

Disconnections in Cyprus

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Perspective on disconnections in the policy debate of Cyprus

The Republic of Cyprus has taken legislative action against the disconnection of electricity for consumers officially recognised as vulnerable. Action was first taken in 2012, within the Law for the Regulation of Electricity Market of 2003 to 2012, amending the regulatory electricity market legislation (MCIT, 2013). This law stated that measures should be taken to prohibit the disconnection of electricity for vulnerable consumers, defined as:

- those affected by energy poverty;
- individuals relying on mechanical support for their survival;
- individuals over 70 years old;
- individuals with serious health issues or mental and physical disabilities; and
- individuals residing in remote areas.

This regulation was amended in 2015, when prohibition of disconnection was limited only during critical periods and to individuals with serious medical conditions, subject to examination by a relevant medical board (MECIT, 2015). Critical periods are not explicitly mentioned, but the 2015 ministerial Order rather refers to a time period that is considered critical for the consumer, as decided by the medical board. Nevertheless, the Electricity Authority of Cyprus (the sole electricity supplier up to now) often announces that disconnections will not take place during holiday seasons (such as Christmas or Easter). This also occurred in March of 2020, in response to the global pandemic. This amendment is a setback in attempts to protect vulnerable consumers and to their right for minimum energy services. When disconnection protection is discussed in political debates, it is related to vulnerable consumers and energy poverty, within the relative legislation

for the regulation of the electricity market. A new ministerial Order was expected to be released in 2020, revising the definition of vulnerable consumer groups and introducing income criteria in all categories (Mesimeris et al., 2020). This amendment has not yet been materialised, possibly due to pandemic-related delays, nevertheless, it remains unknown whether regulations on disconnections will also be revised through this new Order.

Research perspective on disconnections in Cyprus

At the moment there has been no academic research published on power disconnections for nonpayment among Cyprus households. The little data available on the topic can be found in [the EU Energy Poverty Observatory](#) (EPOV) database of knowledge and resources (EPOV, 2018). Therefore, the need for national action is highlighted, with academia and policy having to join forces to provide the right to energy services.

References

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