

# CEER Draft Advice on Price Comparison Tools

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## Background

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Citizens' Energy Forum 2010: the European Commission presented an Energy study
- Key finding: many customers did not have access to neutral, objective information or could not find it
- Information can empower customers to take an active role in the liberalised energy markets, by switching tariffs or switching suppliers
- Easy access to neutral, objective information is therefore crucial for the further development of the European energy markets
- EC asked CEER to prepare draft advice on how best to provide this information to customers



## **Objectives of draft Advice**

- Give an overview of existing practices, determine the main prerequisites for a wellfunctioning price comparison tool and point out good practices
- Aspects of price comparison tools considered:

### independence

transparency exhaustiveness

### clarity and comprehensibility

correctness and accuracy

### user-friendliness

accessibility

background information



# Methodology

- NRAs were asked to submit, on a voluntary basis, case studies on the situation in their countries
- 12 case studies (11 Member States) were received and published separately
- A closed workshop was held in April to discuss case studies in depth and to collect comments by invited stakeholders
- CEER draft Advice presents 16 draft recommendations
- Draft Advice is being submitted to stakeholder comments at the moment



## **Findings: General overview**

- 2 different possibilities:
  - Price Comparison Tool (PCT) is operated by a public agency (NRA or other authority)



## **Spain: a PCT operated by NRA**



suministro de energia disponibles an el mercado. contratar:





2011 Contexto Nacional de la Energía ( Aviso Legal

#### 4th Citizens' Energy Forum, London, 26-27 October 2011

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## **Findings: General overview**

• 2 different possibilities:

 Price Comparison Tool (PCT) is operated by a public agency (NRA or other authority)

### • The PCT is privately-run

 In this case, there still can be some kind of regulatory oversight, through (voluntary) code of conduct



## UK: example of a PCT accredited by **Consumer Focus Confidence Code**

#### Gas and electricity

#### Need help? 0800 404 7961 Start Switching Business Energy Gas and electricity prices rises Please enter your full postcode to identify suppliers in your area. Interested in reducing With EDF, E.ON, npower, the energy bills for ScottishPower, British vour business? Gas and SSE all Postcode announcing price rises Our business is now's the time to ? Email comparing energy compare prices. Switch deals for you, saving today to save up to Phone number (optional) ? you money and time. £458. Just moved house or $\bigcirc$ Yes 🔿 No EMAIL SIGN UP getting ready to move? Useful reading Email me your free weekly newsletter featuring the latest $\checkmark$ Get auote $\rightarrow$ money-saving deals and expert advice How to switch gas and electricity suppliers Save Now! Is it the right time to switch? All data submitted is used in accordance with our terms and conditions and privacy policy. Find a cheap electricity supplier Compare electricity prices Do you have your annual energy statement? Find a cheap gas supplier If you've got your annual energy statement, we've got a **guick and easy** new Find a cheap gas and electricity way for you to compare energy suppliers and make the switch to a cheaper e supplier tariff. Why use uSwitch? Get started Gas and electricity price rises More gas and electricity articles Latest articles Your bill Your questions Going green News uSwitch.com is fully accredited to the Consumer Focus Confidence Code to compare Consumer Focus Which is the cheapest gas and Energy Customer Satisfaction Awards energy for domestic electricity supplier? 2010 mers Just how important is it to be with the company See how your energy supplier performed in our that holds the title of the cheanest gas an customer satisfaction survey - if you're n 🔍 100% Error on page. 😂 Internet

### Confidence Code logo



## **Findings: General overview**

• 2 different possibilities:

 Price Comparison Tool (PCT) is publicly-run (by NRA or other public authority)

### The PCT is privately-run

- In this case, there still can be some kind of regulatory oversight, through (voluntary) code of conduct, screening of quality and labelling,...

