

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 III

CONSUMER EMPOWERMENT AND PROTECTION

Article 10

Basic contractual rights

1 Member States shall ensure that all final customers are entitled to have their electricity provided by a supplier, subject to the supplier's agreement, regardless of the Member State in which the supplier is registered, provided that the supplier follows the applicable trading and balancing rules. In that regard, Member States shall take all measures necessary to ensure that administrative procedures do not discriminate against suppliers already registered in another Member State.

2 Without prejudice to Union rules on consumer protection, in particular Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽¹⁾ and Council Directive 93/13/EEC⁽²⁾, Member States shall ensure that final customers have the rights provided for in paragraphs 3 to 12 of this Article.

3 Final customers shall have the right to a contract with their supplier that specifies:

- a the identity and address of the supplier;
- b the services provided, the service quality levels offered, as well as the time for the initial connection;
- c the types of maintenance service offered;
- d the means by which up-to-date information on all applicable tariffs, maintenance charges and bundled products or services may be obtained;
- e the duration of the contract, the conditions for renewal and termination of the contract and services, including products or services that are bundled with those services, and whether terminating the contract without charge is permitted;
- f any compensation and the refund arrangements which apply if contracted service quality levels are not met, including inaccurate or delayed billing;
- g the method of initiating an out-of-court dispute settlement procedure in accordance with Article 26;
- h information relating to consumer rights, including information on complaint handling and all of the information referred to in this paragraph, that is clearly communicated on the bill or the electricity undertaking's web site.

Conditions shall be fair and well known in advance. In any case, this information shall be provided prior to the conclusion or confirmation of the contract. Where contracts are concluded through intermediaries, the information relating to the matters set out in this paragraph shall also be provided prior to the conclusion of the contract.

Final customers shall be provided with a summary of the key contractual conditions in a prominent manner and in concise and simple language.

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4 Final customers shall be given adequate notice of any intention to modify contractual conditions and shall be informed about their right to terminate the contract when the notice is given. Suppliers shall notify their final customers, in a transparent and comprehensible manner, directly of any adjustment in the supply price and of the reasons and preconditions for the adjustment and its scope, at an appropriate time no later than two weeks, or no later than one month in the case of household customers, before the adjustment comes into effect. Member States shall ensure that final customers are free to terminate contracts if they do not accept the new contractual conditions or adjustments in the supply price notified to them by their supplier.

5 Suppliers shall provide final customers with transparent information on applicable prices and tariffs and on standard terms and conditions, in respect of access to and use of electricity services.

6 Suppliers shall offer final customers a wide choice of payment methods. Such payment methods shall not unduly discriminate between customers. Any difference in charges related to payment methods or prepayment systems shall be objective, non-discriminatory and proportionate and shall not exceed the direct costs borne by the payee for the use of a specific payment method or a prepayment system, in line with Article 62 of Directive (EU) 2015/2366 of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽³⁾.

7 Pursuant to paragraph 6, household customers who have access to prepayment systems shall not be placed at a disadvantage by the prepayment systems.

8 Suppliers shall offer final customers fair and transparent general terms and conditions, which shall be provided in plain and unambiguous language and shall not include non-contractual barriers to the exercise of customers' rights, such as excessive contractual documentation. Customers shall be protected against unfair or misleading selling methods.

9 Final customers shall have the right to a good standard of service and complaint handling by their suppliers. Suppliers shall handle complaints in a simple, fair and prompt manner.

10 When accessing universal service under the provisions adopted by Member States pursuant to Article 27, final customers shall be informed about their rights regarding universal service.

11 Suppliers shall provide household customers with adequate information on alternative measures to disconnection sufficiently in advance of any planned disconnection. Such alternative measures may refer to sources of support to avoid disconnection, prepayment systems, energy audits, energy consultancy services, alternative payment plans, debt management advice or disconnection moratoria and not constitute an extra cost to the customers facing disconnection.

