

Directive (EU) 2019/944 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 June 2019 on common rules for the internal market for electricity and amending Directive 2012/27/EU (recast) (Text with EEA relevance)

CHAPTER IV

DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATION

Article 30

Designation of distribution system operators

Member States shall designate or shall require undertakings that own or are responsible for distribution systems to designate one or more distribution system operators for a period of time to be determined by the Member States, having regard to considerations of efficiency and economic balance.

Article 31

Tasks of distribution system operators

1 The distribution system operator shall be responsible for ensuring the long-term ability of the system to meet reasonable demands for the distribution of electricity, for operating, maintaining and developing under economic conditions a secure, reliable and efficient electricity distribution system in its area with due regard for the environment and energy efficiency.

2 In any event, the distribution system operator shall not discriminate between system users or classes of system users, particularly in favour of its related undertakings.

3 The distribution system operator shall provide system users with the information they need for efficient access to, including use of, the system.

4 A Member State may require the distribution system operator, when dispatching generating installations, to give priority to generating installations using renewable sources or using high-efficiency cogeneration, in accordance with Article 12 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943.

5 Each distribution system operator shall act as a neutral market facilitator in procuring the energy it uses to cover energy losses in its system in accordance with transparent, non-discriminatory and market-based procedures, where it has such a function.

6 Where a distribution system operator is responsible for the procurement of products and services necessary for the efficient, reliable and secure operation of the distribution system, rules adopted by the distribution system operator for that purpose shall be objective, transparent and non-discriminatory, and shall be developed in coordination with transmission system operators and other relevant market participants. The terms and conditions, including rules and tariffs, where applicable, for the provision of such products and services to distribution system operators shall be established in accordance with Article 59(7) in a non-discriminatory and cost-reflective way and shall be published.

7 In performing the tasks referred to in paragraph 6, the distribution system operator shall procure the non-frequency ancillary services needed for its system in accordance with transparent, non-discriminatory and market-based procedures, unless the regulatory authority has assessed that the market-based provision of non-frequency ancillary services is economically not efficient and has granted a derogation. The obligation to procure non-frequency ancillary services does not apply to fully integrated network components.

8 The procurement of the products and services referred to in paragraph 6 shall ensure the effective participation of all qualified market participants, including market participants offering energy from renewable sources, market participants engaged in demand response, operators of energy storage facilities and market participants engaged in aggregation, in particular by requiring regulatory authorities and distribution system operators in close cooperation with all market participants, as well as transmission system operators, to establish the technical requirements for participation in those markets on the basis of the technical characteristics of those markets and the capabilities of all market participants.

9 Distribution system operators shall cooperate with transmission system operators for the effective participation of market participants connected to their grid in retail, wholesale and balancing markets. Delivery of balancing services stemming from resources located in the distribution system shall be agreed with the relevant transmission system operator in accordance with Article 57 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943 and Article 182 of Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/1485⁽¹⁾.

10 Member States or their designated competent authorities may allow distribution system operators to perform activities other than those provided for in this Directive and in Regulation (EU) 2019/943, where such activities are necessary for the distribution system operators to fulfil their obligations under this Directive or Regulation (EU) 2019/943, provided that the regulatory authority has assessed the necessity of such a derogation. This paragraph shall be without prejudice to the right of the distribution system operators to own, develop, manage or operate networks other than electricity networks where the Member State or the designated competent authority has granted such a right.

Article 32

Incentives for the use of flexibility in distribution networks

1 Member States shall provide the necessary regulatory framework to allow and provide incentives to distribution system operators to procure flexibility services, including congestion management in their areas, in order to improve efficiencies in the operation and development of the distribution system. In particular, the regulatory framework shall ensure that distribution system operators are able to procure such services from providers of distributed generation, demand response or energy storage and shall promote the uptake of energy efficiency measures, where such services cost-effectively alleviate the need to upgrade or replace electricity capacity and support the efficient and secure operation of the distribution system. Distribution system operators shall procure such services in accordance with transparent, non-discriminatory and market-based procedures unless the regulatory authorities have established that the procurement of such services is not economically efficient or that such procurement would lead to severe market distortions or to higher congestion.

