the shaping of future customer information service units. They demonstrate that all regulators dedicate resources to customer information. They also point out the variety of situations among the sample countries: scope of missions of regulators, other organisations involved in customer information. The data concerning Energywatch in the UK reveal the resources devoted to this consumer authority and its high level of activity as a consequence.

Results by sample country:

Graph 29: list of the main organisations that have filled the quantitative questionnaire

<i>Country</i>	<i>Name of the organisation</i>	<i>Type of organisation</i>
<b>Austria</b>	Energie-Control GmbH	Regulator
<b>Belgium (Flanders)</b>	VREG	Regulator (regional)
<b>Denmark</b>	Danish Energy Regulatory Authority	Regulator
<b>Finland</b>	Energy Market Authority (EMA)	Regulator
<b>Germany</b>	BNetzA	Regulator
<b>Ireland</b>	Commission for Energy Regulation	Regulator
<b>Italy</b>	AEEG	Regulator

<i>Country</i>	<i>Name of the organisation</i>	<i>Type of organisation</i>
<b>Netherlands</b>	The Netherlands Competition Authority (NMa) / Office of Energy Regulation (DTe)	Competition Authority / Regulator (included within NMa)
<b>Norway</b>	NVE	Regulator
<b>Spain</b>	CNE	Regulator
<b>Sweden</b>	Consumer Electricity Advice Bureau	Cooperation between regulator / consumer agency / trade association
<b>UK</b>	Energywatch	Consumer authority

Graph 30: number of end-users and employees in the customer information service units of the organisations that have filled the quantitative questionnaire (equivalent full-time jobs, in the case that some employees dedicate a part of their time to this task).

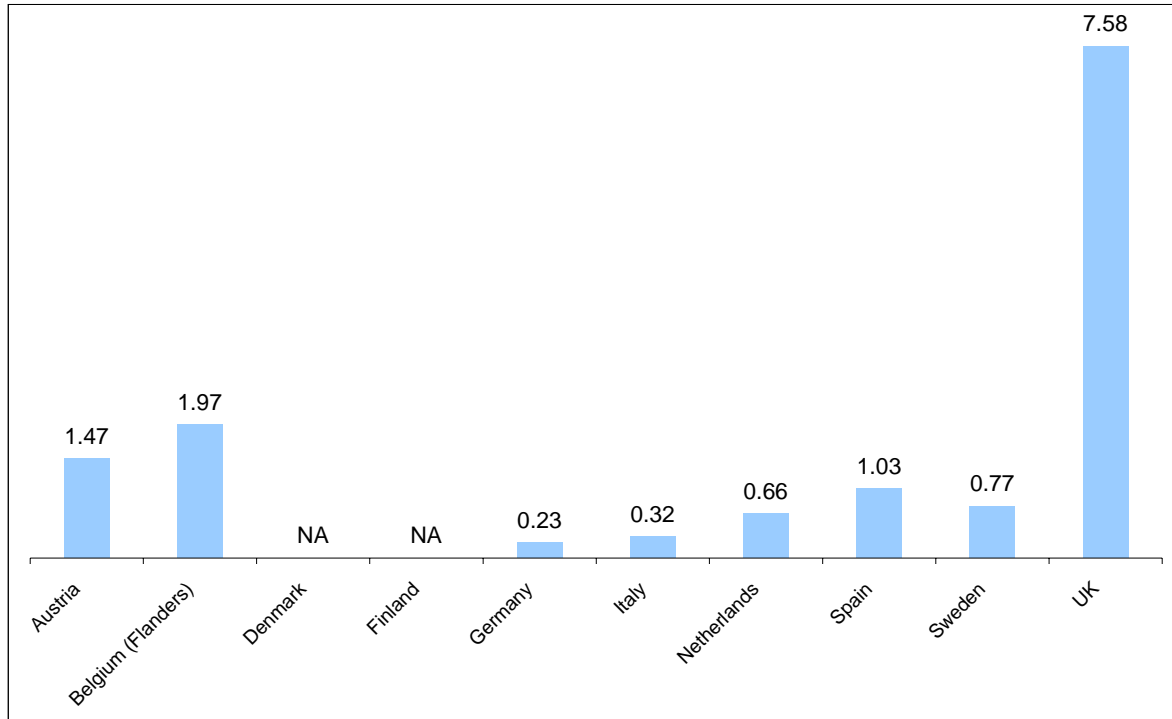
<i>Country</i>	<i>Number of electricity end-users</i>	<i>Number of gas end-users</i>	<i>Approx. number of employees (front and back-office)</i>
<b>Austria</b>	5,122,000	1,310,500	7.5
<b>Belgium (Flanders)</b>	3,043,000	1,607,000	6
<b>Denmark</b>	3,100,000	352,500	NA*
<b>Finland</b>	3,050,000	36,000	NA*
<b>Germany</b>	52,000,000	14,000,000	12
<b>Ireland</b>	2,000,000	544,000	2
<b>Italy</b>	(1)	18,720,000	6
<b>Netherlands</b>	7,544,000	6,685,000	5
<b>Norway</b>	2,600,000	NA (very few)	NA*
<b>Spain</b>	23,437,000	6,038,000	24
<b>Sweden</b>	5,200,000	NA	4
<b>UK</b>	28,500,000	21,600,000	216