12 Suppliers shall provide final customers with a final closure account after any switch of supplier no later than six weeks after such a switch has taken place.

Article 11

Entitlement to a dynamic electricity price contract

1 Member States shall ensure that the national regulatory framework enables suppliers to offer dynamic electricity price contracts. Member States shall ensure that final customers who have a smart meter installed can request to conclude a dynamic electricity price contract with at least one supplier and with every supplier that has more than 200 000 final customers.

2 Member States shall ensure that final customers are fully informed by the suppliers of the opportunities, costs and risks of such dynamic electricity price contracts, and shall ensure that suppliers are required to provide information to the final customers accordingly, including with regard to the need to have an adequate electricity meter installed. Regulatory authorities shall monitor the market developments and assess the risks that the new products and services may entail and deal with abusive practices.

3 Suppliers shall obtain each final customer's consent before that customer is switched to a dynamic electricity price contract.

4 For at least a ten-year period after dynamic electricity price contracts become available, Member States or their regulatory authorities shall monitor, and shall publish an annual report on the main developments of such contracts, including market offers and the impact on consumers' bills, and specifically the level of price volatility.

Article 12

Right to switch and rules on switching-related fees

1 Switching supplier or market participant engaged in aggregation shall be carried out within the shortest possible time. Member States shall ensure that a customer wishing to switch suppliers or market participants engaged in aggregation, while respecting contractual conditions, is entitled to such a switch within a maximum of three weeks from the date of the request. By no later than 2026, the technical process of switching supplier shall take no longer than 24 hours and shall be possible on any working day.

2 Member States shall ensure that at least household customers and small enterprises are not charged any switching-related fees.

3 By way of derogation from paragraph 2, Member States may permit suppliers or market participants engaged in aggregation to charge customers contract termination fees where those customers voluntarily terminate fixed-term, fixed-price electricity supply contracts before their maturity, provided that such fees are part of a contract that the customer has voluntarily entered into and that such fees are clearly communicated to the customer before the contract is entered into. Such fees shall be proportionate and shall not exceed the direct economic loss to the supplier or the market participant engaged in aggregation resulting from the customer's termination of the contract, including the costs of any bundled investments or services that have already been provided to the customer as part of the contract. The burden of proving the direct economic loss shall be on the supplier or market participant engaged in aggregation, and the permissibility of contract termination fees shall be monitored by the regulatory authority, or by an other competent national authority.

4 Member States shall ensure that the right to switch supplier or market participants engaged in aggregation is granted to customers in a non-discriminatory manner as regards cost, effort and time.

5 Household customers shall be entitled to participate in collective switching schemes. Member States shall remove all regulatory or administrative barriers for collective switching, while providing a framework that ensures the utmost consumer protection to avoid any abusive practices.

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Article 13

Aggregation contract

1 Member States shall ensure that all customers are free to purchase and sell electricity services, including aggregation, other than supply, independently from their electricity supply contract and from an electricity undertaking of their choice.

2 Member States shall ensure that, where a final customer wishes to conclude an aggregation contract, the final customer is entitled to do so without the consent of the final customer's electricity undertakings.

Member States shall ensure that market participants engaged in aggregation fully inform customers of the terms and conditions of the contracts that they offer to them.

3 Member States shall ensure that final customers are entitled to receive all relevant demand response data or data on supplied and sold electricity free of charge at least once every billing period if requested by the customer.

4 Member States shall ensure that the rights referred to in paragraphs 2 and 3 are granted to final customers in a non-discriminatory manner as regards cost, effort or time. In particular, Member States shall ensure that customers are not subject to discriminatory technical and administrative requirements, procedures or charges by their supplier on the basis of whether they have a contract with a market participant engaged in aggregation.

