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Press release

The fifth yearly Energie-Info survey on the opening of markets

Five years after opening energy markets to competition, energy costs remain a major concern for households in a context of economic and social crisis. 97% of French people expect a rise in prices over the next few months and 42% of households reduced their heating during the winter to limit their bills. However, the level of knowledge consumers have of the market remains low: only 48% know that they can change energy supplier and only 32% know that EDF and GDF SUEZ are two competing companies.

The fifth wave of this survey shows that, four years after the opening of energy markets to competition, French consumer knowledge is still at the same low level: only 42% know that they have the right to choose their electricity supplier and 37% their natural gas supplier. Furthermore, 62% of households consider that it is preferable to have a single provider for both energies. Only 30% of consumers know that EDF and GDF SUEZ are two competing companies. Finally, only a third of consumers have heard of regulated sales tariffs.

In September 2011, the National Ombudsman and the Regulatory Commission of Energy launched the fifth annual survey on the opening of markets. This telephone survey conducted by the LH2 institute collected the opinions of 1,500 French households.

Energy consumption is an issue that has aroused the interest of French people once again this year. Three quarters say that it is a major concern for them and six out of ten consider that their energy bills represent a major share of the household's total spending.

The majority of consumers (61%) continue to see the opening of the market to competition positively despite one out of two households not expecting any improvement or deterioration in service quality and energy pricing.

Although 57% of French people consider themselves well informed, the majority show real ignorance of how energy markets operate.

The proportion of households that know they can choose their supplier is effectively very low. Only 42% know that they have the right to choose their electricity supplier and 37% their natural gas supplier.

Press contacts :

Katia Lefeuvre : 01 44 94 66 27 / katia.lefeuvre@energie-mediateur.fr

Anne Monteil : 01 44 50 41 77 / anne.monteil@cre.fr

Only a third of consumers have heard of regulated sales tariffs.

There is still much confusion about the role of distributor and supplier (19% identified ERDF and GrDF as suppliers and 42% were unable to comment on the role of these two entities) as well as incumbent suppliers: only 30% of consumers know that EDF and GDF SUEZ are two competing companies.

This state of affairs explains the "timidity" of the market: only 8% of French people say they have already changed supplier and 5% intend to do so in the next six months.

62% of households believe that it is preferable to have a single supplier for both energies which probably explains the success of the dual offers with the French, despite their unfamiliarity with the context.

The latest figures provided by EDF and GDF SUEZ show that nearly 15% of households using gas and electricity have purchased a dual offer from one of these two suppliers.

Find the results of this survey on: www.energie-mediateur.fr

Key figures:

75%

of households consider energy as a major concern

30%

of households know that EDF and GDF Suez are two different competing companies

80%

of households say they do not know how to go about changing supplier

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