(1) electricity market not yet open for residential customers

(\*) NA: not available data; see comments on next page.

The ratios calculated in the following graphs use the electricity end-users' numbers as the numbers of energy end-users in all countries, except for Italy, where the number of gas end-users has been used.

Graph 31: number of employees of the customer information service unit per million of energy end-users



**In Denmark**, DERA has no dedicated customer service unit. The section for electricity and gas markets handles contacts from consumers on complaints regarding the specific energy legislation, economic regulation of electricity and gas companies as well as questions on the market. DERA also serves as a secretariat to the private Energy Supplies Complaint Board, which handles complaints from end-users on general contract law questions. There are 17.5 employees on these areas. It has to be noted that, electricity and gas TSOs have played a major role regarding general and specific PCI when full market liberalisation was initiated and that energy suppliers play a role in customer PCI as well.

**In Finland**, the EMA does not have any special customer service unit or nominated employees for customer service. All 30 employees are doing customer service tasks (guidance by telephone or email, updating information on web-pages, planning of customer leaflets etc.) as a part of their normal tasks. It is impossible to count how much of their time has been used for customer service tasks.

**In Germany**, the customer service unit provides only basic information to the customers, mainly dealing with general pre-contractual issues and the role and competencies of the Regulatory Authority. More complex customer requests are dealt with within the energy department itself and are distributed to all employees according to their field of reference.

**In Ireland,** CER is currently developing a full consumer service which will have dedicated staff.

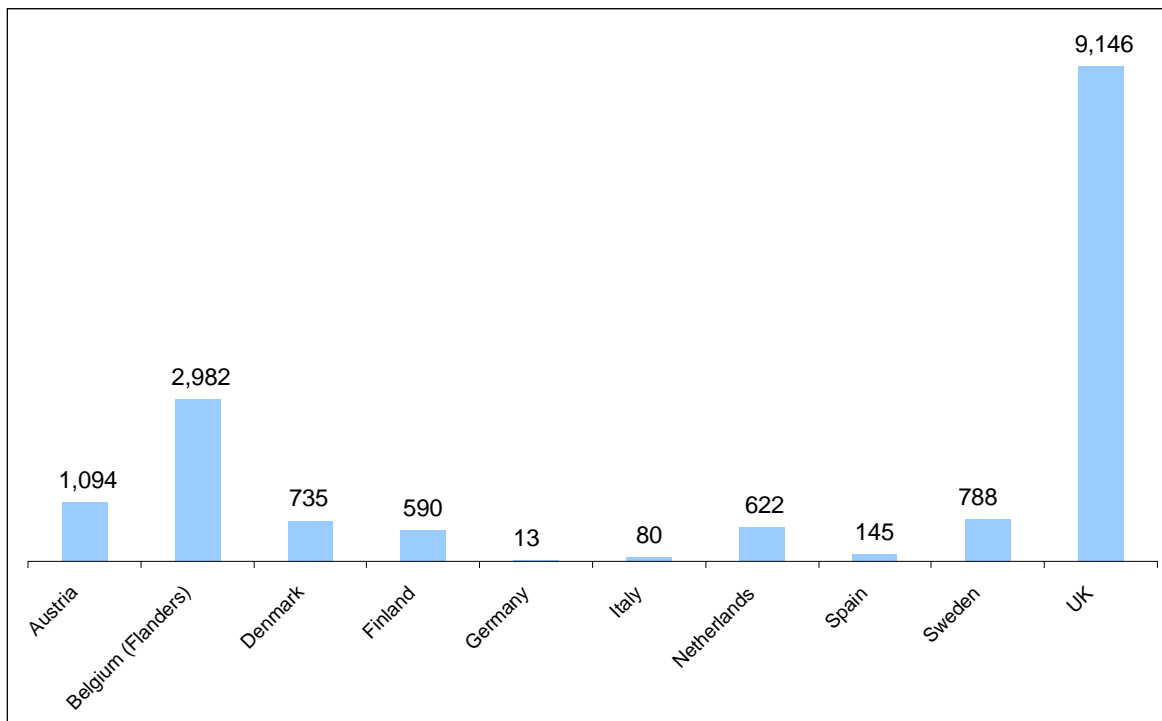
**In Norway,** Nve has no customer service unit. The section for electricity market handles contacts from end-users. This section has 10 employees.

