

Media Release: 29 August, 2012

## Household Energy Price Index for Europe

August Prices Just Released

**Who is paying the most? Who is paying the least?**

**And where are the prices heading in Europe?**

### KEY FINDINGS AS OF August 2012

August has been a rather quiet month for retail prices after significant price changes in July. Even though prices have been stable in most of the countries, important changes can be observed in France and Sweden. French regulated electricity and gas prices increased, whereas Swedish electricity prices decreased due to low wholesale prices. In the Swedish market spot-price-tied contracts are rather common with about 29% of residential customers having tariffs that are linked to NordPool prices.

The index shows that residential electricity prices steadily decreased over the first half of 2009 but started continuously rising from 2010 on and reached the highest value ever this month (110.7 index points). The price index for gas dropped significantly in 2009 and reached its lowest value only in December at 80.3 index points (six months after the electricity price index). Retail prices started to recover in winter 2009/2010. This month the index has

#### *In This Month's Edition*

*HEPI price trend -  
Energy prices reach  
new peak*

*Gas prices and taxes –  
regulated gas prices  
increase in France*

*Electricity prices and  
taxes – regulated prices  
increase in France;  
decrease in Swedish  
electricity prices*

*Energy Price  
breakdown – Market  
forces represent less  
than half of the  
electricity bill*

reached its highest level since the beginning of the Hepi price collection (107.7 index points). Even though prices have been on a continuous upward trend since several months it is the second time that both electricity and gas prices reach a new peak at the same time.