# **PCT tested by Stiftung Warentest**

TEST Strompreisrechner	von den 30 günstigsten Tarifen gefunden	Gesamtpunktzahł	Anmerkungen	Gesamturteil
www.verivox.de	30	465	2)	1. Rang
www.tarifvergleich.de	18	277	3)	3. Rang
www.toptarif.de	15	245	1)	3. Rang
www.mcEnergie.de	14	226		4. Rang
www.wer-ist-billiger.com	14	225		4. Rang
www.ebdtl.de (Energiebörse Deutschland)	6	139		5. Rang
www.stromforyou.de	6	118		5. Rang
www.findhouse.de	4	82		6. Rang
www.energieverbraucherportal.de	3	52		6. Rang
www.stromtarife.de	1	23		6. Rang

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Anmerkungen: 1) Toptarif-Daten werden unter anderem auch genutzt von www.stockdose.do. www.finanztip.do, www.billiger-strom-24.de, www.netzwelt.dt 2) Verivox-Daten werden unter anderem auch genutzt von www.stromzentrale.de, www.stromauskupfi.de, www.stromsparer.de, www.stromkosten-senken.de.

#### **Unsere Empfehlungen**

✓ Wer günstigen Strom sucht, liegt bei <u>www.verivox.de</u> und seinen Kooperationspartnern richtig.

✓ Allerdings gelten auch bei Verivox die meisten Preise für die günstigsten Tarife nur im ersten Jahr oder sind an besondere Bedingungen wie Vorauskasse gebunden. Durch entsprechende Einstellung der Tarifrechner lassen sich solche Preisfallen jedoch meist herausfiltern.





## **Findings: General overview**

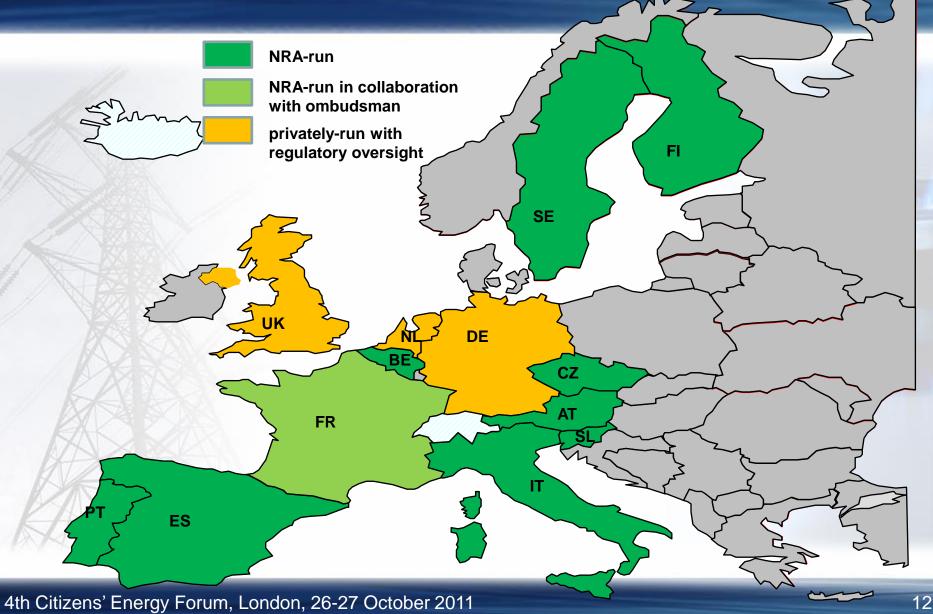
• 2 different possibilities:

- Price Comparison Tool (PCT) is operated by a public agency (NRA or other authority)
  - 9 MS have an NRA operated PCT, in another case, the PCT is a joint venture between NRA and public ombudsman
- The PCT is privately-run

 In 2 MS, NRAs set minimum quality standards, several other MS have monitoring of PCTs