**In Spain,** according to the legislation, most of the customer protection responsibilities are delegated to the regional authorities. In this regard, each regional authority devotes special resources to customer protection and they have set up special units on this purpose. In parallel, the CNE also deals with this issue through the External Relations Department. The data in this graph is only based on the CNE's own resources, and does not include those devoted by regional authorities.

**In Sweden,** Beyond the Consumer Electricity Advice Bureau, the regulator (Energy Markets Inspectorate) also plays a role in PCI. The regulator handles contacts from end-users. The Inspectorate has 60 employees.

### a) Incoming contacts

Graph 32: number of annual in-coming telephone calls from energy end-users per million of energy end-users



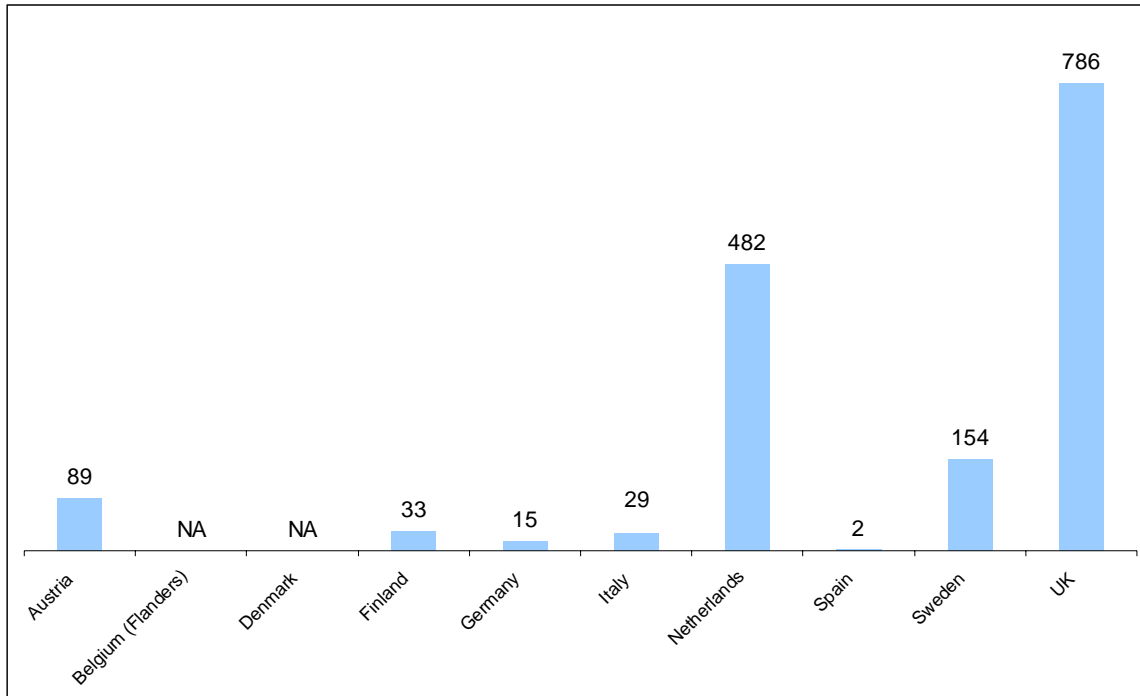
The Spanish regulator has reported that it offers a charge-free phone number.