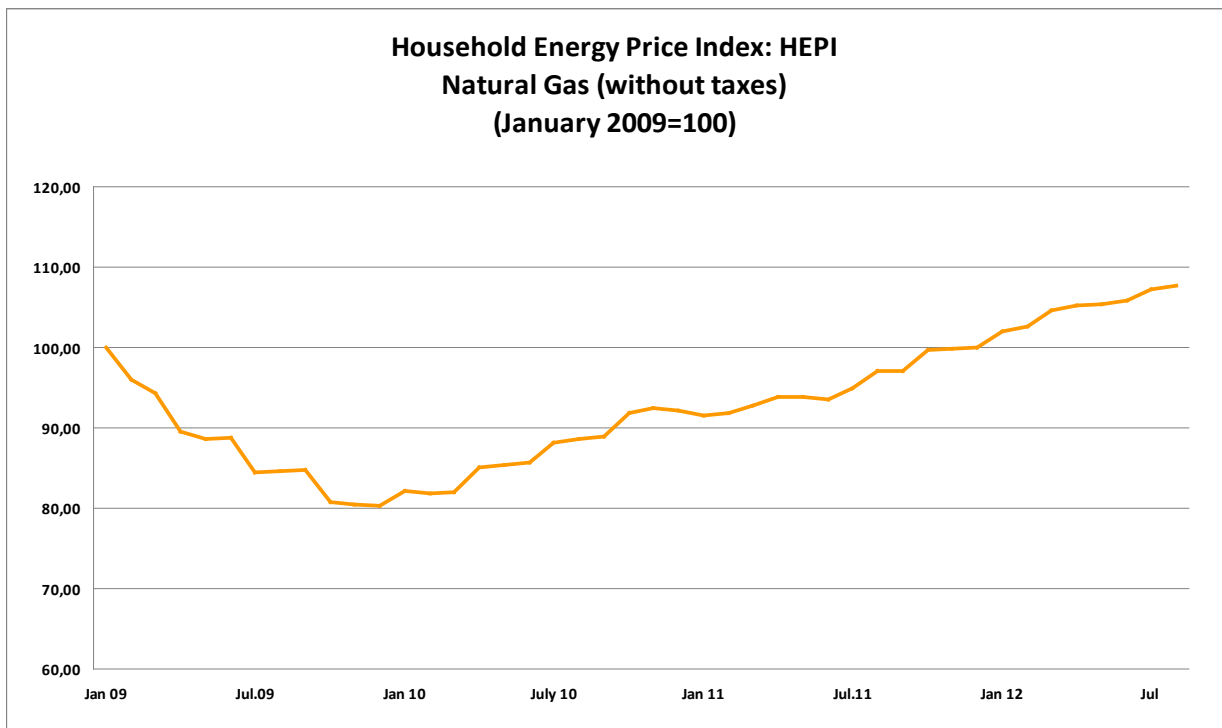
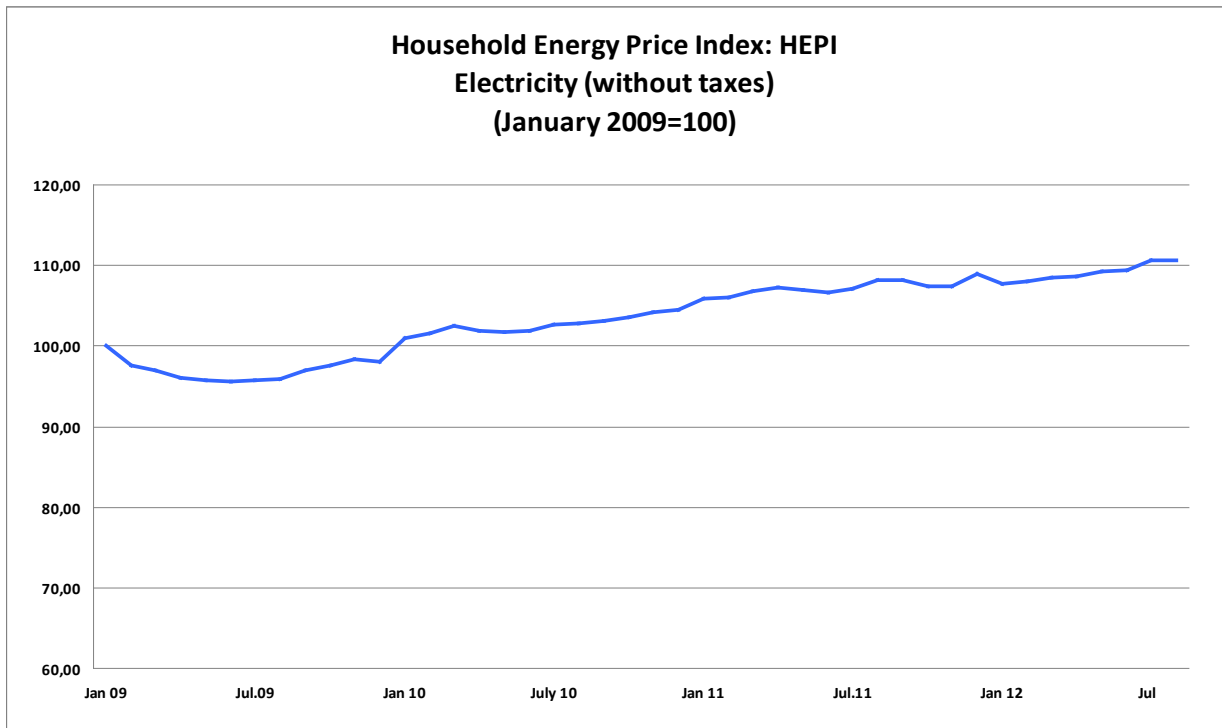
The "Total Price Rankings" table shows that depending on where a customer lives in Europe, the price that customer has to pay can vary by almost 140% per kWh of electricity and by a staggering 380% per kWh of gas. Household customers in Copenhagen pay by far the highest electricity price within the capital cities of the EU-15 (though 55% is made up of taxes), while customers in Athens pay the least. Natural gas household customers in Stockholm pay by far the most within the capital cities of the EU-15 where end-user prices are over 70% higher than in the second most expensive city Copenhagen and close to five times as much as in the British capital city where Londoners enjoy by far the lowest prices. The incredibly high prices in Stockholm can largely be explained by the limited size of the residential market (there are only about 44,000 household gas customers in the whole of Sweden<sup>1</sup>) and the fact that gas heating is almost nonexistent in Sweden.

The breakdown of end-user energy prices into four components (energy, distribution, energy taxes and VAT) also shows major variations. Our survey shows that on average, the electricity price component (including retail margins) represents about 45% of the total cost, distribution 30%, energy taxes 12% and VAT 14%, whereas the natural gas price component (including retail margins) represents 53% of the total cost, distribution 24%, energy taxes 9% and VAT 14%. Copenhagen is a very unusual case; the cost of electricity as a commodity represents less than a fourth of the end-user price, by far the lowest of all surveyed cities, whereas the energy taxes represent an astonishing 35% (about three times the EU-15 average) and 55% if we include VAT. Overall, the results show that market forces represent only about half of the end-user price (both for electricity and gas) whereas national fiscal and regulatory elements are responsible for the other half through distribution tariffs, energy taxes and VAT.