2 Distribution system operators, subject to approval by the regulatory authority, or the regulatory authority itself, shall, in a transparent and participatory process that includes all relevant system users and transmission system operators, establish the specifications for the flexibility services procured and, where appropriate, standardised market products for such services at least at national level. The specifications shall ensure the effective and non-

discriminatory participation of all market participants, including market participants offering energy from renewable sources, market participants engaged in demand response, operators of energy storage facilities and market participants engaged in aggregation. Distribution system operators shall exchange all necessary information and shall coordinate with transmission system operators in order to ensure the optimal utilisation of resources, to ensure the secure and efficient operation of the system and to facilitate market development. Distribution system operators shall be adequately remunerated for the procurement of such services to allow them to recover at least their reasonable corresponding costs, including the necessary information and communication technology expenses and infrastructure costs.

3 The development of a distribution system shall be based on a transparent network development plan that the distribution system operator shall publish at least every two years and shall submit to the regulatory authority. The network development plan shall provide transparency on the medium and long-term flexibility services needed, and shall set out the planned investments for the next five-to-ten years, with particular emphasis on the main distribution infrastructure which is required in order to connect new generation capacity and new loads, including recharging points for electric vehicles. The network development plan shall also include the use of demand response, energy efficiency, energy storage facilities or other resources that the distribution system operator is to use as an alternative to system expansion.

4 The distribution system operator shall consult all relevant system users and the relevant transmission system operators on the network development plan. The distribution system operator shall publish the results of the consultation process along with the network development plan, and submit the results of the consultation and the network development plan to the regulatory authority. The regulatory authority may request amendments to the plan.

5 Member States may decide not to apply the obligation set out in paragraph 3 to integrated electricity undertakings which serve less than 100 000 connected customers or which serve small isolated systems.

Article 33

Integration of electromobility into the electricity network

1 Without prejudice to Directive 2014/94/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽²⁾, Member States shall provide the necessary regulatory framework to facilitate the connection of publicly accessible and private recharging points to the distribution networks. Member States shall ensure that distribution system operators cooperate on a non-discriminatory basis with any undertaking that owns, develops, operates or manages recharging points for electric vehicles, including with regard to connection to the grid.

2 Distribution system operators shall not own, develop, manage or operate recharging points for electric vehicles, except where distribution system operators own private recharging points solely for their own use.

3 By way of derogation from paragraph 2, Member States may allow distribution system operators to own, develop, manage or operate recharging points for electric vehicles, provided that all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a other parties, following an open, transparent and non-discriminatory tendering procedure that is subject to review and approval by the regulatory authority, have not been awarded a right to own, develop, manage or operate recharging points for electric vehicles, or could not deliver those services at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner;
- b the regulatory authority has carried out an *ex ante* review of the conditions of the tendering procedure under point (a) and has granted its approval;

- c the distribution system operator operates the recharging points on the basis of third-party access in accordance with Article 6 and does not discriminate between system users or classes of system users, and in particular in favour of its related undertakings.

The regulatory authority may draw up guidelines or procurement clauses to help distribution system operators ensure a fair tendering procedure.

4 Where Member States have implemented the conditions set out in paragraph 3, Member States or their designated competent authorities shall perform, at regular intervals or at least every five years, a public consultation in order to re-assess the potential interest of other parties in owning, developing, operating or managing recharging points for electric vehicles. Where the public consultation indicates that other parties are able to own, develop, operate or manage such points, Member States shall ensure that distribution system operators' activities in this regard are phased-out, subject to the successful completion of the tendering procedure referred to in point (a) of paragraph 3. As part of the conditions of that procedure, regulatory authorities may allow the distribution system operator to recover the residual value of its investment in recharging infrastructure.