Article 14

Comparison tools

1 Member States shall ensure that at least household customers, and microenterprises with an expected yearly consumption of below 100 000 kWh, have access, free of charge, to at least one tool comparing the offers of suppliers, including offers for dynamic electricity price contracts. Customers shall be informed of the availability of such tools in or together with their bills or by other means. The tools shall meet at least the following requirements:

- a they shall be independent from market participants and ensure that electricity undertakings are given equal treatment in search results;
- b they shall clearly disclose their owners and the natural or legal person operating and controlling the tools, as well as information on how the tools are financed;
- c they shall set out clear and objective criteria on which the comparison is to be based, including services, and disclose them;
- d they shall use plain and unambiguous language;
- e they shall provide accurate and up-to-date information and state the time of the last update;
- f they shall be accessible to persons with disabilities, by being perceivable, operable, understandable and robust;
- g they shall provide an effective procedure for reporting incorrect information on published offers; and
- h they shall perform comparisons, while limiting the personal data requested to that strictly necessary for the comparison.

Member States shall ensure that at least one tool covers the entire market. Where multiple tools cover the market, those tools shall include, as complete as practicable, a range of electricity offers covering a significant part of the market and, where those tools do not completely cover the market, a clear statement to that effect, before displaying results.

2 The tools referred to in paragraph 1 may be operated by any entity, including private companies and public authorities or bodies.

3 Member States shall appoint a competent authority to be responsible for issuing trust marks for comparison tools that meet the requirements set out in paragraph 1, and for ensuring that comparison tools bearing a trust mark continue to meet the requirements set out in paragraph 1. That authority shall be independent of any market participants and comparison tool operators.

4 Member States may require comparison tools referred to in paragraph 1 to include comparative criteria relating to the nature of the services offered by the suppliers.

5 Any tool comparing the offers of market participants shall be eligible to apply for a trust mark in accordance with this Article on a voluntary and non-discriminatory basis.

6 By way of derogation from paragraphs 3 and 5, Member States may choose not to provide for the issuance of trust marks to comparison tools if a public authority or body provides a comparison tool that meets the requirements set out in paragraph 1.

Article 15

Active customers

1 Member States shall ensure that final customers are entitled to act as active customers without being subject to disproportionate or discriminatory technical requirements, administrative requirements, procedures and charges, and to network charges that are not cost-reflective.

2 Member States shall ensure that active customers are:

- a entitled to operate either directly or through aggregation;
- b entitled to sell self-generated electricity, including through power purchase agreements;
- c entitled to participate in flexibility schemes and energy efficiency schemes;
- d entitled to delegate to a third party the management of the installations required for their activities, including installation, operation, data handling and maintenance, without that third party being considered to be an active customer;
- e subject to cost-reflective, transparent and non-discriminatory network charges that account separately for the electricity fed into the grid and the electricity consumed from the grid, in accordance with Article 59(9) of this Directive and Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943, ensuring that they contribute in an adequate and balanced way to the overall cost sharing of the system;
- f financially responsible for the imbalances they cause in the electricity system; to that extent they shall be balance responsible parties or shall delegate their balancing responsibility in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943.

3 Member States may have different provisions applicable to individual and jointly-acting active customers in their national law, provided that all rights and obligations under this Article apply to all active customers. Any difference in the treatment of jointly-acting active customers shall be proportionate and duly justified.

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4 Member States that have existing schemes that do not account separately for the electricity fed into the grid and the electricity consumed from the grid, shall not grant new rights under such schemes after 31 December 2023. In any event, customers subject to existing schemes shall have the possibility at any time to opt for a new scheme that accounts separately for the electricity fed into the grid and the electricity consumed from the grid as the basis for calculating network charges.

- 5 Member States shall ensure that active customers that own an energy storage facility:
- a have the right to a grid connection within a reasonable time after the request, provided that all necessary conditions, such as balancing responsibility and adequate metering, are fulfilled;
 - b are not subject to any double charges, including network charges, for stored electricity remaining within their premises or when providing flexibility services to system operators;
 - c are not subject to disproportionate licensing requirements or fees;
 - d are allowed to provide several services simultaneously, if technically feasible.

