

PRESS RELEASE

Coronavirus: ARERA blocks disconnections for arrears for electricity, gas and water bills

Up to 1 bn for current and future assistance for consumers, closest deadlines envisaged by the regulation deferred.

Milan, 12 March 2020 - All possible procedures for the suspension of electricity, gas and water supplies due to arrears - of families and small businesses - are postponed from 10 March until 3 April 2020. In addition, an account has been set up with the Energy and Environmental Services Fund, with the availability of funds of up to 1 billion, to guarantee the sustainability of current and future regulatory measures in favour of consumers and users.

These are the first provisions decided by ARERA to counteract the critical issues related to the COVID-19 epidemic.

Therefore, any electricity, gas and water supplies that may have been suspended (or restricted/deactivated) since 10 March 2020 will have to be fully *re-supplied*.

As of 3 April, any suppliers concerned with disconnecting/reducing the supply of the defaulting customer shall be obliged to restart the related suspension procedure and again proceed with its formal notice of default.

In detail, the suspension of disconnections for electricity arrears concerns all low voltage customers and for gas arrears it concerns all customers with consumption not exceeding 200,000 scm/year. For the water sector it refers to all types of domestic and non-domestic users.

The account, set up with the Energy and Environmental Services Fund, will have the task of supporting any extraordinary needs for immediate availability of financial resources to ensure, in the current emergency, the sustainability of regulatory interventions in favour of end customers in the Authority's areas of competence.

To finance it, the Fund may transfer - on a temporary basis and consistent with the regular management of payments related to the purposes for which the ordinary management accounts have been set up - an amount of up to 1 billion euros from available funds. These amounts must then be returned to the relevant management accounts.

With a further resolution, the Authority also postponed a series of deadlines (in particular, the closest deadlines) for regulatory obligations in the water, energy and environmental sectors.

The competent authorities are also informed of the opportunity of reconsidering the deadlines set by current legislation for the approval (for the year 2020) of the "TARI tariffs in compliance with the financial plan for the urban waste management service", proposing to postpone the current deadline of 30 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

In any case, the Authority's could intervene with further measures, including emergency measures, in order to refine or supplement the measures listed, or to introduce new ones to protect further needs that may emerge during the ongoing investigations on the impact of government measures to contain the COVID-19 epidemic in the areas of its competence.

The resolutions are being published on the website www.arera.it