## **Case studies**





# **Findings: General overview**

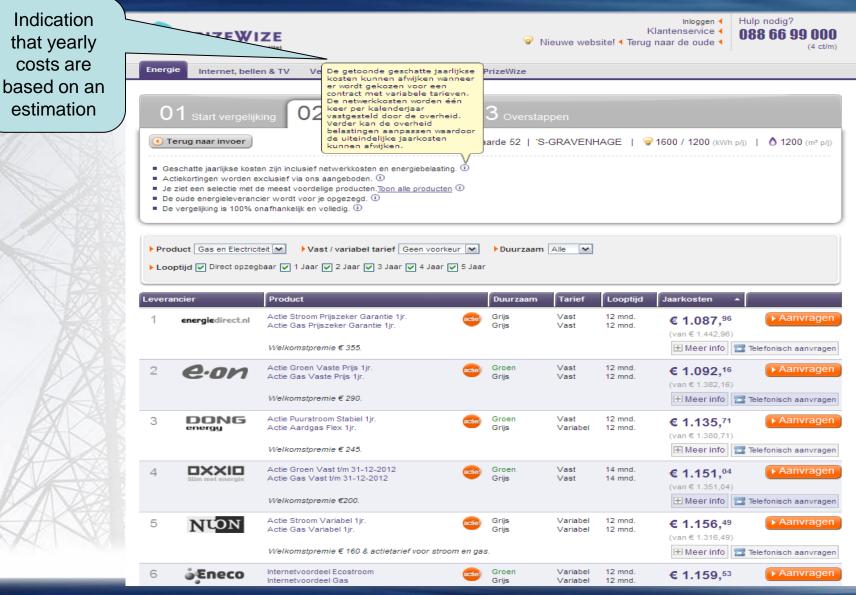
- 2 different possibilities:
  - Price Comparison Tool (PCT) is publicly-run (by NRA or other public authority)
  - PCT is privately-run
- Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages, but they both have the potential to deliver customer empowering information



Some key aspects of a price comparison tool (1)

 Independence: a PCT should aim at giving a non-discriminatory overview of the market and present all information in a consistent way

## **Presentation of information**



4th Citizens' Energy Forum, London, 26-27 October 2011

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Some key aspects of a price comparison tool (2)

 Exhaustiveness: PCT should aim at giving all information relevant to the customer as first output, then allow filtering and detailing of results

## **General overview of offers**



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#### Comparateur d'offres d'électricité et/ou de gaz naturel Clients particuliers

Comparateur d'offres > Profil > Mes résultats

Mon profil : Modifier mon profil Client : particulier Type d'energie : électricité Commune : PARIS 08 (75008) Distributeur électricité : ERDE Electricité Puissance Souscrite : 9 KVA Consommation estimée : 3977 kWh Option tarifaire : Base	Je souhaite affiner ma recherche par : Fournisseur: Electricité verte au moins égal à . Evolution des prix: Nombre maximal d'offre(s) affichée(s) par marque :	Actualiser Réinitialiser
13 offre(s) d'électricité correspond(	ent) à ma recherche	Mon profil - Affiner ma recherche 🔺Réduire