Article 16

Citizen energy communities

1 Member States shall provide an enabling regulatory framework for citizen energy communities ensuring that:

- a participation in a citizen energy community is open and voluntary;
- b members or shareholders of a citizen energy community are entitled to leave the community, in which case Article 12 applies;
- c members or shareholders of a citizen energy community do not lose their rights and obligations as household customers or active customers;
- d subject to fair compensation as assessed by the regulatory authority, relevant distribution system operators cooperate with citizen energy communities to facilitate electricity transfers within citizen energy communities;
- e citizen energy communities are subject to non-discriminatory, fair, proportionate and transparent procedures and charges, including with respect to registration and licensing, and to transparent, non-discriminatory and cost-reflective network charges in accordance with Article 18 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943, ensuring that they contribute in an adequate and balanced way to the overall cost sharing of the system.

2 Member States may provide in the enabling regulatory framework that citizen energy communities:

- a are open to cross-border participation;
- b are entitled to own, establish, purchase or lease distribution networks and to autonomously manage them subject to conditions set out in paragraph 4 of this Article;
- c are subject to the exemptions provided for in Article 38(2).

3 Member States shall ensure that citizen energy communities:

- a are able to access all electricity markets, either directly or through aggregation, in a non-discriminatory manner;
- b are treated in a non-discriminatory and proportionate manner with regard to their activities, rights and obligations as final customers, producers, suppliers, distribution system operators or market participants engaged in aggregation;

- c are financially responsible for the imbalances they cause in the electricity system; to that extent they shall be balance responsible parties or shall delegate their balancing responsibility in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943;
- d with regard to consumption of self-generated electricity, citizen energy communities are treated like active customers in accordance with point (e) of Article 15(2);
- e are entitled to arrange within the citizen energy community the sharing of electricity that is produced by the production units owned by the community, subject to other requirements laid down in this Article and subject to the community members retaining their rights and obligations as final customers.

For the purposes of point (e) of the first subparagraph, where electricity is shared, this shall be without prejudice to applicable network charges, tariffs and levies, in accordance with a transparent cost-benefit analysis of distributed energy resources developed by the competent national authority.

4 Member States may decide to grant citizen energy communities the right to manage distribution networks in their area of operation and establish the relevant procedures, without prejudice to Chapter IV or to other rules and regulations applying to distribution system operators. If such a right is granted, Member States shall ensure that citizen energy communities:

- a are entitled to conclude an agreement on the operation of their network with the relevant distribution system operator or transmission system operator to which their network is connected;
- b are subject to appropriate network charges at the connection points between their network and the distribution network outside the citizen energy community and that such network charges account separately for the electricity fed into the distribution network and the electricity consumed from the distribution network outside the citizen energy community in accordance with Article 59(7);
- c do not discriminate or harm customers who remain connected to the distribution system.

Article 17

Demand response through aggregation

1 Member States shall allow and foster participation of demand response through aggregation. Member States shall allow final customers, including those offering demand response through aggregation, to participate alongside producers in a non-discriminatory manner in all electricity markets.

2 Member States shall ensure that transmission system operators and distribution system operators, when procuring ancillary services, treat market participants engaged in the aggregation of demand response in a non-discriminatory manner alongside producers on the basis of their technical capabilities.

