



PRESS RELEASE

MAJOR COMPANIES IN THE ENERGY, WATER AND DISTRICT HEATING SECTORS IN ITALY SIGN A SINGLE PROTOCOL FOR JOINT CONCILIATION WITH CONSUMER ASSOCIATIONS

Agreement between 7 operators and 20 CNCU consumer associations to promote and enhance joint conciliation

Rome, 11 June 2021 - A historic agreement has been signed between seven major companies in the energy, water and district heating sectors and the 20 national consumer associations of the CNCU, the National Council of Consumers and Users. For the first time in Italy, a Single Protocol has been signed following the positive experience over previous years. The aim of the agreement, which involves the major national operators in the sector, is to relaunch joint conciliation and strengthen the alternative dispute resolution tool by consolidating dialogue between companies and consumer associations and strengthening the relationship of trust with consumers.

The Single Protocol was signed by A2A, Acea, Edison, Enel, Eni gas e luce, E.ON, Iren and the 20 CNCU consumer associations Acu, Adiconsum, Adoc, Adusbef, Altroconsumo, Association of Users of Radio and Television services, Asso-consum, Assoutenti, Casa del Consumatore, Cittadinanzattiva, Codacons, Codici, CTCU - Consumer and User Protection Centre Trentino-South Tyrol, Confconsumatori, Federconsumatori, Lega Consumatori, Movimento Consumatori, MDC - Citizen Defence Movement, U.di.Con. - Consumer Defence Union, UNC - National Consumers Union. In recognition that conciliation has become an essential part of the culture of companies and consumer associations, whose main objective is to contribute to the continuous improvement of the quality of services provided to consumers, the Protocol extends the conciliation tool, in addition to electricity and gas supply services, to the water sector and district heating.

As a form of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Joint Conciliation Bodies, which offer a way to settle disputes between businesses and consumers free of charge, quickly, simply and out-of-court, were introduced in Italy in 2016 and gradually adopted by the 7 companies through individual agreements with consumer associations that regulate their use.

Through the experience gained in recent years, joint conciliation has evolved into a successful process based on the search for synergies, built on by an ongoing exchange of knowledge and improved upon by regular discussions with ARERA, the Energy, Networks and Environment Regulatory Authority.

The Protocol renews and strengthens the commitment to a tool that ensures consumers can effectively protect their rights without resorting to often lengthy and costly legal proceedings.

Companies and associations are committed to jointly promoting and supporting the ongoing development of joint conciliation, ensuring its effectiveness, ease of access to the procedure and its widest possible dissemination, as well as guaranteeing the ongoing training of conciliators. Joint initiatives are also planned to improve knowledge and the use of joint conciliation as an independent, rapid and cost-effective process, useful not only

for conflict management but also to encourage processes that improve the service offered to consumers, within the framework of open dialogue between supplier and customer that fosters an increasing awareness of how the market works.

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