Fournisseur 🔱	Offre 8	% d'électricité "verte"	Frais souscription et/ou résiliation	Evolution des () prix	Coût estimé par an hors « promo »	Coût estimé par an avec « promo »	Le mot du fournisseur ?
PLanère OUI	Offre ELECTRECOLO de Planète OUI Base Détail offre-services	100 % 🔎	Non	Autre évolution	554 € (TTC)	527 € (TTC)	Offre ELECTRECOLO 100 % Renouvelable
proxelia	DOMELIA DOMELIA BASE Détail offre-services	26 % 🔎	Non 🔎	Prix indexé	533 € (TTC) Ø	533 € (TTC)	Votre fournisseur de proximité
OIRECT Energie	Offre 100% Pur Jus Base Détail offre-services	100 %	Non 🔎	Prix indexé	548 € (TTC)	548 € (TTC)	100% d'énergies renouvelables certifiées
Stepf blen ciel	Tarif Bleu (particuliers) Base Détail offre-services	9% 🔎	Non	Tarif réglementé	556 € (TTC)	556 € (TTC)	L'offre de référence
Planet Elec	POWEO Planet Elec Base Détail offre-services	100 % 🔎	Non 🔎	Prix indexé	556 € (TTC)	556 € (TTC)	100% d'électricité verte certifiée
Gaz de France Dolcevita	DolceVita Electricité prix fixe de marché 1 an Base Détail offre-services	21 %	Non	Prix fixe	556 € (TTC)	556 € (TTC)	Un prix fixe sans augmentation pendant 1 an
Gaz de France Dolcevita	DolceVita Electricité prix fixe de marché 2 ans Base Détail offre-services	21 %	Non	Prix fixe	556 € (TTC) Ø	556 € (TTC)	Un prix fixe sans augmentation pendant 2 ans

## **Detailed comparison of 2 offers**

Retour



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Comparateur d'offres d'électricité et/ou de gaz naturel Clients particuliers

Comparateur d'offres > Profil > Mes résultats > Comparaison de mes offres

#### Comparaison détaillée des offres

#### MON PROFIL

Client : Type d'énergie : Commune : Distributeur électricité:	particulier électricité PARIS 08 (75008) ERDF ARE PARIS 6, Rue d'Aboukir 75002 PARIS Téléphone service raccordement: 0 810 89 34 37
Puissance souscrite :	9 KVA
Ma consommation estimée :	3977 KWh

#### CARACTERISTIQUES

Fournisseur	PLanère 🏈	proxelia
Offre	Offre ELECTRECOLO de Planète OUI Base Type :Base	DOMELIA DOMELIA BASE Type :Base
Type de l'offre	Offre de marché Si vous souscrivez un contrat à prix de marché, vous pouvez conclure ultérieurement, si vous le souhaitez, un contrat au tarif réglementé. Vous devez en faire la demande auprès du fournisseur historique dont vous dépendez (EDF en général*). Lorsque vous emménagez dans un logement, vous avez le choix entre souscrire un contrat au tarif réglementé ou un contrat à prix de marché.	Offre de marché Si vous souscrivez un contrat à prix de marché, vous pouvez conclure ultérieurement, si vous le souhaitez, un contrat au tarif réglementé. Vous devez en faire la demande auprès du fournisseur historique dont vous dépendez (EDF en général*) Lorsque vous emménagez dans un logement, vous avez le choix entre souscrire un contrat au tarif réglementé ou un contrat à prix de marché.
	*Ou, dans quelques communes (qui concernent moins de 5 % des clients), une entreprise locale de distribution	*Ou, dans quelques communes (qui concernent moins de 5 % des clients), une entreprise locale de distribution
Date de début de validité	01/09/10	01/09/10
Date de fin de validité	31/12/11	Non déterminée



Some key aspects of a price comparison tool (3)

 Clarity and comprehensibility: fundamental characteristics of all products - such as fixed tariff versus floating price products, contract type and duration and energy mix - should be easily recognizable on the first page of result screen



elnät inte ingår i priserna på elpriskollen.se

## Sweden: easy comparability

Elpris-	Start   Om Elpriskollen   Fragor och Svar	Jm Elphiskollen   Fragor och Svar   Mediarum   Elhatsavglit   Elbolag   Billigast Just nu   Kontakt				
kollen	Billigast ju	Billigast just nu				
Om priserna			💽 Dela   ⊠ 🖶			
Priserna är uttryckta som jämförp	Du börjar här					
innehåller samtliga fasta och rör kostnader för avtalet. Välj den	liga Var bor du?	Välj din elförbrukning				
förbrukningstyp som bäst stämm din förbrukning för att få fram de a	avtal som	Lägenhet (2000 kWh)	Visa avtalen			
är aktuella för dig. Observera att l	kostnad för					