3 Member States shall ensure that their relevant regulatory framework contains at least the following elements:

- a the right for each market participant engaged in aggregation, including independent aggregators, to enter electricity markets without the consent of other market participants;
- b non-discriminatory and transparent rules that clearly assign roles and responsibilities to all electricity undertakings and customers;
- c non-discriminatory and transparent rules and procedures for the exchange of data between market participants engaged in aggregation and other electricity undertakings

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- that ensure easy access to data on equal and non-discriminatory terms while fully protecting commercially sensitive information and customers' personal data;
- d an obligation on market participants engaged in aggregation to be financially responsible for the imbalances that they cause in the electricity system; to that extent they shall be balance responsible parties or shall delegate their balancing responsibility in accordance with Article 5 of Regulation (EU) 2019/943;
 - e provision for final customers who have a contract with independent aggregators not to be subject to undue payments, penalties or other undue contractual restrictions by their suppliers;
 - f a conflict resolution mechanism between market participants engaged in aggregation and other market participants, including responsibility for imbalances.
- 4 Member States may require electricity undertakings or participating final customers to pay financial compensation to other market participants or to the market participants' balance responsible parties, if those market participants or balance responsible parties are directly affected by demand response activation. Such financial compensation shall not create a barrier to market entry for market participants engaged in aggregation or a barrier to flexibility. In such cases, the financial compensation shall be strictly limited to covering the resulting costs incurred by the suppliers of participating customers or the suppliers' balance responsible parties during the activation of demand response. The method for calculating compensation may take account of the benefits brought about by the independent aggregators to other market participants and, where it does so, the aggregators or participating customers may be required to contribute to such compensation but only where and to the extent that the benefits to all suppliers, customers and their balance responsible parties do not exceed the direct costs incurred. The calculation method shall be subject to approval by the regulatory authority or by another competent national authority.
- 5 Member States shall ensure that regulatory authorities or, where their national legal system so requires, transmission system operators and distribution system operators, acting in close cooperation with market participants and final customers, establish the technical requirements for participation of demand response in all electricity markets on the basis of the technical characteristics of those markets and the capabilities of demand response. Such requirements shall cover participation involving aggregated loads.

Article 18

Bills and billing information

- 1 Member States shall ensure that bills and billing information are accurate, easy to understand, clear, concise, user-friendly and presented in a manner that facilitates comparison by final customers. On request, final customers shall receive a clear and understandable explanation of how their bill was derived, especially where bills are not based on actual consumption.
- 2 Member States shall ensure that final customers receive all their bills and billing information free of charge.
- 3 Member States shall ensure that final customers are offered the option of electronic bills and billing information and are offered flexible arrangements for the actual payment of the bills.
- 4 If the contract provides for a future change of the product or price, or a discount, this shall be indicated on the bill together with the date on which the change takes place.

5 Member States shall consult consumer organisations when they consider changes to the requirements for the content of bills.

6 Member States shall ensure that bills and billing information fulfil the minimum requirements set out in Annex I.

Article 19

Smart metering systems

1 In order to promote energy efficiency and to empower final customers, Member States or, where a Member State has so provided, the regulatory authority shall strongly recommend that electricity undertakings and other market participants optimise the use of electricity, inter alia, by providing energy management services, developing innovative pricing formulas, and introducing smart metering systems that are interoperable, in particular with consumer energy management systems and with smart grids, in accordance with the applicable Union data protection rules.

2 Member States shall ensure the deployment in their territories of smart metering systems that assist the active participation of customers in the electricity market. Such deployment may be subject to a cost-benefit assessment which shall be undertaken in accordance with the principles laid down in Annex II.

3 Member States that proceed with the deployment of smart metering systems shall adopt and publish the minimum functional and technical requirements for the smart metering systems to be deployed in their territories, in accordance with Article 20 and Annex II. Member States shall ensure the interoperability of those smart metering systems, as well as their ability to provide output for consumer energy management systems. In that respect, Member States shall have due regard to the use of the relevant available standards, including those enabling interoperability, to best practices and to the importance of the development of smart grids and the development of the internal market for electricity.

4 Member States that proceed with the deployment of smart metering systems shall ensure that final customers contribute to the associated costs of the deployment in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, while taking into account the long-term benefits to the whole value chain. Member States or, where a Member State has so provided, the designated competent authorities, shall regularly monitor such deployment in their territories to track the delivery of benefits to consumers.

