

Federal surcharges will continue to grow in 2012
Implementation of coalition agreement urgently needed

Brussels, December 15, 2011. Today, the energy regulator CREG had published the new tariffs for the federal surcharges in 2012:

- for **electricity**, the federal levy will slightly decrease to reach 5,09€/MWh (-3,4%);
- the cost for the subsidy of offshore wind parks will strongly increase to reach 1,22€/MWh (+32%);
- for **natural gas**, the sum of the federal levy and the surcharge for “protected customers” will significantly increase to reach 0,74€/MWh (+48%).

For the consumers of electricity and natural gas, the year 2012 will thus start with a considerable increase of their costs. Febeliec therefore hopes that the new federal government will very rapidly implement concrete measures to make energy prices in our country internationally competitive, as mentioned in its coalition agreement.

Febeliec has been insisting since many years for reforms of these surcharges, which have strongly increased the last few years: the base tariff of the federal levy for electricity, when it was introduced in 2003, then amounted to 1€/MWh and therefore quintupled over a period of 9 years. This year, the levy for offshore amounted to 0,92€/MWh, but will increase progressively to reach potentially 7 to 8 €/MWh in 2020 (t.i. 15% of the current cost of electricity itself !) if all planned wind parks in the North sea will effectively be built there.

Federal and regional surcharges (a.o. due to the certificates’ system) and the passing on of increasingly important obligations of public services (think about the cost of solar panels in Flanders) represent the fastest growing component of prices for electricity and natural gas in our country. The authorities must therefore also face up their responsibilities if they want to again align the energy prices in Belgium with the surrounding countries.

Febeliec therefore insists that the new government pays special attention to the following:

- that the core tasks of the authorities be financed by the State budget and be not supported by the energy consumer;
- that the exemption of the Kyoto and denuclearization funds be thoroughly reviewed in order to avoid abuse;
- that the “anomaly of the ceiling” be suppressed: large energy consumers (more than 250.000 MWh/year) pay a maximum bill of 250.000€. Companies which consume 249.999 MWh do, however, not benefit from this ceiling and pay considerably more; Febeliec pleads for a single ceiling, expressed in euros;
- that support measures, that are financed by levies supported by the energy consumer, be as efficiently as possible; the aid for offshore wind parks can then be lowered considerably, according to several studies, without jeopardizing their chances of survival;
- that the offshore levy be integrated into the federal levy, keeping the current levy base, the digressive tariff and the ceiling in order to guarantee the competitiveness of our industry compared to the neighbouring countries; all actors involved agree on this;
- that a digressive tariff and ceiling also be introduced for the federal levies for natural gas.

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