Article 34

Tasks of distribution system operators in data management

Member States shall ensure that all eligible parties have non-discriminatory access to data under clear and equal terms, in accordance with the relevant data protection rules. In Member States where smart metering systems have been deployed in accordance with Article 19 and where distribution system operators are involved in data management, the compliance programmes referred to in point (d) of Article 35(2) shall include specific measures in order to exclude discriminatory access to data from eligible parties as provided for in Article 23. Where distribution system operators are not subject to Article 35(1), (2) or (3), Member States shall take all necessary measures to ensure that vertically integrated undertakings do not have privileged access to data for the conduct of their supply activities.

Article 35

Unbundling of distribution system operators

1 Where the distribution system operator is part of a vertically integrated undertaking, it shall be independent at least in terms of its legal form, organisation and decision-making from other activities not relating to distribution. Those rules shall not create an obligation to separate the ownership of assets of the distribution system operator from the vertically integrated undertaking.

2 In addition to the requirements under paragraph 1, where the distribution system operator is part of a vertically integrated undertaking, it shall be independent in terms of its organisation and decision-making from the other activities not related to distribution. In order to achieve this, the following minimum criteria shall apply:

- a the persons responsible for the management of the distribution system operator must not participate in company structures of the integrated electricity undertaking responsible, directly or indirectly, for the day-to-day operation of the generation, transmission or supply of electricity;

- b appropriate measures must be taken to ensure that the professional interests of the persons responsible for the management of the distribution system operator are taken into account in a manner that ensures that they are capable of acting independently;
- c the distribution system operator must have effective decision-making rights, independent from the integrated electricity undertaking, with respect to assets necessary to operate, maintain or develop the network. In order to fulfil those tasks, the distribution system operator shall have at its disposal the necessary resources including human, technical, physical and financial resources. This should not prevent the existence of appropriate coordination mechanisms to ensure that the economic and management supervision rights of the parent company in respect of return on assets, regulated indirectly in accordance with Article 59(7), in a subsidiary are protected. In particular, this shall enable the parent company to approve the annual financial plan, or any equivalent instrument, of the distribution system operator and to set global limits on the levels of indebtedness of its subsidiary. It shall not permit the parent company to give instructions regarding day-to-day operations, nor with respect to individual decisions concerning the construction or upgrading of distribution lines, that do not exceed the terms of the approved financial plan, or any equivalent instrument; and
- d the distribution system operator must establish a compliance programme, which sets out measures taken to ensure that discriminatory conduct is excluded, and ensure that observance of it is adequately monitored. The compliance programme shall set out the specific obligations of employees to meet that objective. An annual report, setting out the measures taken, shall be submitted by the person or body responsible for monitoring the compliance programme, the compliance officer of the distribution system operator, to the regulatory authority referred to in Article 57(1) and shall be published. The compliance officer of the distribution system operator shall be fully independent and shall have access to all the necessary information of the distribution system operator and any affiliated undertaking to fulfil its task.

3 Where the distribution system operator is part of a vertically integrated undertaking, the Member States shall ensure that the activities of the distribution system operator are monitored by regulatory authorities or other competent bodies so that it cannot take advantage of its vertical integration to distort competition. In particular, vertically integrated distribution system operators shall not, in their communication and branding, create confusion with respect to the separate identity of the supply branch of the vertically integrated undertaking.

4 Member States may decide not to apply paragraphs 1, 2 and 3 to integrated electricity undertakings which serve less than 100 000 connected customers, or serving small isolated systems.

Article 36

Ownership of energy storage facilities by distribution system operators

1 Distribution system operators shall not own, develop, manage or operate energy storage facilities.

2 By way of derogation from paragraph 1, Member States may allow distribution system operators to own, develop, manage or operate energy storage facilities, where they are fully integrated network components and the regulatory authority has granted its approval, or where all of the following conditions are fulfilled:

- a other parties, following an open, transparent and non-discriminatory tendering procedure that is subject to review and approval by the regulatory authority, have not

- been awarded a right to own, develop, manage or operate such facilities, or could not deliver those services at a reasonable cost and in a timely manner;
- b such facilities are necessary for the distribution system operators to fulfil their obligations under this Directive for the efficient, reliable and secure operation of the distribution system and the facilities are not used to buy or sell electricity in the electricity markets; and
 - c the regulatory authority has assessed the necessity of such a derogation and has carried out an assessment of the tendering procedure, including the conditions of the tendering procedure, and has granted its approval.