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<sup>1</sup> The Energy Markets Inspectorate, The Swedish electricity and natural gas markets 2009, June 2010.

## EUROPEAN ENERGY PRICE DEVELOPMENT (EXCLUDING TAXES)



Source: E-Control and VaasaETT (prices as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012)

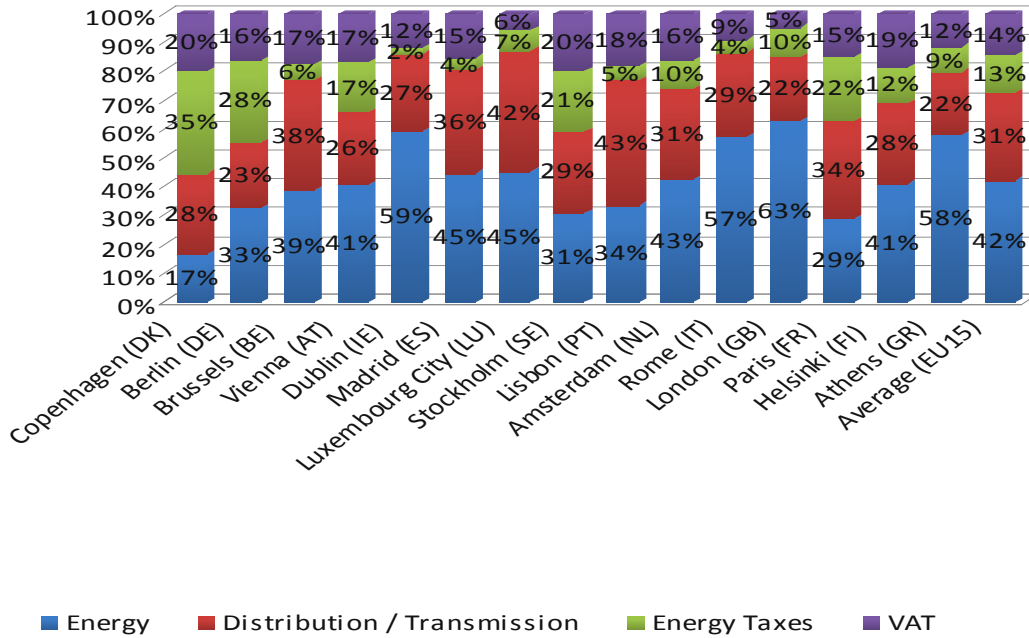
## TOTAL PRICE RANKINGS (INCLUDING ENERGY, DISTRIBUTION AND TAXES)

		Electricity (all tax included)					Gas (all tax included)		
Ranking		City	Price in € cent / kWh	Change / previous month	Ranking		City	Price in € cent / kWh	Change / previous month
Most Expensive	1	Copenhagen (DK)	30,69	↓	Most Expensive	1	Stockholm (SE)	19,68	↑
	2	Berlin (DE)	26,22	→		2	Copenhagen (DK)	11,07	↑
	3	Brussels (BE)	23,34	↓		3	Rome (IT)	9,20	↓
	4	Madrid (ES)	21,92	→		...	<b>Average (EU-15)</b>	<b>8,55</b>	↑
	5	Lisbon (PT)	21,67	→		4	Athens (GR)	8,40	↑
	6	Dublin (IE)	21,36	→		5	Lisbon (PT)	8,05	→
	...	<b>Average (EU-15)</b>	<b>19,81</b>	↓		6	Brussels (BE)	7,81	↑
	7	Vienna (AT)	19,50	↓		7	Vienna (AT)	7,73	→
	8	Rome (IT)	19,42	↓		8	Berlin (DE)	7,67	→
	9	Amsterdam (NL)	19,18	→		9	Madrid (ES)	7,48	→
	10	Luxembourg City	18,44	→		10	Amsterdam (NL)	7,11	↑
	11	London (GB)	17,13	↑		11	Paris (FR)	6,81	↑
	12	Stockholm (SE)	16,02	↓		12	Luxembourg City	6,65	→
	13	Paris (FR)	14,34	↑		13	Dublin (IE)	6,47	→
	14	Helsinki (FI)	14,16	→	Cheapest	14	London (GB)	5,61	↑
Cheapest	15	Athens (GR)	13,74	→					

