

Abstract

The liberalization of gas markets is in the European Union and especially in its new Member States a current topic. This thesis is devoted to a comparison of the liberalization processes in three Central European countries – the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Poland. The thesis first introduces the concepts of public and natural monopolies, the specific characteristics of gas markets and the legislation of the European Union that underlies the liberalization. Further, the thesis takes a close look at the developments in the gas markets of the three countries. The focus lies mainly on the national legislation, opening of demand side and changes in the market structure, including unbundling, new entrants and supplier switching. The final chapter of the thesis analyzes and compares the progress in liberalization of the individual markets by calculating the market concentrations using the Herfindahl-Hirschman index.