

Directive 2009/72/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council  
of 13 July 2009 concerning common rules for the internal market in  
electricity and repealing Directive 2003/54/EC (Text with EEA relevance)

CHAPTER VI

**DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM OPERATION**

*Article 26*

**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 those 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 37(6), 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,

---

*Status: EU Directives are being published on this site to aid cross referencing from UK legislation. After IP completion day (31 December 2020 11pm) no further amendments will be applied to this version.*

---

to the regulatory authority referred to in Article 35(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 his 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 in respect of 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 serving less than 100 000 connected customers, or serving small isolated systems.