



28 June 2012

CRE has noted that electricity and gas distributors were not very well known

In its seventh report on compliance with codes of conduct and the independence of electricity and natural gas network operators, the CRE found that distributors (distribution network operators) were not very well known and that this unfortunately maintained confusion in the minds of consumers. Consumers are not aware that these distributors exist. Most of them confuse their public service missions with those of suppliers.

As part of its report, the CRE conducted a "mystery shopper" telephone survey on distributors to monitor progress in responding to consumers. For the majority, the objective response rate that did not favour any supplier in particular was 100%, which was very satisfactory. However, responses to consumers lacked clarity and precision. On average, 40% of responses were vague or incomplete. Finally, the results of the survey showed that the majority of distributors do not spontaneously indicate to customers that they have the choice between several suppliers.

The distinction between the visual identities and names of parent companies, incumbent suppliers, and distributors remains a central concern for the CRE. It would like to see distributor independence strengthened.

Examples of this are the proximity of the corporate identity and logo of the electricity distributor ERDF with those of the supplier EDF lends to confusion and, for the gas distributor GrDF, only its corporate identity can be confused with that of the supplier GDF SUEZ. The CRE has asked ERDF and GrDF to provide it with an action plan to comply with the energy code on fully removing these elements of confusion.

The CRE also asks that the assistance telephone number on bills is provided with the distributor's name to help the consumer clearly identify the entity responsibly for restoring their electricity or gas supply.

Founded on 24 March 2000, the French Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE) is an independent administrative body. CRE works to guarantee smooth and efficient operation of the electricity and natural gas markets for the benefit of the end-user. It also works to guarantee the absence of discriminatory practices, cross-subsidies or restrictions on competition.

Press contacts:

Anne MONTEIL : 01.44.50.41.77 - anne.monteil@cre.fr

Cécile CASADEI : 01.44.50.89.16 – cecile.casadei@cre.fr