



9th Workshop of Eastern Partnership
Energy Regulatory Bodies, 29th April 2021

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Energy
Sector

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Measures undertaken during COVID-19 Pandemic

- The Acts of the Cabinet of Ministers and the recommendations of the Operational Headquarters and WHO on the anti-pandemic measures are being observed by AERA, MoE and all regulated entities and the following measures were taken to ensure the sanitary and epidemiological safety in due consideration of the Acts of the Cabinet and based on the internal orders of AERA and the regulated entities:
 - ✓ the employees were duly instructed, the antiseptic solutions, cleansers and other measures were arranged and disinfection procedures were carried;
 - ✓ AERA and the regulated entities placed the employees above 65 years on additional paid leave;
 - ✓ the scope of the working staff at the office was decreased to 10% and then increased to 30%. The rest of the staff works remotely from home;
 - ✓ the services provided by AERA, incl. the meetings with the **citizens of regulated entities** representatives were arranged distantly (post, email, phone call, SMS, video-meeting), the **internal sessions** and face-to-face meetings were decreased to a minimum and only in very necessary cases, and the compliance of the regulated entities to take similar decisions were chased. New **telecommunication tools are implemented.**

Measures undertaken by the regulated entities

- All System operators have taken following measures to ensure continuous supply of electricity, natural gas and heat:
 - ✓ The regulated entities are open for the web-based video, voice (audio) and written requests on a 24 hour a day basis;
 - ✓ In order to ensure the uninterrupted gas supply for the consumers, DSO on gas supply conducts the most necessary operations (issue of new smart cards, restoration of the blocked operations, and replacement of the lost and damaged smart cards) free of charge;
 - ✓ In view of #stayhome calls DSO on gas supply also provides support for the vulnerable consumers above 65 years, who are not allowed to leave their homes: in case of any necessity/request, the persons of the stated age category can contact Call Center and send message to WhatsApp number. In case of any failure of the domestic gas equipment, the maintenance is provided free of charge.

Additional measures undertaken by AERA

- In case of any symptoms of influenza, cold, weakness etc. of the employee or his/her family member, the employee should stay home;
- The employees were recommended to limit their personal travels abroad;
- The regulated entities were instructed to remove the specific cut-off cases discovered and to restore the supply.

- The billing system was modified and in coordination with the consumers the notifications were sent to them via SMS or email communication (earlier the notifications were submitted personally and in paper format). Cabinet Decision Nr. 198 dated 09.06.2020
- According to the Cabinet decision, the limit of energy consumption at the preferential rate was increased from 300 kilowatt hours to 400 kilowatt hours for April and May.
- DSO on electricity also declared that consumers, facing financial difficulties caused by coronavirus pandemic, would be able to defer their payments to the next month and make them in partly installments.
- Since the people were not permitted to leave their residences **and the average daily ambient temperature was still at the lower point**, at the initiative of the heating system operator and by the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers, the heating season was extended from 15th April, as have been defined earlier, until 25th April.

- The warning notifications on the current due payments were stopped by the heating supply operator and relevant measures were taken in-situ to ensure the additional services.
- DSO in gas implemented the special advance payment card system, the crediting policy for the gas sold for the resident groups and the gas supply was not cut-off due to open payments. Furthermore, the small entrepreneurs were enabled to settle the payments in partly installments. The operative working group was created for this purpose and each individual case is investigated.
- The consumer above 65 years could receive additional support in handling with smart cards and using new electronic technologies.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION!

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