5 Where the deployment of smart metering systems has been negatively assessed as a result of the cost-benefit assessment referred to in paragraph 2, Member States shall ensure that this assessment is revised at least every four years, or more frequently, in response to significant changes in the underlying assumptions and in response to technological and market developments. Member States shall notify to the Commission the outcome of their updated cost-benefit assessment as it becomes available.

6 The provisions in this Directive concerning smart metering systems shall apply to future installations and to installations that replace older smart meters. Smart metering systems that have already been installed, or for which the ‘start of works’ began, before 4 July 2019, may remain in operation over their lifetime but, in the case of smart metering systems that do not meet the requirements of Article 20 and Annex II, shall not remain in operation after 5 July 2031.

For the purpose of this paragraph, ‘start of works’ means either the start of construction works on the investment or the first firm commitment to order equipment or other commitment that makes the investment irreversible, whichever is the first in time.

Buying of land and preparatory works such as obtaining permits and conducting preliminary feasibility studies are not considered as start of works. For take-overs, 'start of works' means the moment of acquiring the assets directly linked to the acquired establishment.

Article 20

Functionalities of smart metering systems

Where the deployment of smart metering systems is positively assessed as a result of the cost-benefit assessment referred to in Article 19(2), or where smart metering systems are systematically deployed after 4 July 2019, Member States shall deploy smart metering systems in accordance with European standards, Annex II and the following requirements:

- (a) the smart metering systems shall accurately measure actual electricity consumption and shall be capable of providing to final customers information on actual time of use. Validated historical consumption data shall be made easily and securely available and visualised to final customers on request and at no additional cost. Non-validated near real-time consumption data shall also be made easily and securely available to final customers at no additional cost, through a standardised interface or through remote access, in order to support automated energy efficiency programmes, demand response and other services;
- (b) the security of the smart metering systems and data communication shall comply with relevant Union security rules, having due regard of the best available techniques for ensuring the highest level of cybersecurity protection while bearing in mind the costs and the principle of proportionality;
- (c) the privacy of final customers and the protection of their data shall comply with relevant Union data protection and privacy rules;
- (d) meter operators shall ensure that the meters of active customers who feed electricity into the grid can account for electricity fed into the grid from the active customers' premises;
- (e) if final customers request it, data on the electricity they fed into the grid and their electricity consumption data shall be made available to them, in accordance with the implementing acts adopted pursuant to Article 24, through a standardised communication interface or through remote access, or to a third party acting on their behalf, in an easily understandable format allowing them to compare offers on a like-for-like basis;
- (f) appropriate advice and information shall be given to final customers prior to or at the time of installation of smart meters, in particular concerning their full potential with regard to the management of meter reading and the monitoring of energy consumption, and concerning the collection and processing of personal data in accordance with the applicable Union data protection rules;
- (g) smart metering systems shall enable final customers to be metered and settled at the same time resolution as the imbalance settlement period in the national market.

For the purposes of point (e) of the first subparagraph, it shall be possible for final customers to retrieve their metering data or transmit them to another party at no

additional cost and in accordance with their right to data portability under Union data protection rules.

Article 21

Entitlement to a smart meter

1 Where the deployment of smart metering systems has been negatively assessed as a result of the cost-benefit assessment referred to in Article 19(2) and where smart metering systems are not systematically deployed, Member States shall ensure that every final customer is entitled on request, while bearing the associated costs, to have installed or, where applicable, to have upgraded, under fair, reasonable and cost-effective conditions, a smart meter that:

- a is equipped, where technically feasible, with the functionalities referred to in Article 20, or with a minimum set of functionalities to be defined and published by Member States at national level in accordance with Annex II;
- b is interoperable and able to deliver the desired connectivity of the metering infrastructure with consumer energy management systems in near real-time.