**In Denmark,** DERA does not have a customer service unit, but the statistics cover the end-user calls regarding DERA's function as secretariat for the private Energy Supplies

Complaint Board. The regional net companies/suppliers often have consumer service units (call centres) and they keep statistics on the area.

**In Finland**, the number of calls is an estimation based on a two-week sample period in May 2006.

Graph 33: number of annual in-coming e-mails from energy end-users per million of energy end-users

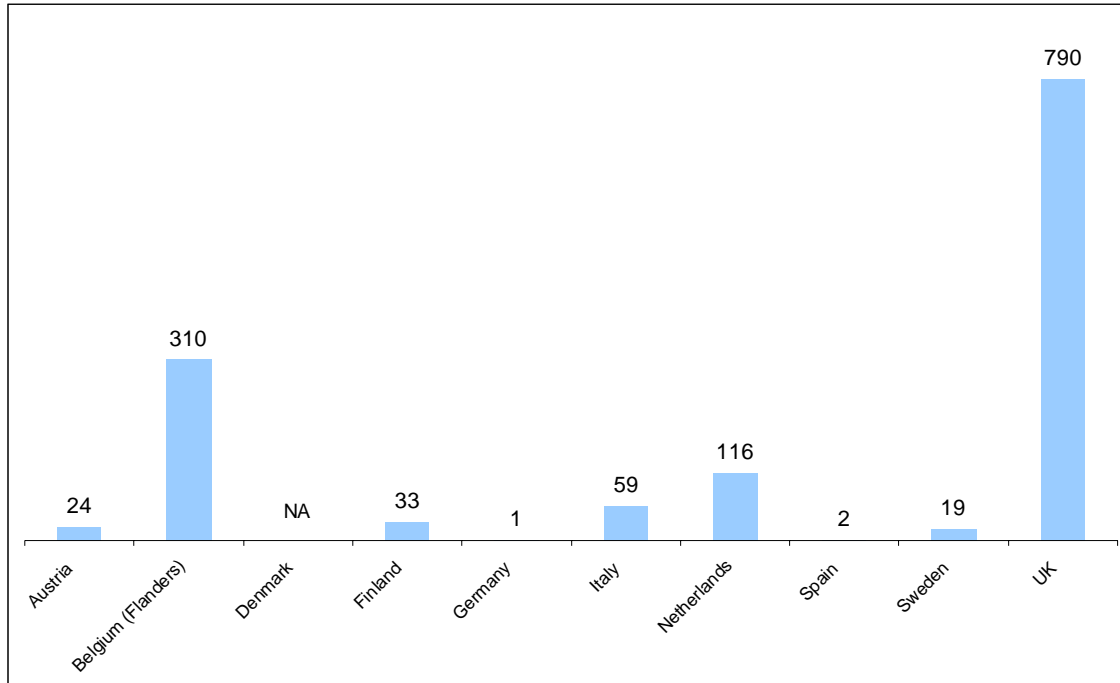


**In Belgium (Flanders)**, VREG receives many e-mails from energy end-users (approximately 130 e-mails per month), but does not have more detailed data.

**In Denmark**, DERA does not have a special customer service unit, and there is no separate data on end-user e-mails to the secretariat for the Energy Supplies Complaint Board.

**In Finland**, the provided data was an estimation that included the total aggregate number of written mail (both e-mail and mail). In the above graph, the total aggregate number has been halved.

Graph 34: number of annual in-coming mails from energy end-users per million of energy end-users



**In Belgium (Flanders)**, data includes written mail (e-mail and mail) concerning complaints, not questions for general information.

**In Denmark**, DERA has no special customer service unit, and it is not possible to isolate the mail to the Energy Supplies Complaint Board on end-users, as the Board can receive mail from an end-user several times during the handling of a dispute.

**In Finland**, the provided data was an estimation that included the total aggregate number of written mail (both e-mail and mail). In the above graph the total aggregate number has been halved.

