

Press release

ELECTRICITY BLACKOUT ON 28th APRIL 2025

1. What caused the blackout?

There is still no evidence to accurately characterise the possible causes of the incident or to determine responsibility.

As this event involves several European electricity systems, analyses will be carried out by the various national and European players in the sector:

- Network operators directly involved, including REN - Rede Eléctrica Nacional (REN) and E-Redes;
- European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity- ENTSO-E;
- Regional Coordination Centre for South-West Europe - CORESO;
- European Union Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators – ACER, in which ERSE participates.

2. Who is responsible for managing the national electricity system?

The management of the national electricity system is the responsibility of REN, in its capacity as overall system manager and transmission system operator, acting in coordination with the distribution system operators (E-Redes in high, medium and low voltage, practically throughout the continent).

CORESO is responsible for coordinating the management of the electricity system in south-western Europe.

3. What codes regulate the security of supply, operation and management of the electricity system?

There are European and national rules on security of supply, operation and system management that are mandatory for network operators and the system manager (REN).

The rules, methodologies and responsibilities to be observed when drawing up contingency plans in the electricity sector are in line with the provisions of Regulation (EU) 2019/941 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019, for which the Directorate-General for Energy and Geology (DGEG) is responsible.

The Network Operations Regulation and the Global System Management Procedures Manual, approved by ERSE, establish the procedures for operating in a state of emergency and acting in a state of recovery. Continuity of supply standards, i.e. the number and maximum duration of interruptions affecting consumers connected to the public electricity network, are established in the Quality of Service Code (RQS) approved by ERSE. The continuity of service performance may affect the remuneration of the network operators, since their remuneration includes incentives/penalties for the continuity of service verified in the previous year, if they are found to be responsible.

4. Are consumers entitled to compensation?

The Quality of Service Code (RQS) requires network operators to compensate consumers when the maximum number or duration of interruptions is exceeded. However, if the incident is classed as an exceptional event, consumers may not be entitled to compensation.

If customers are entitled to compensation, it will be paid to them automatically at the beginning of the next year via their supplier's bill.

An interruption of the duration experienced on 28th April 2025 could have a significant impact on the quality of service indicators, which are calculated annually.

5. What is an exceptional event?

ERSE, following a duly justified request by network operators, may classify an event as exceptional if all the following conditions are met:

- a) Low probability of the event or its consequences occurring;
- b) Result in a significant reduction in the quality of service provided;
- c) It is not economically reasonable for network operators to avoid all of its consequences;
- d) The event and its consequences are not attributable to the network operators.

It is the responsibility of the network operators to request and justify the classification of an exceptional event if they consider it to be so, with particular emphasis on the technical analysis to be carried out by the various entities involved.

6. Can consumers claim indemnities for the damage caused?

Consumers can always complain to their energy supplier or network operator about any damage caused by the blackout. To do so, they must provide proof of the damage.

As a rule, supply interruptions do not cause damage to equipment. The restoration of service complies with rules designed to prevent damage to equipment.

However, ERSE advises consumers not to use the contact methods of network operators and retail suppliers during the present day so that they can finalise the restoration of normal system operation.

Determining liability for any damage claimed by consumers (e.g. interruption of production processes, loss of goods requiring refrigeration, activities that didn't work) is not ERSE's responsibility, but rather that of the courts (judicial or alternative dispute bodies).

7. What information obligations do network operators have towards ERSE?

When there are high impact incidents, as is the case here, network operators must send ERSE information:

- Preliminary, within 3 days, containing the best information available to characterise what happened;
- A full report, within 20 days, containing the following information: (i) the cause of the supply interruptions and the reasons for them; (ii) the consequences of the interruptions, namely the number of customers affected, the geographical areas affected and the energy not supplied or not distributed; (iii) actions to restore service, characterised namely in terms of chronology, procedures adopted, difficulties encountered and communication strategy; (iv) the impact on general and individual service continuity indicators at the voltage levels involved.

This deadline can be extended by ERSE's decision for highly complex situations, namely because they involve several European entities, as is the case here.

8. Can similar cases be avoided in the future?

The high impact of these incidents on society means that we need to identify the source of the problem and the improvements to be made, particularly with regard to the mechanisms for preventing and mitigating this type of event, as well as the restoration of service and the necessary communication. The in-depth analyses that will be carried out will make it possible to identify the key elements for the concrete measures to be adopted.

At the same time, it should also be emphasised that critical sectors, facilities and services must have alternative means of supply to guarantee the maintenance of services during emergency situations.

ERSE recognises the efforts made by the system manager and network operators in their work to restore the country's electricity supply, in an unprecedented situation of severe disruption to the electricity supply.