2 In the context of a customer request for a smart meter pursuant to paragraph 1, Member States or, where a Member State has so provided, the designated competent authorities shall:

- a ensure that the offer to the final customer requesting the installation of a smart meter explicitly states and clearly describes:
 - (i) the functions and interoperability that can be supported by the smart meter and the services that are feasible as well as the benefits that can be realistically attained by having that smart meter at that moment in time;
 - (ii) any associated costs to be borne by the final customer;
- b ensure that it is installed within a reasonable time, no later than four months after the customer's request;
- c regularly, and at least every two years, review and make publicly available the associated costs, and trace the evolution of those costs as a result of technology developments and potential metering system upgrades.

Article 22

Conventional meters

1 Where final customers do not have smart meters, Member States shall ensure that final customers are provided with individual conventional meters that accurately measure their actual consumption.

2 Member States shall ensure that final customers are able to easily read their conventional meters, either directly or indirectly through an online interface or through another appropriate interface.

Article 23

Data management

1 When laying down the rules regarding the management and exchange of data, Member States or, where a Member State has so provided, the designated competent authorities shall specify the rules on the access to data of the final customer by eligible parties in accordance with this Article and the applicable Union legal framework. For the purpose of this Directive, data shall be understood to include metering and consumption data as well as data required for customer switching, demand response and other services.

2 Member States shall organise the management of data in order to ensure efficient and secure data access and exchange, as well as data protection and data security.

Independently of the data management model applied in each Member State, the parties responsible for data management shall provide access to the data of the final customer to any eligible party, in accordance with paragraph 1. Eligible parties shall have the requested data at their disposal in a non-discriminatory manner and simultaneously. Access to data shall be easy and the relevant procedures for obtaining access to data shall be made publicly available.

3 The rules on access to data and data storage for the purpose of this Directive shall comply with the relevant Union law.

The processing of personal data within the framework of this Directive shall be carried out in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679.

4 Member States or, where a Member State has so provided, the designated competent authorities, shall authorise and certify or, where applicable, supervise the parties responsible for the data management, in order to ensure that they comply with the requirements of this Directive.

Without prejudice to the tasks of the data protection officers under Regulation (EU) 2016/679, Member States may decide to require that parties responsible for the data management appoint compliance officers who are to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of measures taken by those parties to ensure non-discriminatory access to data and compliance with the requirements of this Directive.

Member States may appoint compliance officers or bodies referred to in point (d) of Article 35(2) of this Directive to fulfil the obligations under this paragraph.

5 No additional costs shall be charged to final customers for access to their data or for a request to make their data available.

Member States shall be responsible for setting the relevant charges for access to data by eligible parties.

Member States or, where a Member State has so provided, the designated competent authorities shall ensure that any charges imposed by regulated entities that provide data services are reasonable and duly justified.

Article 24

Interoperability requirements and procedures for access to data

1 In order to promote competition in the retail market and to avoid excessive administrative costs for the eligible parties, Member States shall facilitate the full interoperability of energy services within the Union.

2 The Commission shall adopt, by means of implementing acts, interoperability requirements and non-discriminatory and transparent procedures for access to data referred to in Article 23(1). Those implementing acts shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 68(2).

3 Member States shall ensure that electricity undertakings apply the interoperability requirements and procedures for access to data referred to in paragraph 2. Those requirements and procedures shall be based on existing national practices.

Article 25

Single points of contact

Member States shall ensure the provision of single points of contact, to provide customers with all necessary information concerning their rights, the applicable law and dispute settlement mechanisms available to them in the event of a dispute. Such single points of contact may be part of general consumer information points.

Article 26

Right to out-of-court dispute settlement

1 Member States shall ensure that final customers have access to simple, fair, transparent, independent, effective and efficient out-of-court mechanisms for the settlement of disputes concerning rights and obligations established under this Directive, through an independent mechanism such as an energy ombudsman or a consumer body, or through a regulatory authority. Where the final customer is a consumer within the meaning of Directive 2013/11/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council⁽⁴⁾, such out-of-court dispute settlement mechanisms shall comply with the quality requirements of Directive 2013/11/EU and shall provide, where warranted, for systems of reimbursement and compensation.

