

Summary

Key words: Natural monopoly, network industry, energy industry, regulation, liberalization, unbundling, third party access

The present thesis sets out to explore the legal aspects of network industries and natural monopolies. It researches these aspects using the example of the energy sector (i.e. the power and gas industries), which is a typical example of a network industry. In terms of its geographical scope, the thesis focuses on the EU energy law and its specific application in the Czech Republic. The fundamental point of departure for the present thesis is a believe that energy law is closely intertwined with economic policy, and is appropriately interpreted only in the context of the concrete measures, tools, and concepts meant to reflect a nation's energy policy. The main driver of energy policy, and hence also of energy law, is a reform of the energy industry aiming at its liberalization. The key tools for its successful implementation are economic regulation, third party access, unbundling, and public administration by independent regulatory bodies. Firstly, the present thesis discusses the economic characteristics of network industries, that is most importantly the existence of a natural monopoly. The second part of the thesis outlines the background of liberalization and the related concepts as a deliberate part of the energy reform. The third part of the thesis turns to specific legislation through which the liberalization of the energy sector is implemented.