and the owned in the star

#### Du sökte på: postnummer 64432, elområde 2, 2 000 kWh,

st pris 1 ár		Visa med reducerad elskatt 🔲 ?
Elhandlare	Elavtal	Jämförspris
Ingetextra.se	1-årsavtal med Bra miljöval	99,25
Ingetextra.se	1-årsavtal, vattenkraft	99,88
Karlstads Energi AB	1-årsavtal	100,50
Ingetextra.se	Fast pris 1 år	103,75
Karlstads Energi AB	Fast pris 1 år - Pröva på!	105,88

#### Fast pris 2 år

Fast pris 1 år

Visa med reducerad elskatt 🔲 🕐

Energimarknads inspektionen

1.10-14-14

Dilling of treef

Elhandlare	Elavtal	Jämförspris
Ingetextra.se	1-årsavtal med Bra miljöval	99,25
Ingetextra.se	1-årsavtal, vattenkraft	99,88
Karlstads Energi AB	1-årsavtal	100,50
Ingetextra.se	Fast pris 1 år	103,75
Karlstads Energi AB	Fast pris 1 år - Pröva på!	105.88



Some key aspects of a price comparison tool (4)

 Background information: addition information on market issues such as market functioning should be provided if the customer wants this



## **Additional information**



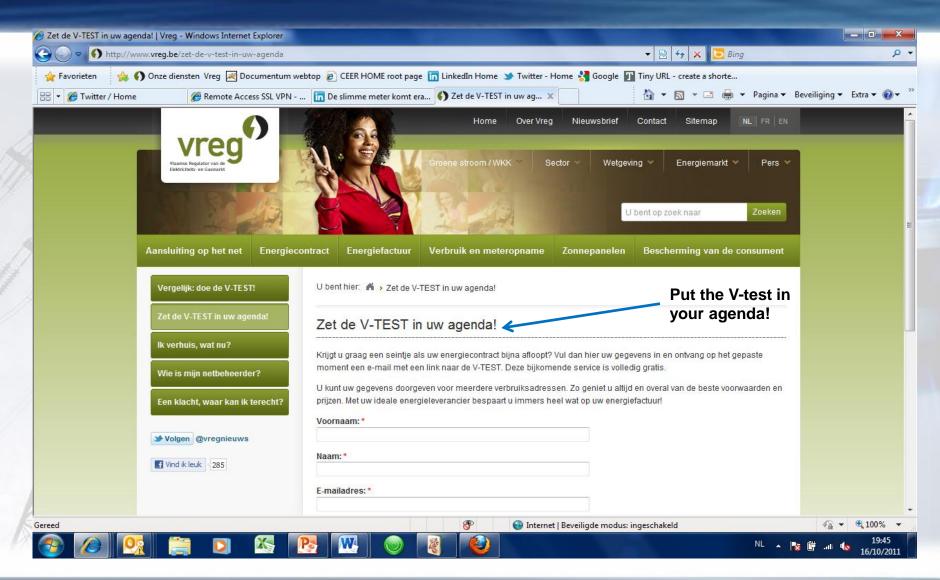


Some key aspects of a price comparison tool (5)

 Background information: a good practice is to offer a "reminder" if the customer is bound by a fixed term contract when using the price comparison tool. Alternatively, the customer could choose to receive a message when prices or products change



## Make an appointment with a PCT





## Further steps...

- Case studies published in a separate document
- The draft Advice will be put to public consultation for the next two months, starting yesterday
- A stakeholder workshop will be organised in the beginning of 2012 to further discuss the outcome of the public consultation
- Draft CEER Work Programme for 2012 proposes that a GGP on price comparison tools will be prepared in 2012



## Thank you for your attention!

### www.energy-regulators.eu

## Weblink to the report (click on the title): CEER Draft Advice on Price Comparison Tools