

The final stage of the gas market liberalization process starts on 1 July with the transition of about 3.4 million household customers from the regulated gas market to the competitive one. Regarding the liberalization of the gas market for residential consumers, the Romanian Competition Council pointed out that, both at wholesale and retail level, there must be a normal competitive environment so that prices can be formed freely on demand and supply, given that there are only two large domestic producers, while only two large suppliers provide about 90 % of residential consumption.

As a result, larger companies must act responsibly in relation to both their smaller competitors and customers and not abuse the dominant position or enter into anti-competitive agreements.

President of the Competition Council Bogdan Chiritoiu said that the regulator wants the liberalization process to provide residential customers with the conditions to change their gas supply contracts so as to obtain the best price and the best associated services.

Consumers must have confidence that they can freely change the supplier, without interference from the current supplier of the distribution system operator. In this way, consumers can generate a competitive pressure that can be transmitted on the production-supply chain and can determine the obtaining of more favorable contractual conditions.

In the next period the regulator will collaborate with the competent authorities: the National Energy Regulatory Authority (ANRE) and the National Authority for Consumer Protection (ANPC), but also the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment, in order to improve consumer access to relevant information so that they can make an informed decision to contract natural gas, but also to prevent possible actions to block the migration of customers. At the same time, it will discuss with the natural gas suppliers in order to identify possible barriers in terms of increasing the degree of competition in the market.

The Competition Council will continue its monitoring actions and will intervene by using all the legal instruments at its disposal, mainly by investigating cases of abuse of a dominant position and anti-competitive agreements.