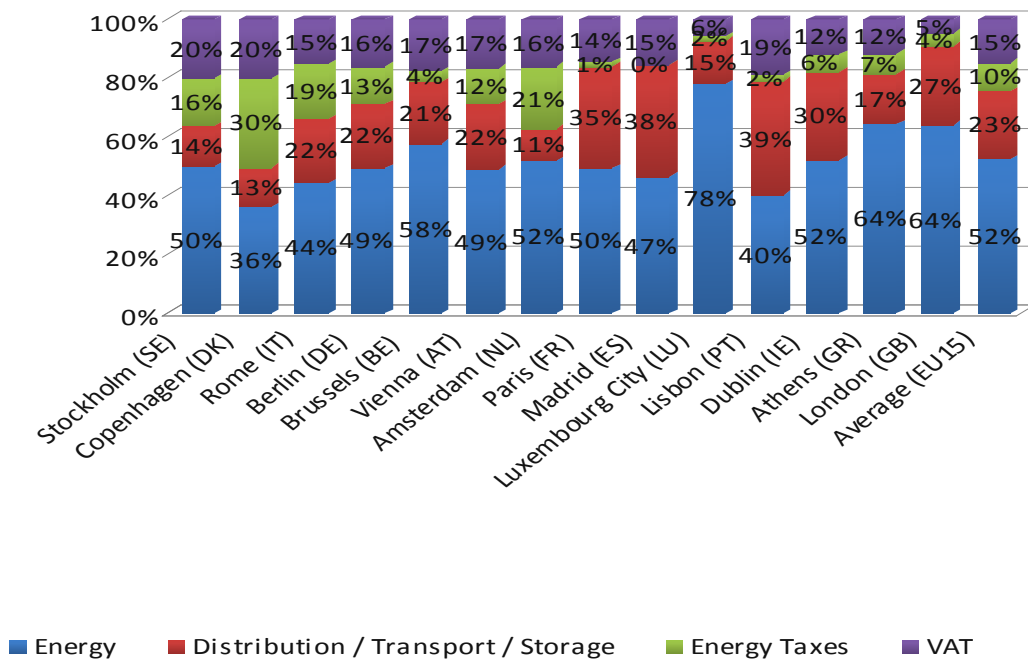
Source: Energie Control Austria and VaasaETT (Prices as of August 1st, 2012)

# ENERGY PRICE BREAKDOWN

## Residential Electricity Price Breakdown



## Residential Gas Price Breakdown



Source: E-Control and VaasaETT (prices as of August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012)

## What is the HEPI?

Based on the electricity and natural gas prices collected both for incumbents and competitor companies in capital cities of EU15 member states, E-Control Austria in cooperation with VaasaETT has compiled The Household Energy Price Index, HEPI. The HEPI is a weighted end user price index that assesses overall price developments in Europe.

The HEPI is Europe's only independent comparative monthly index of electricity and gas prices across the 'EU 15' states. Data is collected directly from utilities and authorities in the respective markets, using a thorough, precise and comparative definition and methodology.

The HEPI project also compiles and publishes a monthly ranking and analysis of capital city prices within the EU15.

E-Control Austria and VaasaETT will continue to publish HEPI every month.

## For More Information

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*Subscribe to the free monthly update of the HEPI index for Europe. Get the latest prices delivered automatically to your email. Just send an email request to Christophe Dromacque*

## About the Authors

### E-Control

E-Control (Energie-Control Austria) was set up by the legislator on the basis of the new Energy Liberalisation Act and took up work on 1 March 2001. E-Control is headed by Mr Walter Boltz and Mr Martin Graf as managing directors and is entrusted with monitoring, supporting and, where necessary, regulating the implementation of the liberalization of the Austrian electricity and natural gas markets.

**More at: [www.e-control.at](http://www.e-control.at)**

### VaasaETT Global Energy Think Tank

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