



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **SORGENIA: NEW AGREEMENTS WITH CONSUMERS FOR CONCILIATING DISPUTES AND INCREASING COMMERCIAL TRANSPARENCY**

*Today in Rome the General Manager of Sorgenia Riccardo Bani and eleven consumer associations signed a conciliation protocol which will make it possible for disputes between the company and its customers to be settled rapidly and amicably. The agreement also includes micro businesses and VAT-registered self-employed people.*

*A set of binding rules was also defined to combat unfair commercial practices. With these initiatives the company has strengthened its commitment to increasing customer satisfaction.*

Rome, December 14 2009 – Today in Rome Sorgenia and eleven of the most representative Italian consumer associations belonging to the National Council of Consumers and Users (CNCU) signed a conciliation protocol to be used in the event of disputes between the company and its customers.

The agreement was signed this morning in Rome by the General Manager of Sorgenia, Riccardo Bani, and the representatives of the eleven associations involved (Adiconsum, Adoc, Assoutenti, Cittadinanzattiva, Codici, Confconsumatori, Federconsumatori, Movimento Consumatori, Movimento Difesa del Cittadino, Unione Nazionale Consumatori, Centro Tutela Consumatori e Utenti).

Recourse to conciliation on an equal footing in the event of disputes between Sorgenia and its customers has thus come out of the experimental stage, which began a year ago, and has become a document inspired by European recommendations. This trial year has



enabled Sorgenia and the associations to agree on a set of rules for the conciliation process and make them fully operational.

The main feature of the agreement is the fact that the conciliation procedure will not apply only to consumers of electricity or gas for domestic or condominium use but also to micro-businesses and VAT-registered self employed people with contracts for up to 6 kW for electricity and 3,000 cubic metres per year for gas.

The conciliation rules will allow Sorgenia customers to solve disputes amicably, quickly and free of charge without having to go through the courts. To start the process you need to fill in a form which can be downloaded from the Sorgenia website and send it by ordinary post or e-mail to a special office set up at the company headquarters. A conciliation commission, consisting of a representative of Sorgenia and a representative of the consumer associations, will facilitate contact between the company and the customer with the aim of settling the dispute in a peaceable manner. The agreement also involves penalties payable by Sorgenia in cases where after conciliation the company does not respect deadlines for the payment of compensation to customers.

Together with the conciliation protocol, Sorgenia and the consumer associations also agreed upon a set of rules of conduct that the commercial agents, who act as partners of the company, will have to follow in order to ensure that consumers have more protection. These rules refer in particular to the fair and transparent communication of all contractual and economic conditions, the procedures and timing of bills as well as the method used for charging consumption. The main new feature is the fact that these rules will be an integral part of agency agreements.



*"Signing the conciliation protocol and adopting the new rules of commercial conduct with external agencies - highlights Riccardo Bani, General Manager of Sorgenia - will enable us to reach a double objective: enhancing both transparency and efficiency towards consumers and strengthening our opposition to all forms of unfair commercial practice. As the number one private operator in the energy sector, we intend to pursue this direction, thanks to our fruitful exchange with the consumer associations, in order to continue to improve customer satisfaction. Sorgenia is to all extents and purposes the only new company to have come out of liberalization. For us initiatives such as today's demonstrate how the opening up of the markets not only guarantees more choice but also fosters virtuous competition among operators even on the front of consumer protection."*

*"Every time a private company decides to sign a conciliation protocol is always good news for consumers. Because conciliation is an efficient instrument that gives rapid and effective responses free of charge" said Liliana Ciccarelli, who is responsible for the conciliation area of Cittadinanzattiva, on behalf of the 11 associations that signed the protocol. And she added: "As well as the conciliation process which is now up and running in a new form with improved content and better procedures, there are now other important instruments for guaranteeing that commercial rules and rules of conduct respect the right of consumers to have fair and transparent information prior to signing a contract. We believe that this is the true meaning of the fruitful collaboration between private entities and organizations which protect citizens' rights".*

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