

Introduction

Issue to be addressed:

Load metering for consumers with an annual consumption between 400,000 kWh and 1,107,000 kWh is voluntary.

Objective:

Reducing the threshold to 400,000 kWh would greatly improve the system operators' information basis.

Contents:

This order governs the assignment, compilation and adjustment of standardised load profiles.

Alternatives:

retaining the order currently in force

Financial consequences:

The amendments proposed do not affect the budget of the state or any other regional authority. The adjustment of thresholds should not have a major impact on the financial situation of distribution system operators.

Consequences for employment in Austria and Austria as a business location:

No major impacts are to be expected.

Community legislation framework:

The order rests on the provisions of the Natural Gas Act, which in turn refers to the Natural Gas Directive (Directive 2003/55/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2003).

Particulars of the legislative process:

None.

**Explanatory notes to the
E-Control GmbH Order amending E-Control GmbH Order on the assignment, compilation and
adjustment of standardised load profiles (Load Profile Order 2006)
(Load Profile (Amendment) Order 2008)**

Background

Pursuant to section 28 para 2 Natural Gas Act, E-Control GmbH shall, by ordinance, oblige distribution undertakings to prepare standardised load profiles for system users whose facilities are connected to a distribution system whose operating pressure is below a specified figure and whose annual consumption and meter size are below a specified figure, and to allocate such profiles to the respective system users. The specified figures shall be determined by the economic feasibility of the effort required for metering. The said ordinance shall also specify how the standardised load profiles are to be prepared, their number and adjustment, with a view to achieving a uniform and comparable procedure. Attention shall be given to simple handling and reproducibility of the process.

This requirement has been met with the Load Profile Order 2006.

Commentary on sections

Section 3 subsection 2

The installation of a load profile meter shall be compulsory for an annual consumption of 400,000 kWh and above, instead of the former 1,107,000 kWh threshold. Load profile meters have become more widely used on the European market over the last years and the number of suppliers has increased. Technical progress and increasing production numbers have led to decreasing prices for these metering devices.

Considering that a network user with an annual consumption of 400,000 kWh bears a total annual cost of about 20,000 EUR (energy, system charges and surcharges and taxes), a maximum charge of 10 to 18 EUR per month for a load profile meter seems feasible. The available types of load profile meters mainly differ in the number of possible channels and the type of data transmission (modem, GSM or manual meter reading). Section 11 subsection 2 Gas System Charges Order 2008 states that the installation, removal and replacement costs of metering devices have to be borne by the consumer; a changeover does not imply any additional cost for system operators. If the installation costs for the meter(s) at a metering point exceed 200 EUR, customers may choose between a single payment and payment in instalments.

Real-time or near-real time billing also complies with the Energy Efficiency Directive 2006/32/EC and enables system users to optimise their consumption behaviour. They can control their energy consumption more easily and handle it more consciously.

Section 3 subsection 3

Section 3 subsection 3 Load Profile Order 2006 provided that network users, at whose metering point a load profile meter has been installed can request billing based on a standardised load profile after two continuous years of compliance with the criteria stated in section 3 subsection 2, i.e. if there is no obligation for load profile metering. This stipulation contradicts the proposed amendment of section 5 subsection 7 Gas System Charges Order 2004 by the Gas System Charges Order 2008: this amendment provides that consumers with load profile meters shall be billed in accordance with bands A-F as set in section 5 subsection 8 Gas System Charges Order 2008, and non-load profile metered consumers shall be billed in accordance with bands 1-7, without considering any consumption thresholds. The possibility for system users to choose pursuant to section 3 subsection 3 Load Profile Order 2006 does not apply anymore. However, the new wording maintains the possibility for system users to switch to another type of metering if the criteria set in section 3 subsection 2 have been fulfilled for two continuous years.

To avoid that load-metered system users for whom the Load Profile Order 2006 does not foresee compulsory load metering keep switching between the tariffs for bands A-F and the tariffs for bands 1-7, section 3 subsection 3 stipulates that such system users may only switch to another type of metering after a settlement period of 365 (or 366) days.

Section 7 subsection 2

The amendment comes into force at the same time as the Gas System Charges (Amendment) Order 2008. For the transition to load profile meters, system operators are granted a transitional period of approximately three years.