

PRESS RELEASE

Automating the Social bonus on the bill for those who are entitled to

ARERA notice to Parliament and Government for a rule that guarantees the required discounts for electricity, gas and water to 6.8 million Italians

Milan, 1 July 2019 - Automatically applying the required social bonus discount on electricity, gas and water bills by adopting a rule that allows the necessary exchange of data between the administrations in order to ensure that all those entitled can benefit, abolishing all the bureaucratic steps currently necessary for families. In short, this is what ARERA stresses in the notice that it has sent to the Parliament and the Government, based on the observation that those who might benefit from this tool barely use it, also in view of the recent rules on the allocation of benefits to those entitled to citizenship income.

To automate this bonus ARERA proposes a procedure that, however, requires a regulatory intervention which ensures the consent of the person concerned to the interaction between the databases of the INPS and the databases of electricity, water and gas (integrated information system and territorial water registry) in order to provide the social bonus, enhancing the role of municipal administrations in supporting and providing information to the public, with particular reference to the management of the bonus for users of electro-medical equipment, territorial water bonuses, and the possible identification of customers with gas central heating.

In this way we could contribute to the fight against energy poverty, guaranteeing economic support to cover expenditure on energy and water to all 2.2 million households that have an ISEE certification that entitles them to access the bonus that, considering their average size of 3.1 members, corresponds to approximately 6.8 million individuals. The proposed measures can be implemented without being a burden on the State Budget, by applying the procedures currently laid down in order to cover the cost of bonus, and with null or limited costs for electricity and gas service customers and users of the water service.

In fact, despite efforts made and the different tools used to spread knowledge of the bonus and the related requirements to qualify, the ratio between potential recipients and actual recipients for electricity and gas has always remained around 30-35%. The level of coverage of the electricity bonus with respect to potential recipients is not uniform at national level: it tends to be higher in the regions of the Center-North (with the exclusion of Lazio) and particularly low in some regions of the South and in the Islands, where the number of potential recipients is actually higher. Similar trends can be observed for the gas bonus, whose geographical spread is even more differentiated due to the different methanization of different areas of the country. In the first six months of operation the water bonus, active since July 1st 2018, has recorded modest demand (240 thousand applications at 31 December 2018), mainly from individuals who are already beneficiaries of the electricity and/or gas bonus. The Authority hopes to extend the water social bonus to recipients of citizenship income and scale up the bonus for all those who qualify, so as to also include the costs relating to sewerage and purification services.

Data of the Report to the Minister for Economic Development

In addition to the notice, ARERA has published the 'Report to the Minister of Economic Development on the state of implementation of the electricity and gas social bonus for 2018' (279/2019/I/com)", from which it emerges that 795,566 families receive the electricity bonus for financial limitations and 519,375 families receive the gas bonus for financial limitations; finally 35,903 families have obtained the electricity bonus for physical limitations. On average 64% of households receive both the electricity bonus and the gas bonus. Finally, 76% of the bonuses granted are renewals, i.e. to families who already received the bonus the previous year, while 24% refer to new sign-ups.

It should be emphasised that 20% of subjects using a centralised gas supply and that have obtained the bonus did not cash the transfer with which the bonus was sent to them, even though they were informed of the availability of the payment transfer at any post office.

The notice and the Report are published on the website www.arera.it.