

# **Public Consultation on Draft Advice on Customer Complaints Handling, Reporting and Classification**

## **Comments from Vychodoslovenska energetika a.s., Slovakia**

### **Introduction:**

Vychodoslovenska energetika a.s. is a part of vertical integrated company, together with its daughter company Vychodoslovenska distribucna a.s. (legally unbundled DSO). Both companies are active in Slovakia in energy sector.

### **General Comment- Executive Summary:**

We strongly recommend to re-evaluate the need for adopting a rules in this area. In our view, this topic is already covered by relevant rules concerning the quality standards, and not to be forgotten that the main driver for improving service has to be a functioning liberalized market and not further regulation. Functioning liberalized market generate a pressure for suppliers to minimize a number of complaints, otherwise there is a risk that a customers will switch the supplier.

Secondly, we object to supposed correlation between complaints and market functioning. The definition used in a Draft Advice covers every complaints- and it is very simplified and artificial to link number of complaints with the market functioning. For example, if customer is complaining that a DSO's employee was rude while reading the meter, it has nothing to do with market indicators such as liquidity, competition at retail market etc.

Thirdly, this paper intends to oblige market players with tasks, which are fundamentally duties and responsibilities of state. For example, to increase the customer's awareness of their rights, or to create a functioning dispute and redress scheme, or availability of alternative dispute settlement for all household customers. Energy sector (private entities) can not substitute the role of state. More over, if such service should be "free of charge".

At last but not least, interaction with national laws has to be considered- not only the above mentioned overlap with quality standards rules, but for example, in some member states there has to be a written agreement of both parties about choosing the alternative dispute settlement body.

## **Specific Comments to relevant provisions:**

### Part 3.1.1, Recommendation 1:

Already today there are increased requirements on the mandatory content of the bill- we would not recommend to extent the scope of compulsory information, since this lead to increase of number of pages of bill, and thus to increase of costs and environmental burden. In addition, not all customers receive bills (for example, prepaid meters). Therefore, we propose a new text: *Customers should have unrestricted and regular access to the contact details of the providers' customer service.*

### Part 3.1.1, Recommendation 2:

As already stated in the general comment, it can not be a task for market players to secure a alternative dispute settlement body and increase of awareness of customers of their rights.

***We propose to delete the recommendation.***

### Part 3.1.3, Recommendation 4:

Complaint handling standards differ from service provider to service provider. It is one of the elements, by which a service provider could win new customers or increase a satisfaction of present customers. Unification of handling standards would be contradictory to goal of functioning market.

Furthermore, 1 day for “first acknowledgment” is absolutely non-realistic and without value added, it only increase costs of service provider. Majority of complaints are relating to metering, and in households segment, no metering data are in place on the second day. This provision is contradictory overlapping the national rules for quality standards, where service provider usually has at least 15 days for his answer, and no “first acknowledgement” is foreseen.

***We propose to delete the recommendation.***

### Part 3.1.4, Recommendation 5:

This provision is overlapping the national rules for quality standards, and would bring a possible double penalization (not meeting of quality standards means compensation for customers), which is legally prohibited.

***We propose to delete the recommendation.***

### Part 3.2:

As stated above, these recommendations should be addressed to member states only.

***We propose to delete this part.***