2 Where necessary, Member States shall ensure that alternative dispute resolution entities cooperate to provide simple, fair, transparent, independent, effective and efficient out-of-court dispute settlement mechanisms for any dispute that arises from products or services that are tied to, or bundled with, any product or service falling under the scope of this Directive.

3 The participation of electricity undertakings in out-of-court dispute settlement mechanisms for household customers shall be mandatory unless the Member State demonstrates to the Commission that other mechanisms are equally effective.

Article 27

Universal service

1 Member States shall ensure that all household customers, and, where Member States deem it to be appropriate, small enterprises, enjoy universal service, namely the right to be supplied with electricity of a specified quality within their territory at competitive, easily and clearly comparable, transparent and non-discriminatory prices. To ensure the provision of universal service, Member States may appoint a supplier of last resort. Member States shall impose on distribution system operators an obligation to connect customers to their network under terms, conditions and tariffs set in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 59(7). This Directive does not prevent Member States from strengthening the market position of the household customers and small and medium-sized non-household customers by promoting the possibilities for the voluntary aggregation of representation for that class of customers.

2 Paragraph 1 shall be implemented in a transparent and non-discriminatory way, and shall not impede the free choice of supplier provided for in Article 4.

Article 28

Vulnerable customers

1 Member States shall take appropriate measures to protect customers and shall ensure, in particular, that there are adequate safeguards to protect vulnerable customers. In this context, each Member State shall define the concept of vulnerable customers which may refer to energy poverty and, inter alia, to the prohibition of disconnection of electricity to such customers in critical times. The concept of vulnerable customers may include income levels, the share of energy expenditure of disposable income, the energy efficiency of homes, critical dependence on electrical equipment for health reasons, age or other criteria. Member States shall ensure that rights and obligations linked to vulnerable customers are applied. In particular, they shall take measures to protect customers in remote areas. They shall ensure high levels of consumer protection, particularly with respect to transparency regarding contractual terms and conditions, general information and dispute settlement mechanisms.

2 Member States shall take appropriate measures, such as providing benefits by means of their social security systems to ensure the necessary supply to vulnerable customers, or providing for support for energy efficiency improvements, to address energy poverty where identified pursuant to point (d) of Article 3(3) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, including in the broader context of poverty. Such measures shall not impede the effective opening of the market set out in Article 4 or market functioning and shall be notified to the Commission, where relevant, in accordance with Article 9(4). Such notifications may also include measures taken within the general social security system.

Article 29

Energy poverty

When assessing the number of households in energy poverty pursuant to point (d) of Article 3(3) of Regulation (EU) 2018/1999, Member States shall establish and publish

a set of criteria, which may include low income, high expenditure of disposable income on energy and poor energy efficiency.

The Commission shall provide guidance on the definition of ‘significant number of households in energy poverty’ in this context and in the context of Article 5(5), starting from the premise that any proportion of households in energy poverty can be considered to be significant.

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.

- (1) Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on consumer rights, amending Council Directive 93/13/EEC and Directive 1999/44/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 85/577/EEC and Directive 97/7/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council ([OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 64](#)).
- (2) Council Directive 93/13/EEC of 5 April 1993 on unfair terms in consumer contracts ([OJ L 95, 21.4.1993, p. 29](#)).
- (3) Directive (EU) 2015/2366 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on payment services in the internal market, amending Directives 2002/65/EC, 2009/110/EC and 2013/36/EU and Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010, and repealing Directive 2007/64/EC ([OJ L 337, 23.12.2015, p. 35](#)).
- (4) Directive 2013/11/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Directive on consumer ADR) ([OJ L 165, 18.6.2013, p. 63](#)).