

The European energy market has experienced a process of rapid change in recent years. The trend of liberalisation and deregulation is shaping in a fundamental way the environment in which energy companies operate. The aim of this paper is to analyse the present situation regarding the European debate on the liberalisation of the energy market. The analysis includes a theoretical excursus on the problem of the natural monopoly in the energy sector, a description of the European requirements for the organisation of the energy market and an account of the experience of the first countries opening their energy sectors. We will base our affirmation that European directive 2003/92/EC leaves sufficient room for each member state to organise its energy market on its own, on the current debate and the experience of two European Union member states, the Czech Republic and France. The culmination of this paper is section six comparing the present state of the liberalisation process in these two countries, the satisfaction of inhabitants with this process and its impact on energy prices.