

UK Tops G7 As Most Competitive Energy Market

The United Kingdom's energy market remains the most competitive in the EU and G7 (Group of Seven), according to independent research. UK Business Secretary John Hutton says the report is evidence that the UK market was delivering for consumers, and calls for more open and transparent markets to be replicated throughout the rest of Europe. The report, from the Oxford Economic Research Associates, monitors the competitiveness of the energy market by assessing a range of factors. These include the market shares in generation and supply, the separation of transmission from generation and supply and the availability of regulated third party access to gas and electricity transmission and distribution networks. Only 11 EU members and none of the other G7 countries have currently deregulated their energy markets sufficiently to be assessed. A further eight EU members are expected to qualify to be assessed in 2008. "Creating an open and competitive energy market has meant that UK consumers have consistently benefited from amongst the lowest energy prices in Europe. While it is true that wholesale energy prices are rising, greater choice and transparency are clearly the best protection against these costs being disproportionately passed onto consumers," says Hutton. "That is why we want to see the UK's open and transparent markets replicated throughout the rest of Europe. Liberalised energy markets – such as the one we have in the UK – could save EU consumers tens of billions of euros a year," he adds. Hutton says he welcomes the "robust actions" the EC has already taken to liberalise European energy markets, and that the UK will continue to encourage and support further work.

[Source essa news]