The regulatory authority may draw up guidelines or procurement clauses to help distribution system operators ensure a fair tendering procedure.

3 The regulatory authorities shall perform, at regular intervals or at least every five years, a public consultation on the existing energy storage facilities in order to assess the potential availability and interest in investing in such facilities. Where the public consultation, as assessed by the regulatory authority, indicates that third parties are able to own, develop, operate or manage such facilities in a cost-effective manner, the regulatory authority shall ensure that the distribution system operators' activities in this regard are phased out within 18 months. As part of the conditions of that procedure, regulatory authorities may allow the distribution system operators to receive reasonable compensation, in particular to recover the residual value of their investment in the energy storage facilities.

4 Paragraph 3 shall not apply to fully integrated network components or for the usual depreciation period of new battery storage facilities with a final investment decision until 4 July 2019, provided that such battery storage facilities are:

- a connected to the grid at the latest two years thereafter;
- b integrated into the distribution system;
- c used only for the reactive instantaneous restoration of network security in the case of network contingencies where such restoration measure starts immediately and ends when regular re-dispatch can solve the issue; and
- d not used to buy or sell electricity in the electricity markets, including balancing.

Article 37

Confidentiality obligation of distribution system operators

Without prejudice to Article 55 or another legal requirement to disclose information, the distribution system operator shall preserve the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information obtained in the course of carrying out its business, and shall prevent information about its own activities which may be commercially advantageous from being disclosed in a discriminatory manner.

Article 38

Closed distribution systems

1 Member States may provide for regulatory authorities or other competent authorities to classify a system which distributes electricity within a geographically confined industrial, commercial or shared services site and does not, without prejudice to paragraph 4, supply household customers, as a closed distribution system if:

- a for specific technical or safety reasons, the operations or the production process of the users of that system are integrated; or
- b that system distributes electricity primarily to the owner or operator of the system or their related undertakings.

2 Closed distribution systems shall be considered to be distribution systems for the purposes of this Directive. Member States may provide for regulatory authorities to exempt the operator of a closed distribution system from:

- a the requirement under Article 31(5) and (7) to procure the energy it uses to cover energy losses and the non-frequency ancillary services in its system in accordance with transparent, non-discriminatory and market-based procedures;
- b the requirement under Article 6(1) that tariffs, or the methodologies underlying their calculation, are approved in accordance with Article 59(1) prior to their entry into force;
- c the requirements under Article 32(1) to procure flexibility services and under Article 32(3) to develop the operator's system on the basis of network development plans;
- d the requirement under Article 33(2) not to own, develop, manage or operate recharging points for electric vehicles; and
- e the requirement under Article 36(1) not to own, develop, manage or operate energy storage facilities.

3 Where an exemption is granted under paragraph 2, the applicable tariffs, or the methodologies underlying their calculation, shall be reviewed and approved in accordance with Article 59(1) upon request by a user of the closed distribution system.

4 Incidental use by a small number of households with employment or similar associations with the owner of the distribution system and located within the area served by a closed distribution system shall not preclude an exemption under paragraph 2 being granted.

Article 39

Combined operator

Article 35(1) shall not prevent the operation of a combined transmission and distribution system operator, provided that the operator complies with Article 43(1), Articles 44 and 45, or Section 3 of Chapter VI, or that the operator falls under Article 66(3).

Status: This is the original version (as it was originally adopted).

- (1) Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/1485 of 2 August 2017 establishing a guideline on electricity transmission system operation ([OJ L 220, 25.8.2017, p. 1](#)).
- (2) Directive 2014/94/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2014 on the deployment of alternative fuels infrastructure ([OJ L 307, 28.10.2014, p. 1](#)).