## b) Out-going contacts

Out-going contacts are not systematically registered as a data by sample countries:

- Statistic data regarding annual **out-going telephone calls** were reported only by 3 countries: **the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.**
- Statistic data regarding annual **out-going e-mails** were reported only by 5 countries: **Austria, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, the UK.**



- Statistic data regarding annual **out-going mails** were reported only by 4 countries: **Austria, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands**.
- Only three countries (**Austria, the UK and Belgium - Flanders**) have reported that they distribute brochures/leaflets in large quantities (more than 1,000 per million of end-users).
  - **In Belgium (Flanders)**, VREG distributes:
    - a general brochure on the liberalisation of the Flemish energy market and the role that VREG plays in informing consumers;
    - a brochure on what to do when moving “Don’t forget to move your energy”. VREG received a lot of questions and complaints from consumers when moving from one residence to another and what to do with the energy supplier. This brochure gives practical information and FAQ’s and has 2 forms to be filled out (one for the new address, one for the previous address).
- Only 3 countries (**Austria, Spain and the UK**) have reported that they carry out road shows.

#### 4.3.2 Advertising and press relations

This graph indicates the scope of the channels/tools used by sample countries in the last 12 months.

Graph 35: channels/tools used by sample countries

Authorities/ Country	Advertising campaigns				Press relations	Outlets	Energy bills
	Written Press	TV	Radio	Cinema			
<b>Austria</b>	X	X	X		X		
<b>Belgium (Flanders)</b>					X		
<b>Denmark</b>					X		
<b>Finland</b>					X		
<b>Germany</b>					X		
<b>Ireland</b>					X		
<b>Italy</b>					X		
<b>Norway</b>					X		X
<b>Spain</b>					X		
<b>Sweden</b>					X		
<b>Netherlands</b>	X				X		
<b>UK</b>	X				X		

In **Belgium (Flanders)** and **Spain**, advertising campaigns (written press, TV and radio) have been developed only at the opening of the household markets.

In **Spain**, a leaflet has been inserted in the energy bill envelope at the opening of the market.

In **Denmark**, DERA distributes a newsletter every three months and writes articles about energy topics but the information is not directed to end-users. DERA has been on TV, as the Energy Supplies Complaint Board for end-users was established, and DERA often issues press releases.

In **Sweden**, in the nearest future, the regulator will use advertising channels as newspapers and magazines.

### Contact list

<i>Country</i>	<i>Name of the organisation</i>	<i>Type of organisation</i>	<i>Person to be contacted</i>	<i>e-mail</i>
<b>Austria</b>	Energie-Control GmbH	Regulator	<b>Jürgen Göttinger</b>	juergen.goettinger@e-control.at
<b>Belgium (Flanders)</b>	VREG	Regulator (regional)	<b>Sarah Van Kerckhoven</b>	sarah.vankerckhoven@vreg.be
<b>Denmark</b>	Danish Energy Regulatory Authority	Regulator	<b>Annemaria Amerenzes</b>	ama@ks.dk
<b>Finland</b>	Energy Market Authority (EMA)	Regulator	<b>Antti Paananen Timo Lankinen</b>	ap@emvi.fi tl@emvi.fi
<b>Germany</b>	BNetzA	Regulator	<b>Yvonne Finger</b>	yvonne.finger@bnetza.de
<b>Ireland</b>	Commission for Energy Regulation	Regulator	NA	NA
<b>Italy</b>	AEEG	Regulator	<b>Dario Franchi</b>	dfranchi@autorita.energia.it
<b>Netherlands</b>	The Netherlands Competition Authority (NMa)/ Office of Energy Regulation (DTe)	Competition Authority/Regulator (included within NMa)	<b>Ton Buitelaar</b>	a.buitelaar@nmanet.nl
<b>Norway</b>	NVE	Regulator	<b>Olav Kolbeinstveit</b>	oko@nve.no
<b>Spain</b>	CNE	Regulator	<b>Gema Rico Rivas</b>	dre@cne.es
Sweden	Consumer Electricity Advice Bureau	Cooperation between regulator/consumer agency/trade association	<b>Bo Hesselgren</b>	bo@elradgivningsbyran.se
<b>UK</b>	Energywatch	Consumer authority	<b>Ben Wilson</b>	ben.wilson@energywatch.org.uk

*For general questions, you can also contact the Chair Person of the CPR TF (Patricia de Suzzoni - [patricia.de-suzzoni@cre.fr](mailto:patricia.de-suzzoni@cre.fr)) or André Piérard ([andre.pierard@cre.fr](mailto:andre.pierard@cre.fr)).*