

**MEDIA RELATIONS**

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## ENEL LAUNCHES ONLINE CONCILIATION SERVICE TO SETTLE DISPUTES WITH ELECTRICITY AND GAS CUSTOMERS IN ITALY

- *An agreement between Enel and the Consumers' Associations grouped in the Italian Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU) has paved the way for a free, simple and rapid online dispute settlement service, available to both free market and enhanced protection customers.*

**Rome, 26 May 2009** – Today, Enel has launched its voluntary joint conciliation procedure for all its free market and enhanced protection power and gas customers over the entire Italian territory. The procedure was launched following an agreement between Enel and all the Consumers' Associations grouped in the Italian Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU).

Gianfilippo Mancini, Director of Enel Market Division, commented: *"Enel is the first European utility to launch such a large-scale project. The service has now been extended to customers on the free market, therefore covering almost all the potential disputes that could arise between supplier and customers. Over 30 million electricity and gas customers will now be able to obtain a fast, simple and free of charge response. Supported by the Italian Regulatory Authority for Electricity and Gas, the initiative was made possible thanks to the joint commitment of our company and of the Consumers' Associations with which we work regularly in order to improve the level of service offered to customers."*

Representatives of the Consumers' Associations also expressed their satisfaction, commenting: *"We are pleased to continue our dialogue with Enel, as it has fostered a number of joint initiatives encouraging the sharing of many issues related to the protection of consumer rights. It has now resulted in a conciliation procedure which is aimed at all Enel customers, both on the free and on the enhanced protection market,, thus drastically reducing time and costs involved in the settlement of disputes. This decision will allow all Enel customers to benefit from the enhanced channels of communication with the company. For the consumers' associations, it also marks a successful end to a trial phase aimed at further improving the existing conciliation procedure."*

After a trial phase in Piedmont and a lengthy training process involving 560 branch employees and more than 150 mediators, more than 30 million Enel electricity and gas customers will now be able to speed up the dispute resolution process and avoid incurring any costs in dispute settlement, thanks to this simple out of court procedure, conducted online via the Consumers' Associations. Conciliation is a way of settling

disputes that is based on a voluntary application submitted by both parties in an attempt to reach an amicable settlement. The procedure offers all consumers, both on the free market and on the enhanced protection market, a valid way to nip any disputes in the bud without having to go through the courts.

The extension of the service to all electricity and gas customers is something which has long been sought by the Regulatory Authority for Electricity and Gas. It is governed by regulations which set out the guidelines for a procedure conducted entirely online and applicable to almost any type of dispute. The previous regulations, applicable only to enhanced protection electricity customers and free-market gas customers, covered disputes related to the recalculation of energy or gas consumed after meter faults, bills which did not reflect the customer's average consumption over the previous two years, and reductions in power or suspension of services for non-payment. As from today, the regulations will also cover disputes related to estimated bills which are too high or do not reflect average consumption, those deriving from payments through instalments with high actual (if not final) consumption, instalments and refunds for final bills, re-billing or double billing.

The service is open to all customers of Enel Servizio Elettrico and Enel Energia (the company which sells electricity and gas on the free market) who have a domestic or condominium contract for supplies of up to 15 kW, as well as gas customers whose annual consumption is less than 50,000 m<sup>3</sup>.

After sending a written complaint to Enel via post, fax or email, customers will be able to start a conciliation procedure via the Consumers' Associations if they are not satisfied with the written reply received, or if they receive no reply within 30 working days from the date of delivery of the complaint. Customers need only visit the website [www.enel.it/conciliazione](http://www.enel.it/conciliazione) or the sites of the other Consumers' Associations that have signed the agreement in order to locate their nearest Consumers' Association.

The joint Conciliation panel in charge of discussing the case will be made up of two mediators, one appointed by Enel and the other by the Consumers' Association contacted by the customer. The mediators will attempt to propose a solution which is acceptable to the consumer within the shortest time possible. If the customer is satisfied with the proposal, the parties will reach an agreement and sign a conciliation report. If not satisfied, the customer will sign a report to this effect.

The 17 signatories to the agreement, which make up the Italian Council of Consumers and Users set up by the Ministry for Economic Development, are: **Acu, Adiconsum, Adoc, Adusbef, Altroconsumo, Assoutenti, Casa del Consumatore, Cittadinanzattiva, Codacons, Codici, Confconsumatori, Federconsumatori, Lega Consumatori, Movimento Consumatori, Movimento Difesa del Cittadino, Unione Nazionale Consumatori and Verbraucherzentrale Südtirol – Centro Tutela Consumatori.**